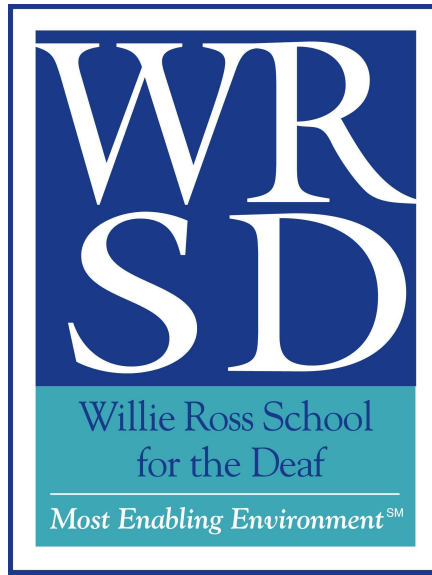




WILLIE ROSS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025 - 2026

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA
FOR UPDATED SCHOOL INFORMATION:**

<https://www.wrsdeaf.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/wrsd1967>

<https://www.instagram.com/wrsd1967/>

**32 Norway Street
Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01106-3198**

Voice: 413-567-0374

Video Phone: 413-798-4221

Fax: 413-567-8808

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To view ASL translations or to hear each section read aloud in English, scan each QR code with your smartphone.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



The parents and families of our students are our most valuable resources. The following guidebook is

intended to assist you in learning about the services and programs offered at Willie Ross School. Our goal is to be as responsive to you as possible. It is my hope that this guide book will assist us in achieving that important objective.

Willie Ross School for the Deaf offers a unique instructional model which will provide your child with the best possible program. Our small classes, individual attention, and our ability and commitment to getting to know each of our students, provides a unique array of opportunities to promote your child's development.

Willie Ross is your school, whether your child's program is at the Longmeadow Campus or one of the Partnership Campus sites within the East Longmeadow Public Schools. I hope you will find the pages that follow helpful. Please remember that you are welcome to contact me at any time at 413-567-0374, or by email at bcarter@wrsdeaf.org.

I'd also like to let you know that we have a website and Facebook page that I encourage you to take a look at: www.wrsdeaf.org; <https://www.facebook.com/wrsd1967>. They contain up-to-date information and announcements from the school.

Robert (Bert) Carter
President & CEO
Willie Ross School for the Deaf



We at Willie Ross School for the Deaf believe in a world in which all people who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing have every opportunity to experience full and productive lives.



Our school provides deaf and hard of hearing students access to comprehensive, evidence-based education and support services in the classroom and in the greater community. We strive for excellence and innovation. We work to maximize each individual's intellectual, social and emotional growth.

WRSD is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate in the employment, training, promotion, transfer, or compensation of personnel on the grounds of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or disability, as provided by law.

COMMUNICATION PHILOSOPHY



WRSD acknowledges and embraces the right of its students and staff to have full and ongoing access to language and communication, both incidental and planned. Optimal access to all communication, utilizing a Total Communication approach, is vital to our students' academic and social development.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



1. WRSD is a diverse, multicultural, and inclusive school where students and staff are expected to contribute to a safe and supportive environment by keeping the school free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying.
2. Students will apply their knowledge, experiences, and connections in order to succeed in life.
3. Individual Education Plan requirements for language, communication, and speech will be met through each student's primary mode of communication as determined by the team in conjunction with the family.
4. Students are expected to become involved with the world through hands-on learning and interactions with the community.

CONTACTING STAFF MEMBERS



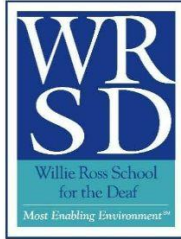
You are welcome to call the school at: (413) 567-0374 OR VP 413-798-4221 to speak with:

Erika Kaftan	Education Director	ekaftan@wrsdeaf.org
Heather Robinson	Assistant Director, Student Life	hrobinson@wrsdeaf.org
Amy Platt	Assistant Director, Early Learning & Student Support	aplatt@wrsdeaf.org
Becka Mitchell	Coordinator of Student & Admin Services	bmitchell@wrsdeaf.org
Joel Skelton	Coordinator of Community Engagement	jskelton@wrsdeaf.org
Alyssa Kristek	Director of Operations	akristek@wrsdeaf.org
Bert Carter	President & CEO	bcarter@wrsdeaf.org

Please remember that teachers and assistants are in their classrooms during the school day and are not always available to receive telephone calls. We will gladly take a message and deliver it to the appropriate person. They can also always be emailed using their first initial and last name @wrsdeaf.org. For example, John Smith would be jsmith@wrsdeaf.org.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

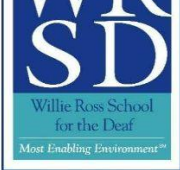
edited 4/14/2025



2025 - 2026 Willie Ross School for the Deaf

THIS CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO CHANGES

Final

 Willie Ross School for the Deaf Most Enabling Environment™		JULY							AUGUST									
		S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S	S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S			
				1	2	3	4	5						1	2	22	New Staff Orientation	
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	25	Convocation	
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	26	Professional Development	
		20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	27	Students first day of school	
		27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
																3		
		SEPTEMBER							OCTOBER									
		S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S	S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S			
1	Labor Day		1	2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3	4			
		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			
		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	13	Indigenous People's Day	
24	1/2 day Professional Development	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	23	1/2 day Professional Development	
		28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31				
21																	22	
		NOVEMBER							DECEMBER									
		S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S	S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S			
								1			1	2	3	4	5	6	3	1/2 day Professional Development
4	Full day Professional Development	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
11	Veteran's Day	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
26	1/2 Day of School	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	23	1/2 day of school	
27 & 28	No School - Thanksgiving	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31				24-31	Holiday Break	
16		30															17	
		JANUARY							FEBRUARY									
1-2	Holiday Break	S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S	S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S			
1	New Year's Day					1	2	3										
		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	8	9	10	11	12	13	14			
19	MLK Day - no school	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	16-20	Winter Break	
28	Full day Professional Development	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	22	23	24	25	26	27	28			15
18																		
		MARCH							APRIL									
		S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S	S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S			
													1	2	3	4	3	Good Friday - no school
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			
		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
18	1/2 day Professional Development	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	20-24	Spring Break	
		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	26	27	28	29	30					
22		29	30	31													16	
		MAY							JUNE									
		S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S	S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S			
							1	2			1	2	3	4	5	6		
7	1/2 day Professional Development	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	12	Last day of school for students 1/2 day	
		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	19	Juneteenth - no school	
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	22	Last day of school for students +5	
25	Memorial Day	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30							
20		31															10	

Please Note: This calendar may be changed - please check our website for updates: www.wrsdeaf.org

School Hours		
Longmeadow Campus	Regular hours	Early Release
(LC) Founders Classroom Building	8:15 - 2:45	11:45
Partnership Sites		
(BPU) Bay Path University	8:00 - 2:30	11:30
(MV) Mountain View Elementary School	8:10 - 2:30	11:30
(BP) Birchland Park Middle School	7:30 - 2:00	11:05
(ELHS) East Longmeadow High School	7:25 - 1:45	10:50

Red	No School for Students
Yellow	First & Last Days of School for Students
Blue	Professional Development
	Half Day of School for Students
Look for us on:	
Website:	https://www.wrsdeaf.org/ IG https://www.instagram.com/wrsd1967/
Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/wrsd1967



ADMISSIONS AND PLACEMENT POLICY

Willie Ross School for the Deaf has an eligibility criterion for admission. Upon referral by the sending district, the intake team will review the referral. The chair of the intake team will then reach out to the family to set up an intake meeting and tour. This meeting does not guarantee acceptance of the student. The intake team includes the Education Director, Assistant Director of Student Life, a teacher, Speech and Language Pathologist, Audiologist, and Counselor.

Minimum requirements for enrollment are as follows:

- Referral from student's sending district
 - While we are located in Massachusetts, we are able to accept referrals from surrounding states.
- Student is between the ages of 3 and 21 years old
- Updated immunization records and a recent physical
- An Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Current audiogram that documents hearing loss or a special education evaluation/documenting medical necessity that recommends placement at a school for communication needs
- Benefits from placement at a specialized school

Willie Ross School for the Deaf is a day school and does not accommodate residential needs. Admission to the school is at no cost to the parents. The sending district assumes fiscal responsibility for placement and transportation.

Should a student be accepted, the placement will be as follows:

- If the student is between the ages of 3 and 5, they will be placed in our preschool program. Students in kindergarten through 1st grade, the student will be placed at the Longmeadow Campus in the appropriate classroom (either Preschool or Elementary 1.)
- If the student is in 2nd grade through 12th grade, the team (including the sending district and parents) will determine if placement is more appropriate at the Longmeadow Campus or at a partnership site in East Longmeadow.

The team may require an Extended Eligibility Evaluation in which they work with the student for 6-8 weeks and then reconvene to determine whether the student is in an appropriate placement and/or needs a new IEP written by the team at Willie Ross School for the Deaf with input from the parents and sending district.

To ask more questions or to learn more about WRSD, please contact WRSD at 413-567-0374 voice or 413-798-4221 videophone.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT

At Willie Ross School for the Deaf (WRSD) we recognize that a student can achieve more when parents are actively involved in the educational process. With this in mind, WRSD provides many opportunities for parent(s)/guardian(s) to become involved including: open houses, parent-teacher conferences (at least 2 per year), invitations to school plays and shows, volunteer opportunities, free sign language classes, counselor home visits, and Parent Advisory Group meetings. We welcome parents to visit but require notification to ensure there are no testing conflicts and to keep the visits unobtrusive.



