

25 Years Of Excellence



Principal: Alexa Trafficante
Assistant Principal: Raymond Spear

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! Please take the time to read, complete, and review the information in this first day packet with your child. Please return items in the list below:

- **Emergency Card – MOST IMPORTANT!**
 - Check pre-printed information and make corrections as needed
 - Complete all sections that are not pre-printed
 - Sign, date, and return as soon as possible
- Health History Information Questionnaire
- Dismissal Procedure Form and Walker/Bike/Inclement Weather Form
- Student Permission Form (Photos, Internet, Field Trips)
- Student Code of Conduct Agreement

NOTE: All volunteers will need to complete the YES Volunteer form online.

<https://www.hillsboroughschools.org/Page/7346>

Communication is Key!

Westchase strives for transparency and continuous communication. We will be sending out a weekly Parent Link message indicating upcoming events and important information you will need to know. Please make sure your correct email and phone number is listed so you will receive these key points of information! Below are some of the additional ways the Westchase team reaches out to keep parents informed:

- **Newsletters:** Many teachers send home newsletters, either hard copies or digitally.
- **Website:** Our school website, <https://www.hillsboroughschools.org/westchase> has a plethora of information available at your fingertips!
- **Twitter:** Please follow us on Twitter @WestchaseWizard! We will be tweeting highlights of our school along with important information.
- **Parent Link:** Blackboard is a system that allows us to call/text/email all families. Please make sure your email and phone number are accurate on your student enrollment form.
- **Email:** Teachers have email addresses that you can access from the school web page. Typically, it is their firstname.lastname@hcps.net. Teachers will make every attempt to respond to emails within 24 hours or one workday.
- **Telephone Calls:** The phone number to Westchase Elementary is 813-631-4600. The office normal work hours are Monday through Friday, 7:00-3:30. If you call the office to speak to a teacher, an office staff member will take a message and ensure the teacher receives that message. Unfortunately, teachers do not have access to outside lines in their classrooms. We strive to maximize our instructional time for all students, so phone calls will be returned as soon as possible.
- **Parent Conferences:** Formal Parent Conference Nights are held two evenings a year. Tentative dates are Thursday, October 19 and Thursday, February 15. In addition to those dates, you may request a conference at any time. Please know that teachers are unavailable for conferences from 7:10-7:40 a.m. as they are supervising students and working with others to provide additional assistance. You may call the office and leave the teacher a message or you can send the teacher a note/email to set up a time to conference in person.

Attendance and Tardy Information

Westchase Elementary Absentee Phone Number: 631-4600 Option 1

Attendance is a KPI (Key Performance Indicator) for success in school. We need our Wizards to be here to provide them with the best educational experience possible. If attendance or tardies are excessive, we will reach out to see how we can help!

Tardies: All students who arrive late to school must be walked to the office **by a parent** and be signed in. Unattended students will be considered unexcused tardy. When a student is tardy, he/she misses key instructional time and disrupts the learning process for other children in the class.

Frequent tardies and absences will be referred to the school social worker.

Help Westchase to surpass our 96% Attendance goal! Please keep in mind that children who are sick (fever and/or vomiting) should stay home for at least 24 hours.

Please keep your child home if they display any of the following symptoms

- Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Fever within the last 24 hours
- Sore throat
- Persistent coughing or sneezing
- Rashes not diagnosed by a physician
- Earache/drainage from ears

Dress Code

Westchase Elementary is a non-uniform school. Students must comply with the HCPS Policy 5511 which can be found on the district website. Please be mindful of outdoor play where closed toed shoes would be optimal. **NOTE: Students have either PE with the PE coaches or Teacher Directed PE daily.**

Parents, please be mindful that this is an elementary school and as adults, we need to be an example for dressing appropriately when attending on campus activities/volunteer opportunities.

Bullying: Zero Tolerance

Westchase Elementary and the Hillsborough County School District maintains a zero tolerance for bullying. "Bullying" means **systematically and chronically** inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one (1) or more students or employees. It is defined as any **unwanted and repeated** written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, which is **severe or pervasive** enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation.

