



Westminster
COMMUNITY
CHARTER SCHOOL

Information Guide for Parents, Guardians & Students
2010-11

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The children are our community's future! 



Westminster Community Charter School Board Members

Rene Baugh-Teacher Representative
Terenda Brown-Parent Representative
Rita Eisenbeis-Education Representative
John A. Carmichael- CEO, WCCS

Mark J. Czarnecki- President, WCCS
Robert G. Wilmers-M&T Bank Representative
Ronald E. Banks- Education Representative
Dr. Yvonne S. Minor-Ragan- Principal, WCCS

Telephone Contacts

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Main Office Fax.....(716) 816-3458 or 838-7458
Principal.....Dr. Yvonne S. Minor-Ragan
Assistant Principal.....Pastora Bolden; pbolden@buffaloschools.org
Kaleida Health Clinic Telephone.....(716) 838-7460
Kaleida Health Clinic Fax.....(716) 836-8543
Nurse Practitioner.....(716) 838-7460 -Jan Robinson
Social Worker.....Kathleen Gabryel
Guidance Counseling.....(716) 816-3452
Guidance Counselor.....Mr. Benjamin Willis; bwillis@buffaloschools.org

Website

www.westminsterccs.org

General Description

Westminster is a public school serving over 500 Kindergarten through Eighth grade students. All staff meets the certifications requirements of New York State. The Principal has been with the school since September 1994. In addition, Westminster has shared a unique partnership with M&T Bank, which contributes managerial and consulting services to the school. The combination of an enthusiastic and experienced staff backed by a competent administration and management has resulted in Westminster test scores rising from the bottom of the district in 1994 to among the top today. Westminster Community Charter School's motto for its staff and students is "Buffalo's Best" and everyone believes that, "The children are our community's future."

School Mission

It is the mission of the Westminster Community Charter School that all students will graduate with the necessary foundation to be successful in high school and/or higher educational institutions and to become productive and contributing citizens in our society and community. A culture of learning and nurturing, which emphasizes the continuous development of the whole child, will be achieved by creating and maintaining a successful partnership between students and their parents, the staff, the community and private industry.

To enable students to achieve mastery of the state standards, the School will provide focused instruction by developing a diagnostic analysis system in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each student resulting in an individualized program of strategies and instruction for each student. The areas of reading, writing, math and student attendance will be targeted and staff development will augment efforts to meet student needs. All students will have the opportunity to participate. Parent activities will enhance the “community spirit” of the Westminster Community Charter School, and will enable parents to better assist and support their children to increase their academic success and attendance.

Westminster School Pledge:

I am a student of the Westminster Community Charter School, Buffalo's Best. I respect my parents, my teacher, my classmates and myself. I am responsible for all of my behaviors. I am learning to set goals for myself. I come to school with a clean body and appropriate, clean clothes. I come to school prepared to learn with my homework, books, pencils, pens, and paper. I come to school with a positive attitude and an open mind, ready to learn. I come to school to learn and participate in order to get the best education I can!

Unique Program Highlights

After-School Program

Westminster has a two-tier after school program. The first tier offers an extra hour of instruction by certified schoolteachers from Westminster at least 3 days per week. The second tier operates until 5:00 p.m. each day and is run under the supervision of school staff as well as students from local universities. The emphasis of the program is on academics and recreation and also includes a daily snack.

Summer School Program

Westminster offers a summer school program consisting of an academic program in the morning and day camp activities in the afternoon. The summer school program operates from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Breakfast and Lunch are also served. Applications to enroll are available in the Main Office.

Kaleida Health Clinic

Westminster provides a full service health clinic. The clinic is run by Kaleida Health and operates on school days from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. including the summer during school hours. For an application to participate in all services, contact the Main Office or the Health Clinic. The clinic consists of a Nurse Practitioner, a Health Assistant and a Social Worker. The health services include on-site pediatric primary care services, which may include first aid due to injuries/accidents, and sick visits and administration of medications in accordance with State Education Department guidelines as follows:

Medications

Medications must be sent to the school in the **original prescription bottle** for the protection of the student and the school. There must be a note from the physician stating that medication cannot be administered outside of school hours. The note must state the amount and time of the dosage. The parent or guardian must sign a note giving permission to administer the medication for a specific period of time including prescription medication and any over-the-counter medication. Verbal and/or telephone requests to administer medication are not acceptable.