PARENT/GUARDIAN ADVISORY GROUP (PAG)

WRSD works to maintain an active Parent Advisory Group. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) that have expressed interest in joining receive written invitations to attend meetings which are held at least two times each year. Erika Kaftan and Heather Robinson are WRSD's designated representatives although other staff members are welcome to attend as well. It is through this group that parents can most easily raise concerns and make recommendations regarding the education, health, and safety of our students.

If you are interested in being a part of the PAG please feel free to contact Erika Kaftan, Education Director at ekaftan@wrsdeaf.org or Heather Robinson, Assistant Director, Student Life at hrobinson@wrsdeaf.org. Please feel free to contact the school by video phone (VP) 413-798-4221 or our main office at 413-567-0374.



PARENT/GUARDIAN SCHOOL COLLABORATION (PSC)

For those parents who would like to be active with the school and their students but not in an advisory capacity, we have created a Parent School Collaboration group that will focus on engagement and activities for their children. Please look for flyers in your student's backpack, emails, and announcements sent in our monthly newsletter about upcoming events.

TRANSLATION



Please note that there are times when we utilize third party services for translation of documents and correspondence. We will not use your student's name in any of these third party exchanges.

Written Translation: Willie Ross will provide written translation service for all important documents such as school policies, permission slips, and other essential communication documents.

Verbal Translation: Willie Ross will provide verbal translation services, as needed, during parent-teacher conferences, individual student meetings, and any other significant school events where accessible communication is crucial.

Visual Translation: Willie Ross will provide certified American Sign Language Interpreters with all necessary and vital information. For documents, the ASL interpreter will then create a video in American Sign Language, with voice over. Appointed staff will convert video to an accessible QR code for families that would like to view a signed version of the written information that is displayed in the document.

Confidentiality: All translation requests and all communications will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and remain in compliance with the applicable privacy laws. All interpreters/translators hired by Willie Ross will adhere to a code of ethics and uphold confidentiality at all times.



CURRICULUM

At WRSD, curriculum is reviewed informally on a regular basis but formally every 6-8 years to ensure ongoing alignment with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. WRSD's curriculum matches the needs of our students and is open to adding new materials at any point during the teaching process. The curriculum is vertically and horizontally aligned to address our students' knowledge and skills in each subject across all grades. In addition, we promote a hands-on approach to learning including providing experiences that promote students' thinking and problem solving skills. The curriculum is taught based on an individual's needs whether that be whole group, small group, or 1:1 instruction. The full curriculum guide is found on the school website:

<https://www.wrsdeaf.org/wrsd-curriculum-guide>

HOMework



Establish a set time and place for doing homework. Check your child's homework when they have completed it. For Middle & High School students, ask them if they want you to check their homework.

Early Childhood	Parents are encouraged to read to their children daily.
Primary	Homework assigned would not be more than ½ hour per day. Parents are encouraged to read to their children daily.
Elementary	Homework assigned could be up to one hour.
Middle	Homework assigned could be up to 1½ hours.
High School	Homework assigned could be up to two hours.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS, MCAS TESTING, COMPETENCY DETERMINATION, AND GRADING POLICY



Beginning at grade 3, students will take the appropriate MCAS. Students will be expected to take the standard MCAS test with appropriate accommodations, unless the IEP team has determined that an alternate assessment is more appropriate. All students who routinely take paper-and-pencil tests will be expected to take the standard MCAS with accommodations.

Previously, the state had required that the high school English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science MCAS tests be passed for graduation. That requirement was removed in November 2024. However, the following competency determination requirements must be satisfactorily met in order to graduate with a diploma:

- The student must successfully complete, in accordance with our grading policy, a final assessment for a course or a capstone or portfolio project.
- Full credit in two years of English Language Arts courses taken between grades 9-12.
- The equivalent of one year of both Algebra I and Geometry courses or the equivalent of one year of both Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II. (If the Algebra I or Geometry course is taken at the middle school level, that may meet this requirement.)
- Full credit in one year of the following science courses: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, or Technology/Engineering taken between grades 9-12.
- Beginning with the graduating class of 2027, full credit in a one-year United States History course taken between grades 9-12.

In limited circumstances where WRSD or the sending district are unable to document a student's prior coursework, state regulations allow for the student to earn the competency determination by:

- Attaining a qualifying score of at least “Meeting Expectations” or “Exceeding Expectations” achievement levels on the relevant high school MCAS assessment; or
- Meeting the standard for a substituted equivalent that WRSD and the sending district certifies satisfies the same academic standards.

The other requirements for receiving a Diploma are as follows:

The student must pass:

4 courses of English (4 credits each)
 4 courses of Math (4 credits each)
 4 courses of Science including Health (4 credits each)
 3 courses of Social Studies including Civics (4 credits each)
 4 courses of Physical Education (East Longmeadow students) (4 credits each)
 4 courses of Physical Education (Longmeadow students) (4 credits each)
 4 courses of Electives, including a Fine Arts class (such as Art,) a Practical Arts class (such as Culinary or Technology), Career Readiness (Longmeadow Campus students), Life Skills, Junior Exploratory Class, and Senior Seminar

- East Longmeadow students - Fine Arts/Practical Arts = 4 credits each
- Longmeadow students - Fine Arts/Practical Arts = 3 credits each
- Life Skills (both campus students) = 2 credits each
- Junior Exploratory Class (both campus students) = 2 credits
- Senior Seminar (both campus students) = 2 credits
- Career Readiness (Longmeadow students only) = 2 credits
- Work Study = 1 credit the first year, 2 credits the second year, 3 credits the third year, 4 credits the fourth year
- RFL / WIN = 1 credit
- Project Based Learning (PBL) = 2 or 4 credits

4 years of American Sign Language

- The full 4 year requirement begins with the Class of 2026.
- 1 credit per year / 1 day a week course
- The Language Skill Hierarchy Frameworks will be used for assessments. The ASL Specialist will be responsible for measuring a student's ASL skills. Fluency is not required for graduation but progression and effort should be observed in order to obtain passing grades.
- If a student/family does not want to participate, they must "test out" as evidenced by the completion of the Language Skills Hierarchy Frameworks. If the student does not test out and does not participate in classes, the student will receive zeroes for the class.

40 hours of Community Service
 Completion of Civics Project

112 credits are required for graduation.

Students who are admitted to WRSD at age 19 or older, who do not have sufficient transfer credits will be eligible for a Certificate of Attendance.

If a student cannot pass the MCAS examinations nor can they satisfy all other competency determination requirements, they are eligible for a Certificate of Attendance.

*Please note that unpaid library book fines will result in not receiving a diploma or certificate until the fines are paid.

Our grading policy is as follows:

Preschool through Elementary III students do not receive letter grades on their report cards. Instead, they receive a standards based report card that shows their level of mastery in various skills. Middle school and high school students receive letter grades on their report cards unless they qualify for a standards based report card based on their learning needs.

Letter grades are as follows:

Grade	GPA/Credit Value	Percentage
A	4.0	93.5-100%
A-	3.667	89.5-93.4%
B+	3.33	86.5-89.4%
B	3	82.5-86.4%
B-	2.667	79.5-82.4%
C+	2.33	76.5-79.4%
C	2	72.5-76.4%
C-	1.667	69.5-72.4%
D+	1.33	66.5-69.4%
D	1	62.5-66.4%
D-	0.667	59.5-62.4%
E	0	0-59.8%

I	0	0
NG	0	0
P	0	0
F	0	0

Each teacher will determine what the weights are for each category (i.e. homework, participation, tests, etc.) in their classes. This will be announced at the beginning of each course along with their policies on late or missing work.



WRSD TRANSITION SERVICES

Transition Overview:

As mandated by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process, transition planning starts for all students at WRSD at age 14. Our transition coordinator meets with the student to ask about their vision for their future and creates a transition plan for the student. This plan is reviewed at the IEP meeting with the team and updated annually. Educational planning and course selection is guided in part by the transition plan.

Our transition coordinator also helps to ensure that the student is making progress towards their future goals, whether that be academic goals, vocational goals, or independent living goals by working with the student and their family closely. The transition coordinator will also bring in appropriate agencies to support the students.

Academic Goals:

Our transition coordinator helps students prepare for graduation by helping them monitor their coursework and grades. They will discuss graduation requirements and help students set goals. The transition coordinator also helps students prepare for college or training programs by helping coordinate campus visits, prepare for entry exams, applications, and essays. They work closely with families to help them navigate the post-secondary education process. They also assist students with finding financing for college through financial aid, grants, scholarships and awards.

Vocational Goals:

WRSD has a school to career coordinator who provides our work study program. Working closely with the transition coordinator, the school to career coordinator develops and instructs career readiness classes and life skills classes. In addition to coursework, the work study program also provides students with opportunities to develop job skills through work experiences. Students in the work study program spend a part of their school day working in various environments learning essential work

behavior skills. Each year in high school, the student's participation in work study experiences increases in complexity and length.

Independent Living Goals:

Our transition coordinator also works with students and their families to make the important connections that will assist their transition to adulthood. Students are referred to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (or another agency as appropriate such as the Department of Developmental Services) and meetings are coordinated with a counselor. These counselors work with our transition coordinator to help students transition to college and career. Before graduation and typically in their last months of school, students begin transitioning to postsecondary programs provided in our area.