Currently, the school district has posted a copy of the district Bullying and Harassment Policy on the website www.hillsboroughschools.org/bullyprevention which explains district policies regarding bullying and harassment. The reporting form is available in the office and may also be reported online from the school district website at: www.hillsboroughschools.org/bullyprevention

There will be ongoing discussions in the classroom, as well as with the guidance counselors. Please follow up at home with discussions about bullying. Our goal is that Westchase will continue to be a safe place where everyone can learn.

Hillsborough County Public Schools, in compliance with 2008 Florida Statute - 1006.147~adopted its own anti-bullying and harassment policy in December 2008. It is the policy of Hillsborough County Public Schools that all of its students and school employees have an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The district will not tolerate bullying or harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying or harassment, as defined in the policy, is prohibited.

Student Handbook

Hillsborough County Public Schools' Student Handbook is now available online through the mySPOT Parent Hub. A copy is also available on our Westchase Elementary school district website.

My Payments Plus

We will continue to use My Payments Plus as often as we can for lunch accounts, field trips, and other monies collected. This eliminates the cash flow and is more secure. Please see the attached flyer on how to set up the account for your children.

Birthdays

If it is a child's birthday, a small store-bought treat may be dropped off in the main office labelled with the student's name and homeroom. Beforehand, check with the teacher to be advised about allergies. The item will be delivered to the child's class for the teacher to distribute. No balloons, goody bags, or classroom celebrations.

School Counseling Department

The comprehensive school counseling program at Westchase Elementary is designed to support the mission of the school by promoting and enhancing the learning process of every student through integration of academic, career, and personal/social development. Many prevention topics are addressed through classroom guidance, career, and personal/social development, and small group guidance and district approved school-wide presentations. Examples of these topics include:

- Physical and Emotional Health/Safety
- Character Education
- Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution
- Bullying Prevention
- Drug and Alcohol Prevention
- Harassment and Violence Prevention

There are some grade level specific programs that may be available to your child, such as:

- In Grades K-5 - Red Ribbon Week Utilizes the "Too Good for Drugs" Mendez Curriculum
- In Third Grade – Champions for Children's *Kids-on- the-Block* uses puppets and child-appropriate language in skits to cover child abuse issues with third grade students.

- In Fourth Grade – Champions for Children’s *Kids-on- the-Block* uses puppets and child-appropriate language to present information on bullying prevention and tolerance to fourth grade students to teach them peaceful alternatives and solutions.

These are just a few examples of the exciting activities that your child may be participating in at our school. Please feel free to contact us at 631-4600 if you have any questions or concerns. Kirsten Rivenburg ext. 227 & Melanie Rosado ext. 223.

Arrival and Dismissal

Morning drop-off begins at 7:10. Students should not arrive before this time as there is no supervision until 7:10.

All students are encouraged to take part in the breakfast program that is provided free of charge. **Students are to get breakfast before going to the classroom.**

The north side of the small parking lot will be coned off until after 7:40 a.m. This area will be supervised as a second drop-off point. It will still only be accessible through Westchase Drive, via Montague. **For student safety, children are not to be dropped off from parking spaces, the bus drop off area, the side leading to the back of the school, or the middle of the road.**

Morning Arrival Map:



Arrival: Students may enter the building who walk, ride a bicycle, or ride in a car through the main side entrance. Parents are not allowed to escort students to class, students will be expected to walk to class independently. Parents who wish to volunteer with a purpose beginning at 7:10 may sign-in through the main office as long as the teacher is aware they are coming. This will help us maximize our educational time with our students and enhance security on campus.

Dismissal begins at 1:55 (12:55 on Monday). Students who walk home and ride bicycles will be released from the “walker gate.” Parents will receive three tags that will enable them to get their child(ren). The extras are for any other family/friends that you want to be able to pick up your child. **If anyone comes to pick up a child without the tag, they will be directed to enter the main office and**

show identification. This is to ensure the safety of all students. Parking at the Rec Center and picking up your child from the walker gate WILL BE PROHIBITED AND ENFORCED BY OFFICER WEBB.

At 1:55 (12:55 on Monday), students are escorted to their respective dismissal points. School buses are scheduled to depart at 2:05 (1:05 on Monday) from the rear lot.