Immunizations

Before a child can be permitted to enter and attend school, parents/guardians must present documentation that their child has received all required doses of vaccines or that their child has at least received one dose of each of the required vaccines and is waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals. Parents may waive immunization in accordance with Public Health Law and exceptions to immunizations shall be granted if a licensed physician or nurse practitioner certifies such immunization may be detrimental to the student’s health, or if the student’s parent/guardian holds genuine and sincere religious beliefs contrary to such immunization.

Vaccines	Grades Kindergarten – 8
Diphtheria Toxoid-Containing Vaccine	3 doses
Tetanus Toxoid-Containing Vaccine and Pertussis Vaccine (Dtap, DTP)	Not applicable until student born on or after 1/1/05 enrolls in school
Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis Booster (Tdap)	Born on or after 1/1/94 and enrolling in 6 th grade 1 dose
Polio (IPV or OPV)	3 doses
Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)	2 doses of measles-containing vaccine and 1 dose each of mumps and rubella (preferably as MMR)
Hepatitis B	3 doses
Varicella (Chickenpox)	Born on or after 1/1/98 or born on or after 1/1/94 and enrolling in 6 th grade 1 dose

Communicable Disease

When a communicable disease is reported in a classroom, a notice will be sent home with each student in that class. If your child is diagnosed as having a communicable disease, please contact the school nurse. According to NYS Education Law, any child with an undiagnosed rash, temperature over 100 degrees, vomiting or any communicable disease will be excluded from school until diagnosed and/or treated. Parents/guardians will be notified. If your child has lice, or you suspect the occurrence of lice, please contact the school nurse. Your child must be examined before being re-admitted to the school. This procedure is very important in preventing the spread and reoccurrence of lice.

Sick Child Pick-up

If a student must leave the school during school hours due to illness, the school nurse will contact the parent/guardian. Students should be picked up and signed out at the Health Clinic.

Special Education Services

Westminster provides special education services in accordance with all applicable laws. Services include, but are not limited to learning disabilities with occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech.

Discipline of Students with disabilities: while all students are subject to the same Code of Conduct, Westminster recognizes that students with disabilities are entitled to additional procedural protections. The Code of Conduct affords students with disabilities subject to disciplinary action no greater or lesser rights than those expressly afforded by federal and state laws and regulations. The complete policy for discipline for students with disabilities is in the Main Office.

Columbia Teachers College Reading & Writing Workshop

Columbia consultants work monthly with the staff to instruct teachers on reading and writing techniques that are used throughout the school. Columbia consultants engage our staff in ongoing staff development and monthly workshops in language arts. Specifically, our staff is taught research-based strategies in reading and writing, which aid students in their academic success across the curriculum.

Mentor Program

Employees of M&T Bank volunteer to serve as mentors to Westminster students. The goal of this program is to provide enriching experiences for the student, and to promote self-esteem. Activities may include cultural activities (e.g. museums, theater), sporting events and other fun experiences (e.g. go-kart rides, Darien Lake, bowling, laser tag)

Other services and programs

Full-service Library
2 Computer Labs and at least 5 computers in every classroom
Home & Careers
Foreign Language

Chorus
Instrumental Instruction
School Plays and Musicals
Various Clubs

School Operations

School Hours

Breakfast is served from 8:00-8:15 a.m. The regular school day officially begins at 8:25 a.m. with the morning announcements. Attendance is taken promptly at 8:30 a.m. If your child arrives after 8:30 a.m., he/she is tardy and needs to report to the office with the proper written excuse. Dismissal begins at 2:30 p.m. for grades K-5 on Thursday and Friday. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, grades K-5 are dismissed at 3:30 p.m. Grades 6-8 are dismissed at 3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Entrance and Exit Door Locations

Westminster Avenue Main Door	8:00 a.m.	All students entering for breakfast
	8:15-8:25 a.m.	Grades 6, 7, 8
Parking Lot- North Door	8:15-8:25 a.m.	Grades 4, 5
E. Amherst St. Door	8:15-8:25 a.m.	Grades K, 1
Westminster Ave. Side Door	8:15-8:25 a.m.	Grades 2, 3

Absenteeism & Tardiness

When a student is absent due to illness, please call the Main Office (816-3450) on the first day of the absence no later than 8:30 a.m. Send a written note with our child on the first day back to school after the absence. The note should include the date absent, the reason for the absence and a parent's signature. Excessive absenteeism will be discussed with the parent/guardian. The full attendance policy is listed in the next section. If your child comes to school late, he/she must have a signed, written excuse to explain the tardiness. Your child must report to the Main Office with the excuse before given a pass to the classroom.