As part of our life skills classes, students learn how to access services and learn more about their rights as a Deaf adult. Students learn how to request interpreters, request accommodations and assistance. Through field trips and presentations from professionals, students learn how to navigate independently as a Deaf adult.

Curriculum used:

We have access to various curricula: *Attainment's Pre-ETS Pre-Employment Transition Solutions*, which covers Jobs and Career Exploration, Work-Based Learning, Workplace Readiness, Self-Advocacy, and Post-Secondary Training. We also use *Brigance Transition Skills Inventory and Activities*, which covers Academic Skills, Post Secondary Opportunities, Independent Living, Community Participation and Self Assessments. We also use assessments such as the *Transition Planning Inventory - 2nd Edition*, *Transition to Work Inventory - 2nd Edition*, and *Career and Life Explorer - 3rd Edition*, various hands-on pre-vocational kits (culinary, manufacturing, sorting, assembly, sewing, filing, data collection, and basic payroll/bookkeeping). In addition, we also teach indoor/outdoor survival signs and help students prepare for the written learner's permit test as appropriate.



SCHOOL TO CAREER PROGRAM

Internships and work-study opportunities exist for our high school students in order that they may gain actual hands-on direct experience in the workplace. These internships go from the pre-vocational level through more advanced opportunities, which are appropriate to their interests and abilities. The program is staffed by the school to career coordinator who will provide support to the students throughout their time in the program, both in the classroom and during their placements.



SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

All Willie Ross classroom teachers are either Teachers of the Deaf or Special Education Teachers. All teachers are fluent in American Sign Language regardless of their license.

We provide services in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that comes to the school with the student. The IEP is in effect for 364 calendar days with a new plan developed annually by the team. The student can start receiving services as early as 3 years of age until the day before they turn 22.

The IEP team consists of the parent/guardian(s), the student when appropriate, district representative, WRSD administrator, classroom teacher, counselor, audiologist, speech/language therapist, and any other therapists required by the IEP. The IEP lists the student's disability(ies) and the services required to address the student's needs.

Services include:

- Direct teaching services
- Interpreting services
- Speech and Language services
 - English grammar
 - Articulation
 - Listening
 - American Sign Language vocabulary and grammar
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Adaptive Physical Education
- 1:1 paraprofessional support
- Counseling
- Assistive technology
- Teacher of the Visually Impaired services
- Summer programming
- Consultation

At each annual team meeting, services will be reviewed and ensured that the student is receiving the right amount of services. During three year evaluations, specific services may be found to no longer be necessary and with the team's approval, be removed from the IEP. In addition, while WRSD is a least restrictive environment for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students due to being able to provide the least amount of language and communication barriers, placement will be reviewed annually to ensure the school is an appropriate fit for the students. In the case it is not, a plan will be developed with the ETL of the student's sending district to find a more appropriate fit for the student.

If a parent or a school professional requests an evaluation, parent consent must be received in writing for an evaluation to occur. Once the signed consent is received, the team has 30 school days to do the evaluation and 45 days to schedule and hold a meeting to discuss the evaluation results. If the evaluation results show that a student needs additional (or to reduce or to remove) services, the team will make the determination at the meeting and write either a new IEP or an amendment to update services.

In the student's IEP, it is determined whether the student has a cognitive impairment or language delay that necessitates state-required alternative assessments.

If WRSD cannot provide the appropriate services needed for a student, a team meeting will be called to determine the next steps.

Progress reports will be disseminated four times a year to show the student's progress towards each goal on their IEP.



PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

Students who have been identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and referred by a public school system receive intensive language, reading and sign language instruction, often in a 1:1 or small group setting. Students of all different language backgrounds are welcome to the school. Since the majority of deaf students have limited English skills, Willie Ross School for the Deaf teachers are well trained to use appropriate instructional materials and methodology to help LEP students develop English Language Skills. Students generally develop a manual communication system first, and this is then used as the basis for spoken English (if possible & appropriate) and written English.

Sign Language vocabulary for math, science, and social studies enables students to understand concepts in these subject areas as they develop written English skills. All students have equal opportunities to participate in all academic and extracurricular activities.

Willie Ross School for the Deaf addresses the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) as follows: All of our students are considered ELL due to their hearing losses. Teachers address the language needs of all students on a daily basis as part of their ELA instruction.



STUDENT IN GOOD STANDING POLICY

We expect our students to model responsible and appropriate behaviors. Students who come to school on time and are respectful of their classmates and staff members are considered "students in good standing." In addition, students must be receiving good grades and/or showing their best effort in school. Students on a diploma track must be receiving a D+ and above in all subjects.

Students who consistently violate our attendance policies, academic expectations, and/or behavioral expectations may lose their "student in good standing" status. Any student who has incident reports

exhibiting unsafe behavior, disrespect, physical aggression, or eloping will lose eligibility from athletics and/or extracurricular activities for at least one week. Parents will be notified immediately.

Prior to the next planned activity, the student will then meet with an administrator to determine if the student should regain their eligibility. A plan will be put into place at that point to outline how that student can remain eligible moving forward and this plan will be communicated with all the staff involved and the student's parents. However, the meeting does not guarantee that eligibility will be restored at that point. Participation in athletic and extracurricular programs is a privilege, not a right. Students who participate in our athletic and extracurricular programs are representatives of our school and should model the values and expectations of WRSD.



AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Our after school program is designed to promote our students' social behavior and to give them enrichment opportunities. The goal is to provide each group with one activity a month throughout the year but specific activities may meet regularly such as Dance Club, Jr. NAD, and sports. To ensure that all the students have a safe and enjoyable time, it is important to continue with the following guidelines.

If a student acts inappropriately:

- engages in unsafe behavior,
- is disrespectful to staff or other students,
- is physically aggressive,
- leaves the group without permission

They will lose the privilege of attending the next after school activity. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the student's behavior the day of the event. This is in accordance with our Student in Good Standing policy.

It should also be noted that inappropriate behavior at school could result in your child not being allowed to attend the program. It is a **privilege** to be able to attend the After-School program.

Permission slips for after school activities are due 2 days before the scheduled event to allow us time to finalize details. Please be aware that late permission will not be accepted.

Recurring activities (ex. Yearbook Club)

These activities are a commitment and attendance is important. We are teaching students responsibility and following through with commitments. A student with more than 2 unexcused absences from these activities will no longer be allowed to participate in the activity.

As stated in our handbook, excused absences include:

- Student illness (Note: to be deemed excused, an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence length).
- Student's observance of a religious holiday.
- Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.
- Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required).

Guidelines for picking up your child:

Children should be picked up in the bus loop at the front of the school on time.

If your child is not picked up by the time indicated on the permission slip, you will receive a gentle reminder for the first incident. If this occurs again, you will be notified and your child will lose the privilege of attending the next activity. *Our time is just as valuable as yours so please be respectful and pick your child up on time.*

We are looking to provide a safe and inviting environment for all our students and adhering to these rules will help us accomplish this.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Heather Robinson, Assistant Director, Student Life, at 413-567-0374 or by email: hrobinson@wrsdeaf.org



FIELD TRIP POLICY

When permission forms for field trips or after-school-hour activities are sent home, the forms must be completed, signed and returned by the given date to the school for our files. **Verbal permission WILL NOT be accepted.**

On all permission forms, regarding field trips during school hours, there will be a reminder that, if for any reason you do not want your child to attend, a teacher will be at school, and classes will proceed as scheduled.



ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Please call the school at (413) 567-0374 or VP (413) 798-4221 whenever your child will not attend school. You can leave a message in the general box on our voicemail if you call before 7:30 a.m. You will be called in the morning to verify your child's absence if the school has not been notified earlier.

If **your child** is being dismissed early for any reason, the Willie Ross School safety policy is as follows:

- **No student will be dismissed** to anyone other than the person(s) designated by the student's parent or guardian and whose names are on file in the Cooley Administration Building on the Longmeadow Campus.
- **No student will be dismissed** without a phone call/text, paper note, or an email from the parent/guardian confirming their dismissal.
- No student may sign themselves out. The person picking up the student must come into the building to sign them out.

Should you, as parent or guardian, wish to add to or change the list of designated people on file, you must contact the Willie Ross School main office on the Longmeadow Campus. The first time the new person is to pick up your child, **they will be required to present a current driver's license** which positively identifies them as your designee. No student will be dismissed to anyone until positive identification is made.

It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that we have, on file, a functioning home, work and emergency contact phone number **at all times**. If you are unable to be reached during an emergency by the phone numbers provided, 911 will be called, your child will be transported to the hospital, and the police will be notified and told that we were unable to reach you.

The safety of our students is of utmost concern to WRSD. Practices such as those mentioned are, and will continue to be, followed diligently to insure an environment that is secure for your children.



DROP OFF POLICY

If you drive your child into school at the Longmeadow Campus, please abide by the following policy: When dropping off, please make sure that you arrive here between 8:00 - 8:15. If you arrive later than 8:15 you will need to park in the Administration parking lot and sign your child in regardless of their age and wait with them until it is time for them to go over to the classroom building. If you arrive during the appropriate drop-off time then please pull your car up in line with the buses. Do not get out of your vehicle. A staff member will assist you in getting your child out of the car.

This is for your safety as well as the safety of your child/children.