Parents who prefer to drive and pick up their children may do so in the parent pick-up loop in the front of the school. **The small side lot in between the school and the REC Center will be closed daily at 12:25 (Mondays) and 1:25.** There will be no parking in this lot in the afternoon for student safety. Families who are not TRULY walkers must use the car line for dismissal. Hangtags are included in the first day packet. After the first week of school, if someone comes to pick up a child without a hangtag, they will be directed to park and enter the office and show identification. **For the safety of ALL our Wizards, please show your hangtag each day at dismissal.** Walkers and bicycle riders will be released from the gate west of the main office. Students who ride bicycles must wear a helmet.

Afternoon Dismissal Map:



Early Dismissal/Release of Students

A request to have a student excused from class early should be sent with the student on the morning of dismissal. The time and reason for leaving should be included. When possible, medical, and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours.

Any student who leaves during the school day must be released through the school office. **The parent must bring photo identification to the office to sign the child out on the school safe-net system.** If the parent is authorizing another adult to pick up the child, the office must be advised in writing. This information should be sent with the child. No child will be released without positive photo-identification.

The student will then be escorted to the office. Students may not be called to wait in the office before parent arrival. Students are only called after photo identification has been verified.

Transportation Changes

Student transportation changes may not be made over the phone.

Parents may:

- Send the teacher a note (a template is provided for you to use if you like).
- Come to the office and fill out a change in dismissal form.

Change in Transportation: Westchase Elementary School

Date _____ Student Name _____ Homeroom Teacher _____

In effect for the following date(s): _____ -or- _____ Until Further Notice

My child will be changing their regular mode of transportation by the method checked below:

_____ Picked up in the car line by _____

_____ Riding Bus# _____ Stop _____ (pending approval by transportation)

_____ Going to Daycare _____

_____ Walker _____ Bike Rider _____ Other _____

Parent Signature _____ Phone # _____

**** The latest time to sign-out students on Monday is 12:25 and Tuesday – Friday is 1:25. There will be no exceptions as this impacts our ability to dismiss students safely****

Independent Walker/Bike Rider Permission Form

If you would like your child to walk or ride a bicycle home from Westchase, we must have your written permission on file, as well as your rainy-day plan. Children will not be released to ride bikes or walk home during inclement weather.

Student Name: _____ Age: _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

As the parent or legal guardian of _____, I hereby grant permission to the school to release my child to walk and/or ride a bicycle from school. I understand that children without helmets will not be released with their bicycles and parents will be called to arrange pick-up.

In case of inclement weather, our family has discussed our plan (outlined below) for alternate dismissal:

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Phone Number _____

Please return this form to your child's teacher!



2023-2024 Student Academic Calendar

Board Approved 9/20/22

Students' First Day of School	Thursday, August 10, 2023
Labor Day/Non-Student Day	Monday, September 4, 2023
End of 1st Grading Period	Thursday, October 12, 2023
Non-Student Day	Monday, October 16, 2023
Veterans Day Observed/Non-Student Day	Friday, November 10, 2023
Fall Break/Non-Student Days	Monday, November 20 - Friday, November 24, 2023
Students Return to School	Monday, November 27, 2023
End of 2nd Grading Period (End of 1st Semester)	Friday, December 22, 2023
Winter Break/Non-Student Days	Monday, December 25, 2023 - Friday, January 5, 2024
Students Return to School	Monday, January 8, 2024
Martin Luther King, Jr./Non-Student Day	Monday, January 15, 2024
Non-Student Day	Friday, February 16, 2024
Non-Student Day	Monday, March 4, 2024
Spring Break/Non-Student Days	Monday, March 11 - Friday, March 15, 2024
Students Return to School	Monday, March 18, 2024
End of 3rd Grading Period	Wednesday, March 20, 2024
Non-Student Day	Friday, March 29, 2024
Last Day of School/End of 4th Grading Period (End of 2nd Semester)	Friday, May 24, 2024

Hurricane Day(s) if needed: October 16, November 10, November 20-22, and November 24

Student Early Release Day schedule has not been finalized.
The last day of school is a 2.5-hour early release.