School Breakfast and Lunch Programs

The charter school participates in the Federal Free- and Reduced-Priced breakfast, lunch and snack programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and adheres to all applicable requirements including, but not limited to: meal pricing, determination of eligibility, nutritional value, and reporting requirements. Any and all food service subsidy revenues received from the Federal and State meal programs shall be used exclusively for the purpose of providing meals to eligible students, and for no prohibited purpose. Typically, students from households with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level are eligible for free meals, while students from households with incomes between 130% and 185% of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. Forms are available at the Main Office or in the Cafeteria

Homework

Students are given homework at least four times per week as a reinforcement of previously learned skills. Students in Grades 2-8 will be provided with Student Planners for \$1.00.

Evaluation Reports

There are four report cards and 3 mid-quarter reports for each student throughout the school year. Monthly grade level newsletters are sent home to parents and guardians. They serve as periodic notification of classroom activities, information that has been taught and how parents can help.

Visitors

All visitors must report to the main office upon entering the school. After signing a visitor's log, a pass will be granted. This is necessary to keep our school safe for all of the children.

Admissions/Registration/Enrollment

In accordance with New York law, The Westminster Community Charter School is open to all students eligible to attend a public school in New York State, without regard to ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability or any other ground that would be unlawful if done by a school. Admission of students is not limited on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion or ancestry. Students are selected on a random selection basis if the number of applicants exceeds the available space by grade level.

Notwithstanding the above, all regular education and special education children who are enrolled in the Westminster Community Charter School in the current school year have preference to Re-enroll annually (See below). Admission preference is also be given to siblings of those students attending the school, then to students residing in the District, and finally to students from outside the District - provided any space remains.

Documents required to register a student:

- Original Certificate of Birth/Adoption: with seal or Passport
- Immunization Record: up-to-date with required immunizations
- Dental Certificate
- Proof of address: current gas or electric bill with name of parent/legal guardian and address
- Final report card from June: transcript of official transfer if registering during the school year

Re-Enrollment for Following School Year

In order to determine the number of slots vacant for the following school year, parents of enrolled children who wish to return and siblings of enrolled children who wish to be enrolled in the following year, must complete a Student Re-Enrollment Form and a Parent/School Contract to be returned by the deadline date. **Please note that this Form must be returned to the School Office or your child's spot could be taken because there is an enrollment cap and a waiting list.**

Enrollment Period and Admissions Lottery for New Students

Formal recruitment of incoming students begins after January 1st. The Charter School advertises open registration and interested families submit applications until April 1st, at which point students will be entered into a random lottery. This lottery will be held after April 1st annually and students will be notified shortly thereafter.

In the event of the need for a lottery, admission preference is granted to applicants in the following manner:

- First preference will be given to returning students, who will automatically be assigned a space within the School.

- Second preference will be given to siblings of students already enrolled in the Charter School.
- Third preference for admission is for students who reside in the school district of location (i.e. the Buffalo Public Schools).
- Any remaining slots shall be available to applicants residing outside the district of location.

A waiting list shall also be established. The waiting list shall expire annually at the lottery drawing following the next year's enrollment period.

Voluntary Withdrawal

The Charter School is a public school of choice, both for entrance and withdrawal. Students with their parent or guardian permission may withdraw from the School at any time. School personnel will offer to meet with the family and discuss the reasons for the desired withdrawal from the School, as well as to seek solutions to any problems that arise from these discussions.

If the parents or guardians still wish to transfer their child to another school, the school staff will ensure the timely transfer of any necessary school records to the student's new school.

General Security, School Cancellations, Early Dismissal

For the safety of all, especially our children, we have increased the security of our building. We have also put a plan in place in the event there is an emergency early closing of our school. Please familiarize your family with these procedures.

- All outside doors are locked. Please use the main door where you must ring the doorbell and identify yourself.
- All parents and visitors to the building MUST report to the main office to sign-in.
- For morning drop off and afternoon pick up, we ask that parents remain on the first floor. Your child will be called down to the main office.
- Please stay tuned to the radio (WBEN 930AM) and TV for any updated information about school closings.
- If we should have an early dismissal, please come to the school immediately to pick up your child.
- We will attempt to call all parents/guardians to notify you of an early dismissal.
- No child will be dismissed without your permission.
- In the event that we cannot make contact, our last resort will be to leave your child at the E District Police station. (2767 Bailey Ave. 851-4416)
- Please make sure that the Main Office has the latest emergency information for your child: telephone numbers, emergency numbers, parent/guardian names and addresses.