When you are picking up your child, please make sure that you arrive between 2:40 – 2:45. If you arrive earlier than 2:40 please pull up in the bus line, in front of the school, and wait in your car for your child to be brought to you. Please do not park your car in the driveway and get out to speak to staff. If you feel that you need to do that, then please park in the Administration parking lot, sign in, get

your child and then you may go and speak to a teacher, if they are available.

Please adhere to these procedures or you will be asked to park and walk your child in daily. These procedures are set in place for the safety of the children, the staff, and you.



ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Regular attendance is expected at school each day.
- Parents/guardians are expected to **CALL** the school at (413) 567-0374 or VP (413) 798-4221 or text (413) 348-6689 each morning a student will be absent.
- Students are expected to be in attendance during the school day for at least half the day in order to participate in after-hours school sponsored activities.



ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

- A student will be present in class each day.
- All absences will be counted. Whether an absence is excused depends on the circumstances and documentation.
 - Excused absences include:
 - Student illness (Note: to be deemed excused, an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence length).
 - Student's observance of a religious holiday
 - Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family
 - Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required).
 - Extraordinary educational opportunities

***Please note that we will allow up to one week after the absences to receive documentation to excuse a student's absence.

- Missing 10% of days enrolled is considered chronically absent.
- If a student is absent more than eight (8) times or tardy more than ten (10) times in a semester, we will send a letter both to parents/guardians and the student's sending district. If absences are still higher than normal, a parent/guardian conference will be scheduled with either the Education Director or the Assistant Director, Student Life and the sending district may be invited to join.
- After nine (9) absences in a semester, the tenth (10) and each subsequent absence follow a stringent and specific set of reasons for the absence to qualify as excused as agreed upon by

the Education/Assistant Director, Student Life, parent/guardian, and possibly the sending district.

- After the tenth day of absences without extenuating circumstances or a pattern of excessive absences, WRSD will notify the student's sending town unless the town's contract requests sooner notification.
- If a student reaches thirteen (13) days of consecutive absences without extenuating circumstances, a referral may be made to DCF or the MA Court of Law to assist families/guardians with attendance.
- Absences cause students to miss instruction and curriculum. Excessive tardiness and absences could result in grade retention and loss of credits.
 - For High School students, 18 absences in a year will likely result in grade retention.
 - If a High School student is tardy to class, these will be counted. Three (3) will equal one (1) absence.
 - For Middle School and High School, more than twelve (12) absences will result "incomplete" for their grade as well as possible grade retention.
 - If credit is lost, WRSD will notify the student's residential town.

Please remember to follow our policy about calling in absences. It is our goal here at WRSD to help your child achieve success; with good attendance and support from our families, we can achieve that goal. We are all here to support your child's academic progress in any way we can. If you have any questions, please call your child's counselor or director at 413-567-0374.



STUDENT BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROGRAM

Breakfast will be provided for ALL students through each Program site.

Breakfast will be provided for ALL students through Springfield Public Schools. The Springfield Public Schools system has generously offered to supply ALL of our students a healthy and nutritious breakfast. All families with children are NOT required to fill out a free/reduced lunch application form for breakfast food.

The students at our East Longmeadow sites will receive free lunch through East Longmeadow Public Schools. However, they may still need to complete the applications at East Longmeadow's request. All other students will receive a free lunch through Springfield Public Schools and are not required to fill out a free/reduced lunch application form for lunch food.

For safety reasons, students may not share lunches. Please discuss healthy food choices with your child.

At this time, we have students and staff with **severe food allergies. Absolutely no tree nuts, coconut, peanuts, and fish are to be brought into school.** Any food that is brought into school needs to be in its original packaging that lists the ingredients. If you have any further questions please contact our school nurse at wrnurse@wrsdeaf.org or 413-567-0374.



STUDENT SUPERVISION

To ensure the well-being and safety of our students, Willie Ross mandates that students must be under supervision at all times, both on and off campus. The goal of this policy is to ensure the security of our students.

On-Campus supervision: Students must remain under the supervisor of designated faculty members, staff, and all other authorized employees while on school property. This includes classrooms, bathrooms (based on age/individual need of student), library, and any other common areas.

Off Campus supervision: Willie Ross Students will be supervised by designated faculty members, staff, or other authorized staff, whenever they are participating in school-sanctioned events, field trips, and activities off school premises.

Arrival and departure: Students will remain under supervision during their arrival and departure from school. This includes ensuring a safe transition to and from their mode of transportation.

After-School activities: Students whom participate in our after-school program must remain under the supervision of the assigned staff until parent, guardian, or any other mode of transportation that has been approved by the town, picks them up.



STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

This policy is to ensure the safety of transportation to and from school-sponsored events. Willie Ross School for the Deaf is committed to providing a secure and safe transportation environment. Students will always have permission from a parent/guardian prior to being transported in a WRSD van.

Approved staff drivers with a current driver's license have taken a driving test with an administrator who ensures they follow all driving laws. Failure to follow driving laws will result in loss of privilege to operate WRSD vehicles and parents/guardians will be notified.

Students will be placed in car seats depending on their weight, age and height. Staff will follow all guidelines pertaining to car seat safety. Staff will ensure that all students who require a car seat or booster seat have one and are properly secured prior to leaving campus.



STUDENT FILES

The main student files are kept in the Cooley Administration Building in the locked supply closet. The Coordinator of Student and Administrative Services oversees the student files. If you wish to gain access to them please contact the Coordinator of Student and Administrative Services directly.

Each student's file contains copies of their current educational program as well as relevant information from all of the disciplines involved in the student's program, including results of outside evaluations.

Medical, emergency and release forms are also contained in each file.

All reports and forms which are contained in the student records are to be placed there by the Coordinator of Student and Administrative Services or their designee not the providers. Reports will not be placed in the student's records until they have been reviewed at a team meeting.

Any material to be released must be processed through the Coordinator of Student and Administrative Services.

Any information not in the file is not considered part of the student's record. Staff members are expected to read these files at any time as often as needed. The student files can only be taken from the Administration Building by an administrator or assigned staff person.

NOTICE OF DESTRUCTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS: Parents, guardians, and former students are hereby notified that all special education records within the possession of Willie Ross School for the Deaf will be destroyed, pursuant to 603 CMR 23.06, 7 years from the date when the student is no longer eligible for special education, graduates, moves or transfers to another district or completes their educational program at age 22. Eligible students, parents, or guardians may receive the student's records prior to the destruction date by submitting a written request to the Coordinator of Student and Administrative Services.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL



A Willie Ross School for the Deaf Social Worker is assigned to each class for weekly group sessions. Topics are based on age and developmental levels of the students. Individual counseling is available to all students on an as needed basis or on a regular weekly basis with parental permission.

Staff monitor and support students' growth and development through classroom activities and through curriculum. Written permission will be obtained from the parent/guardian before any discussions occur regarding sex education with your child.



SUICIDAL THREATS

If a student makes a threat that appears suicidal in nature, the staff person will immediately notify an administrator and the student's counselor. The counselor will complete a checklist that includes contacting the parent/guardian. Some instances may require a safety plan or other interventions before the student returns to the classroom. If you have any concerns at any time, please reach out to your child's counselor.



SAFETY PLANS

A safety plan is a comprehensive plan of action to be used in order to keep students safe at school. The plan involves three components: 1) the actions school staff will engage in, 2) the actions the student will engage in, and 3) the actions the parents or guardians will engage in. The plan has a definite start and the end date will be determined by the administration and the team. This plan is meant to cover the entire school day, from the time a student arrives to school until they are dismissed for the day.

It would be appropriate to complete a safety plan in the following situations:

- The student is potentially harmful to themselves or others.
- The student returns to school from a long-term placement with high levels of support (e.g., hospitalization, psychiatric emergency services, suspension, etc.).
- The student requires ongoing support for a variety of reasons.
- After completion of a risk assessment, if applicable.
- Upon recommendation from a psychologist or administrator.

A safety plan should be completed by the student's team. It is also recommended that the student and their parent's input be considered during development of the plan. Once the plan has been developed by the team, the director or their designee will share the plan with appropriate staff members.

It is the intent of this plan that it be carried out in a way which is minimally intrusive, yet effective in maintaining safety. School layout, passing times, grade levels and configurations and availability of staff may impact the plan. It may be necessary to adapt the plan to the school building. For example, if

there are locations which are known to be particularly dangerous for the student, those areas need to be identified and monitored.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

In case of a **behavioral health/incident related to mental health issues during the school day**, school staff will immediately:

- contact the student's school counselor and education/assistant directors
- offer to escort the student to the counselor's office or notify the school counselor if the student is unable or refusing to move.

The school's behavioral health response will proceed as follows:

- The school counselor will assess the condition of the student to determine the category of behavioral need
 - i. *Life-threatening Situation (**Emergent**)*: There are certain behavioral health conditions that can cause death or harm to self and others. This may require immediate intervention, medical care, and, usually, hospitalization. A behavioral emergency is defined as a situation in which a person presents as being at imminent risk of behaving in a way that could result in serious harm or death to self or others. Examples of this category include signs of self-injury, suicidal or irrational thoughts, and increased agitation demonstrated as verbal or physical threats.
 - ii. *Serious or in need of immediate crisis intervention (**Urgent**)*: Signs might include inability to perform daily tasks, rapid changes in personality, mood, or behavior, signs of alcohol or substance use, history of suicide attempts or other self-harming behaviors, or significant withdrawal from friends, family members, or enjoyed activities.
 - iii. *Non-life-threatening behavioral health need (**Routine**)*: These are defined as any behavioral needs that may affect the general health of a person (e.g., mild or moderate feelings of anxiety, irritability, frustration, sadness, anger, etc.). The school counselor will talk with the person and discuss with the parent/guardian recommendations for further treatment, communicate with community providers, and make any necessary referrals.