Your child's safety is our number one priority. We are counting on your cooperation.

Uniform Policy

The WCCS School Uniform is worn every day and is available from the *French Toast Uniform Company*. Order forms are available in the Main Office or purchases may be made directly from the school's inventory of uniform items. Please refer to the Code of Conduct in the next section for a detailed explanation of the uniform requirements.

Transportation

WCCS does not provide bus transportation. Parents are responsible for getting their children to and from school. Those students living on a Metro Bus route may apply for a Metro Bus Pass. Applications for the Metro Bus Pass are available in the Main Office.

School Policies and Legal Notices

Attendance Policy

Westminster Community Charter School's Attendance Policy is based on the principle that regular school attendance maximizes the student's interaction with his/her teachers and peers and is a major component of academic success. When a student is absent due to illness, please call the Main Office (816-3450) on the first day of the absence no later than 8:30 a.m. Then, send a written note with your child on the first day back to school after an absence. The note should include the date(s) absent, the reason for the absence and a parent's signature.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

- 1) **Excused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance and education, quarantine, required court appearances, incarceration, approved field trip, "Student to Work" Day, suspension (formal and informal), attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations or other such reasons as may be approved by the Board of Trustees.
- 2) **Unexcused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., lack of required immunization without a religious or medical exemption, family vacation, babysitting, unlawful employment, expressing solidarity with a cause, illegally detained by parent, no transportation, illegal pickup by a parent, missed bus, lack of proper clothing, truant [out of school without parental consent] obtaining learner's permit, road test, oversleeping).

Excessive absenteeism will be discussed with the parent/guardian.

A copy of the complete Attendance Policy is available in the Main Office.

Summary of Code of Conduct for Students, Parents and Visitors

Introduction

Pursuant to the requirements of Project SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act), Westminster Community Charter School (WCCS) has prepared this Plain Language Summary of the Code of Conduct. This Plain Language Summary will be distributed to both students and parents in accordance with the Project SAVE legislation. The terms of this Plain Language Summary are provided for convenient reference. The specific terms of the Code of Conduct itself will govern in all cases.

The Code of Conduct is applicable to all persons on school property or attending a school function, except where a specific provision of the Code indicates that it is applicable only to a certain group of people. This summary will focus on the rules applicable to students and parents. The rules set forth in the Code are not the only standards governing the conduct and performance of Westminster students, employees and visitors; it is not intended to, and shall not, limit the authority of Westminster to take appropriate responsive action upon grounds not listed in the Code, including conduct off school premises in appropriate situations.

I. Student Rights and Responsibilities

A. Student Rights

Westminster Community Charter School is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, all WCCS students have the right to:

- Expect a school environment that is conducive to learning.
- Be treated respectfully by those in the school community.
- Take part in all WCCS activities on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
- Be provided with school rules and, when necessary, receive an explanation of those rules from school personnel.
- Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.

B. Student Responsibilities

All Westminster students have the responsibility to:

- Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning, and show respect to other persons and to property.
- Be familiar with and abide by all WCCS policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
- Attend school every day unless they are legally excused, and be in class on time and prepared to learn. (consistent with the WCCS Attendance Policy).

- Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.
- Respond in a respectful, positive manner to all directions and directives given by teachers, administrators and other school personnel.
- Seek help in solving problems that might lead to a disciplinary situation.
- Dress appropriately for school and school functions in accordance with the WCCS Uniform Policy set forth in III, below.
- Accept responsibility for their actions.
- Conduct themselves as representatives of WCCS when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events, and hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship.
- Report to the proper authorities as soon as possible any information they have on the possession or possible possession of a weapon, alcohol or illegal substance by a person on school property, or a threat made by a person to do harm to another or to property.
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct.

II. Dress Code-Uniform Policy

The WCCS School Uniform is worn every day and is available from the *French Toast Uniform Company*. Order forms are available in the Main Office or purchases may be made directly from the school’s inventory of uniform items.

Allowed	Boys (K-8th Grade)	Allowed	Girls (K-8th Grade)
	Black French Toast Pants Black Belt White French Toast Oxford shirt Black Socks Black French Toast V-Neck Cardigan with Westminster logo (optional) Black French Toast Tie (Must be worn every day) Black Dress Shoes Gr 7 & 8: Black Blazer with WCCS logo (must be worn on Fridays) Gr K-2: Sneakers for Physical Education Gr 3-8: French Toast black shorts, sneakers & WCCS logo shirt for Phys.Ed.		Black French Toast V-Neck Jumper (K-4th Grades only) or Black French Toast Pleated Skirt or Black French Toast Pleated Pants White French Toast Peter Pan or Oxford Blouse White or Black Socks/Tights Black French Toast Crew-Neck Cardigan with Westminster logo (optional) Black French Toast Criss-Cross Ties (must be worn every day) Black Dress Shoes Gr 7 & 8: Black Blazer with WCCS logo (must be worn on Fridays) Gr K-2: Sneakers for Physical Education Gr 3-8: French Toast black shorts, sneakers & WCCS logo shirt for Phys.Ed. One small pair of earrings

Not Allowed	Boys (K-8th Grade)	Not Allowed	Girls (K-8th Grade)
	Non-French Toast clothing Earrings Sneakers, except for Physical Education		Non-French Toast clothing Excessive jewelry Sneakers, except for Physical Education

Any student who violates the Uniform Policy, will be sent to the Principal’s Office for disciplinary action.

III. Prohibited Conduct

All persons on school property and at school functions are to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of others and for the care of school facilities and equipment. At a minimum, this requires compliance with the following rules. All persons on school property and at school functions, including all students, are prohibited from engaging in:

- Disorderly conduct (for example, running in hallways; profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive language or gestures; obstructing others; disrupting the operations of the school; entering school premises without authorization after hours; misuse of computer equipment).
- Insubordinate conduct (for example, failing to comply with valid directions of teachers, school administrators or other school personnel; being late; skipping or leaving school without permission).
- Disruptive conduct (for example, speaking out of turn; horseplay; conduct which substantially disrupts the educational process or substantially interferes with a teacher’s authority over the classroom).
- Violent or threatening conduct (for example, hitting; kicking; punching; possessing any form of weapon or item that could be used as a weapon; displaying what appears to be a weapon; threatening to use a weapon or to do any form of harm to another; damaging property; fighting; starting a fight).
- Conduct that endangers safety, morals, health or welfare of others (e.g. lying; stealing; defaming; discriminating; harassing; intimidating; hazing; smoking; having obscene material; using vulgar or abusive language; inappropriate use; possession or sharing of any form of drugs; gambling; indecent exposure; false report of an emergency).
- Misconduct on a school bus (for example, excessive noise; pushing; shoving; fighting).
- Academic misconduct (for example, cheating, plagiarism, altering records, assisting another student in academic misconduct).
- Instigation or encouragement of another person to violate the Code.
- Operating a pager or cell phone during school hours. Students may carry cell phones and pagers to and from school but they must be in the “OFF” or non-operational mode once in the school building.
- Two-way radios, (FCC Licensed or unlicensed) are NOT PERMITTED in the school or at any school function, except as authorized by the Principal. Two-way radios will be treated as contraband. Two-way radios are assigned to designated staff that serve in the capacity of Safety Officers.
- Inappropriate use of the Internet (for example, sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures; using obscene language; harassing, insulting or attacking others).
- Unacceptable computer use (for example, damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks; violating copyright laws; using another’s password; trespassing in another’s folders, work or files).

IV. Penalties for Infractions

Students who are found to have violated the WCCS Code of Conduct may be subject to the following penalties, either alone or in combination. Listed after each penalty are the persons authorized to impose the penalty and a brief description of the procedure.

Penalty Type	Persons authorized to impose the penalty	Brief description of the procedure
Oral Warning or Admonition	Any member of WCCS Staff	No required procedure.
Written Warning	Teachers, principal, assistant principal, hall and lunch monitors, teacher aides, coaches, guidance counselor	No required procedure.
Written Notification to Parent	Teachers, principal, assistant principal, hall and lunch monitors, teacher aides, coaches, guidance counselor	No required procedure.