The school counselor or administrator may consider calling the Behavioral Health Help Line (BHHL) 833-773-2445 for additional support coordinating services.

Behavioral Incident	ROUTINE	URGENT	EMERGENT
Criteria	When the person manifests an adequate pre-morbid level of functioning with adequate social/family supports and resources, and when the person demonstrates only mild impairment in judgment, functioning, and impulse control.	The person may be distressed, or multiple risk factors are present, but there is no current potential danger of harm to self or others. The person indicates a plan and ideation to harm self or others, but no apparent means or intent are present, and protective factors are sufficient to not warrant a higher risk rating. The person indicates intoxication or mild withdrawal symptoms.	Failure to obtain immediate care would place the person's life, another's life, or property in jeopardy, or cause serious impairment of bodily functions. If the person is determined to be at imminent risk, the school counselor will initiate the outreach to active rescue and request community dispatch and safety assessment.
Response	Referral to community-based services, including outpatient and population specific services	Connecting to local Community Based Health Center or Behavioral Health Urgent Care	Deployment of Mobile Crisis Intervention/Youth Mobile Crisis Intervention Or 911

The BHHL can support the school counselor or others with the assessment and response to behavioral incidents as follows:

When in a **life-threatening situation**, the school counselor will notify administration and the administration, with the nurse if available, will:

- call 911 using the dedicated emergency phone line and provide the location of the person.
- direct designated school personnel to remain stationed at the specific location on campus where the behavioral incident occurred and greet emergency responders upon arrival, providing updates on the situation.

- call for a shelter in place while emergency services are on the premises.
- determine who will notify the parent/guardian of the student and inform them that the person is experiencing a behavioral health emergency and is being transported to a medical facility.

When a student is in **need of immediate crisis intervention**, the school counselor will notify education/assistant director and they together then will:

- call their local Community Behavioral Health Center (CBHC) or Mobile Crisis Provider using the dedicated phone line and provide the location of the person in need of immediate crisis support.
- notify the parent/ legal guardian of the student and inform them that the person is ill or has been injured and is being transported to a medical facility if the information is known at the time of the call.
- direct designated school personnel to remain stationed with the person identified as needing crisis intervention and be prepared to greet crisis responders. If school personnel experience unforeseen delays and behavioral symptoms worse, they can then place a call to 911.

If the school counselor is not in the building at the time of the behavioral emergency, staff will notify the administrator in charge. The administrator will assess the situation and place the 911 call in the event of a potentially life-threatening situation. Other steps will be taken as described above.

If the behavioral condition is later determined by the school counselor or other trained personnel to be minor, EMS units will have the discretion to cancel the call/clear the scene.

If the school counselor or other trained personnel determines that the behavioral condition is non-life-threatening, behavioral health services can be offered onsite for the student. Either the counselor or administrator will notify the involved student's parent/guardian.

All faculty and staff must adhere to the following during all incidents:

- Avoid moving the person unless there is more danger if left there.
- Remain with the person until assistance arrives and remain calm.
- Direct other staff to manage bystanders.

SCHOOL POLICY REGARDING GUIDANCE AND BEHAVIOR SUPPORT



Willie Ross School for the Deaf implements a behavior support program to assist students in managing their behavior. These could include positive reinforcement, time out, natural consequences, counseling, etc.

WRSD sends out forms every year for each parent to fill out whether the student is permitted to have time-outs (separation from class) when necessary.

A separation from instruction or educational activities shall only occur as a last resort if the student is agitated and not safe to themselves or others, there is a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff, the student is not responsive to directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, other forms of interventions have failed to ensure the student's safety or the safety of others and, there are psychological or behavioral justification for the use, and there are no medical contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional.

If separation (time-out) from the classroom is necessary following the above criterion, the student being separated from the classroom will be monitored at all times by a staff member (CPI trained) who will always be immediately available to the student and the student is never left alone. The student will always have staff's eyes on them and monitoring for any issues.

Food/water, bathroom necessities, or medical interventions are never to be denied.

The time-out will cease as soon as the student has calmed. There is no set amount of minutes for the student to calm down. The minute the student is calm, the time-out is done and the student should return to class unless they require a sensory break per their Behavior Intervention Plan or IEP.

For any separations lasting more than 30 minutes based on the individual student's continuing agitation, an administrator's permission must be obtained either in person (or via Google Chat when approaching the 25 minute mark). A form must be filled out every time a student is separated from the class and if they are separated from the class for more than 30 minutes, that must be documented on the form as well.

Once the separation is over and the student has returned to class, the staff involved must fill out the separation from class / behavior support form. The staff who made the decision to call for behavior support must also fill out an incident report. If the staff cannot fill it out immediately, they must do so within 24 hours. All documentation will be in the student's records.

At Longmeadow Campus, the cubicle in Wing Hall is our designated time-out space. The cubicle has an opening and has light padding. The staff must stand at the opening if they are not physically inside the cubicle with the student. The sensory room is never to be used for a time-out. At our sites, the administration will determine where the time-out space is at any given time.



CRISIS MANAGEMENT / PHYSICAL RESTRAINT PROCEDURES

WRSD recognizes that the best method to prevent student crises is the provision of a structured, predictable routine and a safe environment. Your child will feel more contained and safe and will be less likely to act out. All students receive supervision, allowing staff the opportunity for early intervention, preventing many situations from becoming a problem.

- All students have access to a counselor for individual counseling sessions. All students meet in a group session with a counselor weekly.
- Staff members are expected to intervene before a situation escalates and are required to complete an IncidentPlus form which is then forwarded to the administrative staff within a 24 hour time frame.
- Whenever a staff person learns of any student with suicidal inclinations or self-injurious behavior they must immediately contact the assigned counselor and administrator. If the counselor is unavailable, an administrator should be contacted. Parents are always contacted regarding the student's behavior.
- They utilize time-outs, sensory breaks, as well as offers to leave the classroom with a staff person for a brief time to "calm down".
- All staff receive training in de-escalation techniques during our beginning of the year full staff orientation. Orientation training is led by the administrative staff. Mid-year hires will be trained as well.
- A CPI trained Interventionist can be called in to de-escalate the situation.
- Any time a staff member feels a student may be losing control, they may call for a member of the Behavior Support Team to come to assist. Staff members are aware that physical restraint is only used as a last resort.
- A minimum of 8 staff are trained annually to perform non-violent restraints when a student's behavior necessitates the need for restraint.

There will be situations when a student becomes assaultive and/or displays destructive behavior. Willie Ross School for the Deaf staff members use a variety of crisis intervention techniques designed to minimize the crisis while maintaining a respectful attitude toward the student. Willie Ross School staff members focus on developing an awareness of when assaultive and/or destructive behaviors may occur, thus preventing many of them. Additionally, Willie Ross School for the Deaf trains its staff

on how to intervene with potentially aggressive students, including safe methods for physically restraining a student if they become violent.

Your child may receive a physical restraint. A restraint is physically holding a student in order to restrict the student's freedom of movement.

Physical restraint will be implemented only when the following circumstances occur:

- ❖ There is a clear and immediate danger that a student will engage in physically destructive/suicidal behavior or physically aggressive behavior towards others, or behavior which presents a serious threat to the safety of self or others.
- ❖ There is clear indication that running around the building or running out of the building will result in escalating and dangerous behaviors.
- ❖ Uncontrollable behavior indicating that a student is unable to regain control without physical intervention.

When a physical restraint is used, a Physical Restraint Incident Report will be completed prior to the end of the day. A meeting with staff members involved in the incident will be held within 24 hours. The school will verbally notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of restraint as soon as possible. This will be done by an administrator's designee. A written notification of restraint will be sent within two (2) school/working days, to the home.

Willie Ross will not do prone restraints unless a doctor and parent have given signed permission if prone restraints become necessary.



DISCIPLINE POLICY

Teaching staff for Elementary through High School will review the Discipline Policy with their students.

The behaviors below will result in a consequence as listed in our Continuum of Consequences spreadsheet. The disciplinary action will be guided by the severity and frequency of the behavior. WRSD prioritizes restorative practices and will make every effort to exhaust all options to remedy the situation before assigning serious consequences.

Students who have to serve internal or external suspensions will be expected to complete the same academic work as their peers and will not be allowed to attend any extracurricular school activities for the same day(s). Students who are serving internal suspensions will be monitored by a school staff member in a designated location.

*****This list is not intended to be complete or exhaustive.*****

- Alcohol violations
 - Possession
 - Use
 - Sale
- Arson
- Attendance policy violations
 - Leaving class without permission
 - Forging absence excuse
 - Skipping Class
 - Tardiness
- Breaking and entering
- Cell phone/electronics policy violation
- Cheating/plagiarism
- Disobedience
- Disruptive conduct/behavior
- Drugs
- Fighting (mutual altercation)
- Harassment
 - Nonsexual (physical, verbal or psychological)
 - Sexual
- Inappropriate use of medication
- Obscenities
 - Written messages or drawings
 - Electronic communication
 - Gestures
 - Language/profanity
 - Other behaviors
- Physical altercations
 - Minor
 - Physical attack/harm
- Robbery (taking by force)
- Sexual offenses
 - Assault
 - Lewd behavior
 - Indecent exposure
- School threat
 - Bomb
 - Fire alarm
 - Chemical/biological
 - Terroristic

- Suicidal attempt
- Technology violations
- Theft
- Threats
 - Physical
 - Verbal
 - Written
 - Electronic
- Tobacco
- Trespassing
- Unsafe behavior
- Vandalism
- Violation of school rules
- Weapons offense

Following certain infractions as listed on the Continuum of Consequences, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called and informed of the situation. Written notification of the incident will follow within 24 hours. Depending upon the severity of the offense, parent(s)/guardian(s) may be required to meet with the program administrator within 24 hours or upon return from external suspension to discuss the disciplinary action.

In cases of more serious infractions, Willie Ross School for the Deaf maintains the option to require a Psychiatric Evaluation to determine if the student is likely to injure themselves or others upon return to their placement.



EXTERNAL SUSPENSION UNDER 10 DAYS

Whenever a student is externally suspended, Willie Ross School for the Deaf will immediately notify the student's parents or legal guardians both via verbal contact and written notification.

Within twenty-four (24) hours of suspension, the program supervisor will provide a written statement explaining the reasons for the suspension to the student's parents or legal guardians (including the Department of Children and Families, if that organization is guardian), the LEA and any human service agency responsible for placement.

No student will be sent home unless a responsible adult is there to receive the student.

Students that serve external suspensions will be required to participate in a re-entry meeting with school administrators along with their parent/guardian(s). Delaying the re-entry meeting at the parent's request will convert to unexcused absences.

Once a student has been suspended for three (3) consecutive school days or five (5) non-consecutive school days in a school year, the school, parents, and public school district, consistent with federal requirements, shall explore together all possible program modifications within the school in an attempt to prevent more lengthy suspension of the student from the program.

A record to track the number and durations of suspensions, including suspensions from any part of the student's IEP program will be maintained in the Coordinator of Student and Administrative Services office.



10+ DAY SUSPENSIONS

Willie Ross School for the Deaf implements the following procedures when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days.

- A request made by the student's sending school district to convene an IEP Team meeting, which includes representation from Willie Ross School for the Deaf, prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities.
- Willie Ross School for the Deaf participates in the Team meeting:
 1. to develop or review a functional behavior assessment of the student's behavior and to develop or modify the intervention plan.
 2. to identify appropriate alternative educational setting(s); and to decide if the disability and the behavior are related. Determination would include review of IEP; review of any behavior plan and its implementation; and review of placement options.
- If the Team determines that the behavior is **NOT** a manifestation of the disability, the school may suspend or terminate the student consistent with policies applied to any other student in the program. The Local Education Agency must, however, offer an appropriate education program to the student with disabilities that may be in some other setting.
- If the TEAM determines that the behavior **IS** a manifestation of the disability, the Local Education Agency, in coordination with Willie Ross School for the Deaf, will take steps (with the consent of the parent) to modify the IEP, the behavior intervention plan, and/or the placement.



TERMINATION

Willie Ross School for the Deaf terminates students only when all attempts to provide appropriate educational and behavioral standards have failed. These include change of IEP, change of setting, and provision of additional services.

Planned Termination

Planned termination of students attending Willie Ross School for the Deaf will be conducted in conjunction with the referring Local Education Agency, family, and when appropriate, the student. Planned terminations of Willie Ross students will include, but not limited to, graduation, turning twenty-two years old during the academic year, or progress suitable to return to their home school.

For planned termination, Willie Ross School will notify the referring Local Education Agency of the recommendation for termination and the need to conduct an IEP review meeting. Such notice will be sent to the Local Education Agency at least ten days prior to the intended meeting date. The review meeting proceedings will develop the termination plan for the student. The recommendations will be implemented in no less than thirty days. The time span may be changed if all parties agree to an earlier date.

Unplanned Termination

Unplanned termination will occur upon recommendation of Willie Ross School for the Deaf. Such unplanned termination may be delayed up to thirty days if the referring Local Education Agency makes such a request after the notification of the termination. If the LEA requests such notification, they will then, within that time period, convene an emergency team meeting to conduct appropriate transitional planning prior to the student's discharge from Willie Ross School. If all parties agree, discharge may be delayed for longer than the thirty day period.

Emergency Termination

Willie Ross School for the Deaf (WRSD) will consider emergency termination a set of circumstances where the student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of themselves or others. In the event of the recommendation for an emergency termination, WRSD will contact the DESE via an incident report through the online portal. WRSD will make every effort not to terminate the enrollment of any student, even in emergency circumstances, unless the enrolling public school district is informed and assumes appropriate responsibility for the student. At the request of the referring LEA, WRSD shall delay termination of the student for up to two calendar weeks to allow the LEA the opportunity to convene an emergency team meeting, or to conduct other appropriate planning discussions prior to the student's emergency termination from WRSD. If Willie Ross School and the

LEA agree, the termination of the student may be delayed longer than two calendar weeks. WRSD shall make every effort to develop a program which responds to the behaviors and/or actions that resulted in the recommendation for emergency termination.



SEARCH OF STUDENTS

Willie Ross School for the Deaf reserves the right, without notice, to inspect backpacks, lockers, desks, pockets, jackets etc. at any given time, by a school administrator whenever there is a safety or suspected issue, to ensure a safe environment.



LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS

WRSD is not responsible for any personal property that is lost or stolen within our classrooms and buildings.



RUNAWAY POLICY

Willie Ross School for the Deaf considers a student leaving school property without permission, to be a serious offense.

Willie Ross School for the Deaf staff will attempt to discourage students from leaving school property by helping them deal with issues appropriately and by clearly explaining the consequences of their actions.

Willie Ross School for the Deaf defines a runaway as follows: any time a student leaves the Willie Ross School property or grounds without authorization and is unable to be located within ten (10) minutes. If a student is seen leaving the building without authorization, a staff member will follow the student and work with the student to encourage them to return. Common sense is a large factor in determining the most immediate and effective process to utilize and depends upon the individual circumstances.

ANTI-HAZING, BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND HATE CRIMES POLICY



This policy was initially developed in December 2010. It is required to be updated every two years. The most recent version of this policy was revised/updated in July 2025.



Disciplinary Policy Regarding Civil Rights Issues

Willie Ross School for the Deaf prohibits all forms of harassment, discrimination, and hate crimes based on the following protected categories: race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Willie Ross School for the Deaf also prohibits bullying, as defined below. Willie Ross School for the Deaf will also not tolerate retaliation against persons who take action consistent with this Policy.

The prohibition against harassment, discrimination, hate crimes, bullying, and retaliation applies to all students on all sites and at all activities Willie Ross School for the Deaf supervises, controls, or where it has jurisdiction under the law, including on school premises and at school-sponsored functions, events or activities, including field trips, athletic activities and school-related events.



Student Responsibilities

Each student is responsible for:

1. Complying with this policy;
2. Ensuring that they do not harass or discriminate against another person on school grounds or in a school-related function, event or activity because of that person's race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability;
3. Ensuring that they do not bully or haze another person on school grounds or at a school-related function, event or activity;
4. Ensuring that they do not retaliate against any other person for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, or for cooperating in an investigation of hazing, harassment, bullying, discrimination, or a hate crime; and
5. Cooperating in the investigation of reports or complaints of hazing, harassment, bullying, discrimination, retaliation, or a hate crime.



Protection for All

Willie Ross School for the Deaf will take appropriate steps to protect ALL students regardless of their status from hazing, bullying, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or hate crimes.

Protection against Retaliation



Willie Ross School for the Deaf will take appropriate steps to protect students from retaliation when they report, file a complaint of, or cooperate in an investigation of a violation of this Policy. Threats or acts of retaliation, whether person-to-person, by electronic means, or through third parties, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to significant disciplinary and other corrective action, including short or long-term suspension, or expulsion.



Reporting and Resolution Process

A. DESIGNATED OFFICIALS FOR REPORTING

The Education Director, or their designee in the Education Director's absence, are responsible for receiving reports and complaints of violations of this policy.



B. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- a. Any student, staff, parent/guardian or other person who becomes aware or has a reasonable belief that hazing, harassment, bullying, discrimination, or a hate crime has occurred or may have occurred on school property or in a school-related activity should promptly report the incident(s) to the Education Director. In situations where a student, staff, parent/guardian or other person does not feel comfortable reporting the incident to a designated official, they may report it to a trusted school employee, who must promptly transmit the report to the Education Director, or their designee.
- b. Any person who becomes aware or has reasonable belief that hazing, harassment, bullying, discrimination, retaliation, or a hate crime has occurred or may have occurred on school property or in a school-related activity may report the incident anonymously if they desire. Anonymous reports may be made in writing either to the designated school officials or to a trusted staff member by using the reporting form, which is available from designated school officials, and on the school website at www.wrsdeaf.org. Anonymous reports may be made verbally over the phone to a designated school official. No disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- c. Any student, staff, parent/guardian or other person who becomes aware or has a reasonable belief that retaliation has occurred or may have occurred on school property or in a school related activity should promptly report the incident(s) to the Education Director, or their designee. In situations where a student, staff, parent/guardian or other person does not feel comfortable reporting the incident to a designated official, they may

report it to a trusted school employee, who must promptly transmit the report to the Education Director, or their designee.