Suspension from Athletic Participation	Coaches, Principal, Assistant Principal	Reasonable opportunity for informal conference to discuss conduct and penalty.
Suspension from Social or Extracurricular Activities	Activity Sponsor, Principal, Assistant Principal	Reasonable opportunity to discuss conduct and penalty.
Suspension of other Privileges	Principal	Reasonable opportunity for informal conference to discuss conduct and penalty.
Removal from Classroom [1-4 day(s) or class period(s)]	Teacher, Principal	When imposed by a teacher, student is entitled to an explanation of reason(s) for removal and opportunity to explain student's version of relevant events; parents have the right to meet with the principal to discuss reason(s) for the removal and give student's version of relevant events; principal to uphold removal unless charges not supported by substantial evidence, removal is in violation of law or principal determines suspension.
Short-Term (5 days or less) Suspension from School	Principal	Parents are notified by letter/ phone. Parents have the right to meet with the principal to give student's version of relevant events and question the principal about evidence against student.
Long Term (more than 5 days) Suspension from School	Principal	Parents are notified by letter and where possible, by phone. Formal hearing to question witnesses and to present witnesses and other evidence; the Principal's decision is issued after the hearing.
Permanent Suspension from School	Principal	Same as long-term suspension.

School Officials have the right to question students regarding any violations of school rules and/or illegal activity. If reasonable suspicion exists that a student possesses a weapon or is engaged in illegal activity or activity in violation of school rules, it is permissible to search the student and/or the student's locker and/or desk.

In determining the appropriate penalty for any act of misconduct, school personnel shall consider the student's age, the nature of the offense and the circumstances which led to the offense; the student's prior disciplinary record; the effectiveness of other forms of discipline; information from parents; teachers and/or others, as appropriate; other extenuating circumstances. In certain cases, the form of penalty may be imposed only for certain forms of misconduct (i.e. a teacher can remove a student only if the student is "disruptive" as defined in the Code of Conduct.)

For certain offenses, the Code of Conduct identifies a minimum period of suspension. In specific cases, the minimum period may be reduced or increased based upon the facts cited above. The minimum periods of suspension are as follows:

- Students who bring a weapon to school will be subject to a suspension from school for at least one calendar year.
- Violent students (as defined under the Code of Conduct) who commit acts other than bringing a weapon to school will be subject to a suspension from school for at least five school days.
- Students who are repeatedly substantially disruptive of the educational process or who repeatedly substantially interfere with the teacher's authority over the classroom (i.e., engage in such conduct on four or more occasions) will be subject to a suspension from school for at least five school days.

Alternate instruction will be provided to a student suspended from school and for any student removed from the classroom by his/her teacher.

Specific procedures for the discipline of students with disabilities are set forth in the Code of Conduct. These provisions have been developed in accordance with state and federal statutes and regulations and are available in the Main Office.

V. Parents and Visitors

Parents (as well as other visitors to the school) are subject to the same rules as students and other school personnel, as set forth above. All visitors to the school must report to the Main Office, sign in and secure a Visitor's Pass. This rule does not apply if the function is open to the public, such as an athletic competition or public gathering.

Parents (and other visitors) who violate any of the rules of the Code of Conduct may have their authorization to remain at school withdrawn. When warranted, they may be excluded from school property and/or school functions in the future.

Further Information

Staff members are instructed on the WCCS School Conduct and Discipline Policy through in-service training. A copy of the complete Code of Conduct is maintained in the Main Office. Questions about the Code of Conduct and its enforcement should be directed to the Principal.

Parents Right to Know about your Child's Teacher and Paraprofessional

As a parent, you have the right to know the qualifications of your child's teacher or paraprofessional. You may obtain information from the New York State Education Department (SED) at www.nysed.gov. You may also send an information request to the Main Office (Freedom of Information Office) to obtain information regarding whether the teacher is certified in the area in which they are teaching, whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status, whether the State qualification or certification requirements have been waived, the bachelor degree major of the teacher, graduate certification of the teacher, the field of discipline of the certification or degree, and whether the child is provided services of paraprofessional and, if so, their qualifications.

Title IX Public Notice

In compliance with Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972, Westminster provides equal access to all its educational programs and activities regardless of sex, race, color, national origin or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, extracurricular activities, or other school resources.

Section 504 Public Notice

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American Disabilities Act of 1990, Westminster does not discriminate on the basis of disability. No qualified student with a disability shall, on the basis of that disability, be denied access to any of the WCCS educational programs or activities. A full explanation of the Special Education services, including the Child Find and reporting requirements, is available in the Main Office.

Complaint/Grievance Procedure

Any individual or group may bring a complaint to the Board of Trustees of Westminster Community Charter School alleging a violation of the provisions of Article 56 of the Education Law, the school's charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the charter school. The complete Complaint/Grievance procedure is available in the Main Office.

Required Notifications

The Freedom of Information Act requires that certain documents be available for inspection. This law is intended to insure that schools meet all regulations and guidelines regarding reporting procedures and safety requirements.

- The annual audit was performed and is on file in the Administration Office.
- The annual fire inspections were performed in accordance with all existing New York State fire regulations.
- In accordance with the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Law (SAVE) and the Commissioner of Education regulations, WCCS has adopted a comprehensive plan that outlines specific actions and responses to any crisis or emergency. Copies of the Summary of the Emergency Response Plan and the complete Emergency Response Plan are on file in the Main Office.

Notification of Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Schools Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Schools Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day Westminster receives a request for access. Parents should submit to the principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents may ask Westminster to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the administration decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent, the parent will be notified of the decision and they will be advised of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by Westminster as an administrator, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; a person or company with whom Westminster has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Westminster to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Westminster may release "directory information" without consent as required by Section 99.3. This may include, but may not be limited to, information such as the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, photos/images, dates of attendance, and most recent educational institution attended. Parents wishing to prevent the release of such information about their child(ren) must submit a written request to the Main Office no later than October 1.

Student Privacy, Parental Access to Information

U.S. Department of Education-Funded Surveys

In compliance with the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), Westminster is committed to protecting the rights and privacy interests of parents/guardians and students with regard to surveys funded in whole or part by any program administered by the U. S. Department of Education (DOE).

Westminster shall make instructional materials available for inspection by parents/guardians if those materials will be used in conjunction with a DOE-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation in which their children participate. In addition, Westminster shall obtain prior written parental/guardian consent before minor students are required to participate in any DOE-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent/guardian;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
- Sex behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent/guardian; or
- Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Anti-Harassment Policy

Westminster Community Charter School is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from unlawful harassment or retaliation based on race, color, religion (creed), national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, and/or disability. Any unlawful harassment or retaliation of a student or employee by a member of the school community is a violation of this policy.

The administration will act to thoroughly and promptly investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of unlawful harassment based on race, color, religion (creed), national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, and /or disability. Westminster will discipline or take appropriate corrective action against any member of the school community who is found to have violated this policy.

If you encounter such actions, you should contact your teacher, guidance counselor or principal. A complete copy of this policy is in the Main Office.

Parent Involvement

The Westminster Community Charter School believes that parents play an integral role in the education of their children, and that parental involvement in the charter school is critical to our school's success.

To meet the educational and social needs of the students, to obtain feedback and direction from parents on how to best serve children, and to assist parents as they help their children be successful in school, the Westminster Community Charter School plans for and expects an active role for parents in the governance of the school. Specifically:

- At least one seat on the Westminster Community Charter School's Board of Trustees shall be filled by a parent of a student in the school (the Parent Association will select the parent to serve on the Board of Trustees);
- The charter school will establish a Parents Association, which shall consist of all parents of students enrolled in the school who wish to participate. The Parents Association will be involved in a variety of school activities, including fundraising events, field trips, and promotion of the charter school throughout the community. The Parents Association also will be involved in the governance of the school, selecting a delegate to work with and advise the Principal and Board of Trustees on policies and practices of the school, plans for providing information to parents, and strategies for arranging staff interaction with parents.
- At each regular meeting of the charter school's Board of Trustees, the parent representative shall be allotted a set amount of time to present any issue to the Board, if the Parents Association so desires.
- From time to time, as the Board of Trustees or Principal requests, the Parent Association will be asked to participate in or comprise advisory committees to study or implement a specific policy or action of the school. For example, committees may be formed to study and advise the Board on building expansion plans, budget issues, or school programs to help the Board determine how the charter school should best proceed.

Participation in the Parent Association is voluntary and open to all parents, and a parent need not formally belong to or participate in the Parent Association to participate at public meetings of the Westminster Community Charter School, serve on ad hoc committees, or meet with or make recommendations to the school's Board of Trustees or administration.

The charter school also recognizes that parents, in addition to students, are its customers. The charter school will effectively serve parents in numerous ways, including: providing comprehensive information on school policies and activities in a timely fashion through newsletters or other appropriate means; holding parent information meetings and/or workshops; and ensuring that regular, uninhibited communication occurs between parents and instructors of their children.

The children are our community's future! 