- d. All complaints or reports about a violation of this policy must be documented on Willie Ross' "Reporting/Complaint Form" (see Appendix A). The form is available from designated school officials and on the school website at www.wrsdeaf.org. If a complainant or reporter is either unwilling or unable to complete the Reporting/Complaint Form, the school official who receives the oral complaint or report will promptly prepare a written report by filling out the Reporting/Complaint Form, using, to the extent practicable, the reporter's or complainant's own words to describe the potential violation.
- e. The school employee will promptly provide the Education Director, or their designee, with the completed Reporting/Complaint Form.
- f. All complaints or reports about a violation of this policy must be documented on the school's "Reporting/Complaint Form" (see Appendix A) and promptly sent to the President & CEO. The form is available from designated school officials and on the school website www.wrsdeaf.org.
- g. If the Education Director, or their designee, determines that hazing, bullying, harassment, discrimination, or a hate crime has occurred, they shall take appropriate disciplinary action. If it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the Education Director will consult with the President & CEO to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the East Longmeadow / Longmeadow Police Department will be notified.

C. RESOLUTION PROCESS: DETERMINING WHETHER TO INSTITUTE FORMAL OR INFORMAL PROCEEDINGS



After the Education Director, or their designee, receives a complaint or report, they must determine whether to resolve the complaint or report through formal or informal proceedings.

If they determine that (1) the allegation is serious enough that it appears to place the complainant or any other person at physical risk; (2) the incident has resulted in a criminal charge; (3) the incident involves a referral to the Department of Children and Families; (4) the allegation involves a serious form of hazing, harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; (5) the allegation involves bullying behavior, where the school has intervened with the alleged student offender under the Code of Conduct for bullying on a prior occasion; (6) there is a pending formal proceeding against the subject of the complaint; (7) the subject of the complaint has previously been found to have violated this Policy; (8) or that a formal proceeding is otherwise appropriate under the circumstances, then the school must commence a formal proceeding.

For allegations or incidents that do not require a formal proceeding, the Education Director may, at their discretion, initiate an informal proceeding.

Nothing in this policy limits the school taking immediate interim disciplinary actions as set forth in the Code of Conduct.



D. INFORMAL PROCEEDINGS

STEP ONE

Upon the initiation of an informal proceeding, the designated official will separately meet in a timely manner with the complainant and the subject of the complaint to tell them about the informal process, the nature of the complaint, explain the prohibition against retaliation, and determine the needed corrective action the complainant seeks.

STEP TWO

If appropriate after adequate investigation, the designated official will propose a resolution. If the complainant and the alleged offender agree with the proposed resolution, the designated official will write down the resolution, and the complainant and the subject of the complaint will sign it, and each person will receive a copy. At the meeting, the designated official will again explain the prohibition against retaliation. Parents of both the complainant and alleged offender will be notified of the complaint and the process being followed.

STEP THREE

A designated school official will monitor the situation, and will follow up with the complainant weekly for one month to determine whether there are further incidents or concerns. The designated official will maintain a written record of the follow up.

STEP FOUR

File Retention: The Education Director, or their designee, will maintain in a separate confidential file the school's reporting/complaint form, information obtained through inquiry and investigation, and the proposed and agreed-to resolution.

STEP FIVE

If the complainant and alleged offender cannot agree to an informal resolution, or the designated official determines that the problem is not corrected, the school will commence a Formal Proceeding.



E. FORMAL PROCEEDINGS

STEP ONE

The Education Director, or their designee, will separately meet in a timely manner with the complainant and the subject of the complaint to tell them about the formal process, explain the prohibition against retaliation, and determine the remedy the complainant seeks.

STEP TWO

The Education Director, or their designee, will conduct an investigation in accordance with

the procedures described in Section F, **INVESTIGATIONS FOR FORMAL PROCEEDINGS**. Parents of both the complainant and alleged offender will be notified of the complaint and the process being followed.

STEP THREE

The Education Director, or their designee, will determine whether the allegations have been substantiated, and whether this policy and/or the Code of Conduct have been violated. If the complaint is substantiated, the designated official will decide based on the investigative findings, on the appropriate course of action. The Education Director or their designee will prepare a written report that includes the investigative findings.

STEP FOUR

The designated official will promptly notify the complainant and the subject of the complaint in writing to let them know whether the complaint has been substantiated. If the complaint is substantiated and the offender remains a student in the school, the designated official will meet with the offender to describe, consistent with the Code of Conduct, the disciplinary and/or corrective action recommended, the school's expectations for future behavior and the potential consequences for retaliation or future violation of the policy.

If a complaint is substantiated, a report of the incident will be placed in the offender's student records.

File Retention: The Education Director, or their designee, will maintain a separate confidential file containing the original completed Reporting/Complaint Form, investigatory interview notes and reports, findings made, the results of the investigation, including any decision for action, and other relevant investigatory materials.

Any disciplinary or corrective action against a student must conform to the due process requirements of federal and state law.

STEP FIVE

The Education Director, or their designee, will monitor the situation, and will follow up with the complainant at least weekly for two months to determine whether there are further incidents or concerns, and whether the corrective action and/or disciplinary action(s) imposed has/had been effective. The designated official will maintain a written record of the follow-up.

STEP SIX

Any right of appeal from discipline imposed is governed by the Discipline Policy.

Permissible Disciplinary Sanctions and Corrective Actions in Response to Hazing, Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment or Hate Crimes



Disciplinary sanctions and corrective actions may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

1. A written warning;
2. Parent conferences;
3. An apology to the victim;
4. Limiting or denying student access to a part or an area of the school;

5. Adult supervision on school premises
6. Exclusion from participation in school-sponsored functions, after-school programs, and/or extracurricular activities;
7. Classroom or site transfer;
8. Awareness training (to help students understand the impact of their behavior);
9. Participation in cultural diversity, anti-harassment, anti-bullying or intergroup relations program;
10. Specific recommendations, (i.e. anger management, medical assessment, counseling, etc)
11. Short-term or long-term suspension;
12. Exclusion, expulsion, or discharge from school;
13. Any other action consistent with the Code of Conduct.



F. INVESTIGATIONS FOR FORMAL PROCEEDINGS

- **Prompt and thorough investigations:** When the Education Director, or their designee, determines that a formal proceeding is appropriate, the school will promptly investigate all reports or complaints of an alleged violation of this policy. The goal of the investigation is to obtain an accurate and complete account of all incidents and circumstances deemed relevant to the allegations of the complaint.
- **Emergencies:** The Education Director, or their designee, will immediately call 911 in the case of a threat of imminent physical harm or actual physical harm to a school community member or where police, fire, medical, or other emergency assistance is needed.
- **Investigative Procedure:** The Education Director, or their designee, investigating the incident will gather and preserve evidence and identify all involved parties and witnesses. If the incident involves physical injury, destruction of public property, or acts of a serious criminal nature, the designated official will confer with the local police department prior to gathering or preserving evidence.
- **Communication during Investigation:** Throughout the investigatory and complaint resolution process, the Education Director, or their designee, will make reasonable efforts to regularly inform the complainant and the subject of the complaint and their parent(s) or guardian(s) of the status of the complaint, the anticipated timing for concluding the investigation, and determination of discipline and/or corrective action(s).
- **Time for Investigations:** The Education Director, or their designee, will complete their investigation as soon as practical, not to exceed more than ten school days after they receive the complaint or report, except for good cause or with consent of the parties (as documented in the investigatory file). The Education Director, or their designee, will expedite the investigation of any claim involving physical violence or serious threats of harm.
- **Ensuring Safety during Investigation:** The Education Director, or their designee, will take any steps they determine necessary and/or advisable to protect, to the extent practicable, the complainant, witnesses, and other individuals from further incidents or from retaliation pending the outcome of the investigation.
- **Victim Assistance:** The Education Director, or their designee, will make appropriate referrals for victim assistance, including counseling and crisis intervention, if requested, or as needed.
- **Confidentiality:** The school will respect the privacy of the complainant, the subject(s) of the complaint, and the witnesses to the extent possible consistent with its obligations under federal and state law and regulations and the policy to investigate, report, and take

appropriate disciplinary and corrective action, and consistent with applicable confidentiality laws and student record regulations.

- **Imposing Disciplinary and Corrective Action:** If the Education Director, or their designee, concludes that the subject of the complaint has violated this policy, the school will impose disciplinary measures and/or corrective action reasonably calculated to end the complaint of conduct, deter future conduct, and protect the complainant(s) and other similarly situated individuals.
- **Frivolous Complaints:** When a complaint is unfounded, frivolous, or maliciously fabricated, the complainant shall be subject to a range of disciplinary and correction actions consistent with the Code of Conduct.



INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES

- As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, §3, when an IEP Team determines that a student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of their disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- Oral/signed reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school staff member is required to report immediately to the Education Director, or their designee, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school staff members, may be made anonymously. The school will utilize a variety of reporting resources including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.
- The school will include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians and the school will post the form on the school's website.
- The school will provide the school community, including administrators, notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Education Director or their designee, will be incorporated in the student and staff handbooks, on the school website, and information about the plan that is made available to parents or guardians.
- No disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

- Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Education Director, or their designee, will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents.
- The Education Director, or their designee, will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.
- Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Education Director, or their designee, will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it.
- At any point after receiving a report of bullying, if the Education Director, or their designee, has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Education Director, or their designee, will notify the local law enforcement agency.
- The Education Director, or their designee, will promptly investigate all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegations(s) and the ages of the students involved.
- During the investigation the Education Director, or their designee, will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Education Director, or their designee, will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. The Education Director, or their designee, will maintain a written record of the investigation.
- If, after the investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Education Director, or their designee, will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The Education Director, or their designee, will: 1) determine what remedial actions are required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.
- The Education Director, or their designee, will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. The Education Director, or their designee, cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.
- If the Education Director, or their designee, decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the

disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Education Director, or their designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the plan and with the school's Code of Conduct.

- Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

This policy has been adapted from that of the East Longmeadow Public Schools with permission from the Superintendent of Schools.



ANTI-HAZING

Willie Ross School for the Deaf prohibits hazing of any kind, at all times.

The Education Director or designee will issue a copy of M.G.L. c. 269 §§ 17 through 19, to every student enrolled full-time, and every student group, student team, or student organization, including every unaffiliated student group, student team, or student organization, and a copy of the school program's anti-hazing disciplinary policy approved by the program's Board of Trustees.

Willie Ross School for the Deaf will, at least annually, file a report with the Department certifying:

- Its compliance with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams, or organizations, and every full-time enrolled student, of the provisions of M.G.L. c. 269 §§ 17 through 19;
- Its adoption of a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing;
- That the hazing policy has been included in the student handbook or other means of communicating school program policies to students.

Consequences for failure to comply with the anti-hazing law:

1. First offense:
 - The student will be suspended from the club or team for one month.
2. Second offense:
 - The student will be dismissed from the club or team for one calendar year.

Consequences for Club Advisor or Team Coach's failure to prohibit hazing activities by club members or team members:

- The staff member will be dismissed from that position and will not be eligible to reapply for the position.



Training & Professional Development

- A. Professional staff members attended a two hour presentation by Dr. Marie Englander on October 12, 2010 centered around the development of a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. All staff attended an in-service on January 14, 2011 on the final plan, including glossary, definitions, reporting policy, investigation procedures and the incident reporting form.

Faculty and staff attended a training presentation in February 2020 centered around the transition to the OLWEUS Bullying Prevention Program.

- B. During an in-service day every year, all staff will complete a refresher session on all elements of the policy.

All new hires during the school year, post annual training, will participate in a similar session prior to or within the first week of hire.

These activities will include:

- a. developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- b. developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- c. information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- d. research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- e. information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying
- f. internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying; and
- g. improve the social climate in the school environment.



Resources & Services

All WRSD students are assigned a school counselor and have access to them on a regular basis. Most students have weekly group sessions with a counselor. Counselors will continue to assist possible targets with strategies to cope with bullying incidents and how to advocate for themselves.

Counselors will also work with aggressors to assist them in developing more respectful, positive behaviors. Willie Ross has been using the OLWEUS Bullying Prevention Program because it incorporates the following approaches to bullying prevention:

- a. using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- b. empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other

- students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- c. helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
 - d. emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
 - e. enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
 - f. engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.



Collaboration with Families

The final draft of the WRSD Policy on Hazing, Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination and Hate Crimes was sent to a cross-section of parents for comments prior to the adoption of the approved policy.

A notice will be sent home to parents and guardians annually informing them that the policy has been posted on the school's website. The policy will be included in both the parent and staff handbooks which are given out the first day of school.

One PAG meeting each year will be devoted to the Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying curriculum. Sub-topics will include reinforcing the curriculum and policy at home; dynamics of bullying; and cyberbullying.

Policy and curriculum will also be available at Open Houses along with academic curricula and materials.



Glossary of Terms

BULLYING: The repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, signed or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to themselves or of damage to their property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

When we determine bullying, we look at whether all the following criteria are met:

- Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
- Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
- Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

DISCRIMINATION: Treating people differently, or interfering with or preventing a person from enjoying the advantages, privileges or course of study in a school because of an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability (i.e., protected status). A person may not be subjected to discipline or more severe punishment for wrongdoing, nor denied the same rights as other students because of their membership in a protected class.

HARASSMENT: Harassment is signed, oral, written, graphic, electronic or physical conduct on school property or at a school-related event, function or activity relating to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability, that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's programs or activities, by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment. For purposes of this policy, harassment shall also mean conduct, if it persists, that will likely create such a hostile, humiliating, intimidating or offensive educational environment. A single incident, depending on its severity, may create a hostile environment. (See Title IX policy for sexual harassment.)

HAZING: Hazing is any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which wilfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.

HATE CRIME: A hate crime is a crime motivated by hatred, bias, or prejudice, or where the victim is targeted or selected for the crime at least in part because of their actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or sex. A hate crime may involve a physical attack, threat of bodily harm, physical intimidation, or damage to another's property.

RETALIATION: Any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment by a student directed against any student, staff or other individual for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation under this policy, or for taking action consistent with this policy.



TITLE IX POLICY

20 U.S.C. § 1681 states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance"

Willie Ross School for the Deaf (WRSD) is committed to the health, safety and welfare of our students and employees. We do not and will not tolerate any form of discrimination on the basis of sex in our educational program or activities. We are required by Title IX not to discriminate in any manner.



I. Definitions

Sexual Harassment is conduct that is sexual in nature; is unwelcome; and denies or limits a student or employee ability to participate in or benefit from the school environment. Examples may be unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or non-verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature. Such conduct can be carried out by school employees, students, non-employee third parties, etc. This conduct may occur in school facilities or at off-campus locations (on a bus, during a field trip, at a training, etc.). Such conduct does not generally include legitimate nonsexual touching or conduct. However if such conduct takes on sexual connotations, this conduct could rise to the level of sexual harassment.

Sexual Violence is a type of sexual harassment, referring to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is unable to give consent.

Gender-Based Harassment is another type of sexual harassment, referring to harassment based on gender identity or nonconformity with sex stereotypes. This type of harassment may not involve conduct that is sexual in nature.

Consent voluntary and knowing agreement. Consent may not be possible due to age or disability.



II. Policy

Under Title IX, all students and employees are protected from sex-based harassment, regardless of the sex of the perpetrator or complainant. Included in such prohibition are claims of discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

It is our responsibility to be sure any sexual violence does not sufficiently limit or deny any of our student's or employee's ability to participate in or benefit from our educational environment, respond with prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the sexual violence, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent recurrence, and as necessary remedy its effects.

Upon receiving any information to suggest sexual harassment/discrimination/violence we will immediately begin our investigation or otherwise determine what has occurred (following necessary confidentiality considerations). If such an investigation identifies a hostile environment, we will take necessary steps reasonably calculated to eliminate the hostile environment, prevent recurrence, and as necessary remedy its effects.

We are required under Title IX to protect the complainant and ensure this individual's safety, which may require taking interim steps to protect the individual during the investigation. Interim steps minimizing the burden on the complainant will be determined considering the specific incident and situation currently affecting the complainant. We will provide the complainant with updates on the status of the investigation as it progresses. We will provide the complainant with knowledge of all resources available to him or her and the right to report the incident to local law enforcement.

Our school employees are trained and aware of their obligations under state and local laws in this area. They are also aware of the consequences for failing to satisfy those obligations. We have

specific policies in place to ensure employees of our school know they are prohibited from engaging in inappropriate conduct towards our students. Employees are also trained in responding appropriately if problems in this area arise.

When a complainant requests that their name not be disclosed to the perpetrator our school will ensure that such information is securely handled. While it may be required to disclose this information to certain parties due to the age of the complainant, the information will still be handled considering their request. It is the responsibility of the school to decide if nondisclosure can be followed, while also considering the necessity of providing a safe and nondiscriminatory environment.

If a complainant requests that the school not investigate or pursue action against the perpetrator, it is our responsibility to inform them that this may limit our ability to respond fully to the incident. In addition, we are required to inform them that Title IX will protect them from retaliation.

If it is determined that we can respect the complainant's request to not disclose or not take action against the perpetrator, we will still limit the effects of the incident and prevent its recurrence. This may be through means of more monitoring, supervision, or security. Additionally, adjustments may be made to our school policy for sexual violence/harassment in response to such conduct.

Professional counselors are not required to report any information regarding an incident of alleged sexual violence under Title IX. Non-professional counselors are also not required to report information without a complainant's consent. However, all will inform the complainant of their rights under Title IX.

Our school has provided necessary training to all employees likely to witness or receive reports of sexual violence. Our trainings inform employees on their obligation to report, who and how to report possible incidents, and the appropriate steps that need to be taken after notification of sexual violence or harassment has occurred.

Our Title IX policy has been distributed and is available for students, families of students, and employees. Any questions concerning Title IX may be directed to our Title IX Coordinators, whose contact information is listed below.



III. Students with Disabilities

Given our student population, any sexual violence towards any of our students may require additional assistance and support. Any sexual conduct will also fall under other federal civil rights laws (Rehabilitation Act of 1973- Section 504 and Title II of the American Disabilities Act of 1990). We will work with our students to help them better understand our sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination prevention policies and procedures. If a student does experience sexual violence, we will provide supports and assistance as necessary.



IV. Title IX Coordinators

Our Title IX Coordinators are Erika Kaftan, Education Director and Joel Skelton, Coordinator of Community Engagement, located at 32 Norway Street, Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01106, and can be contacted at 413-567-0374 and ekaftan@wrsdeaf.org or jskelton@wrsdeaf.org

Our Title IX Coordinators are responsible for overseeing our school's response to all reports and complaints of sex discrimination. Our Title IX Coordinators will investigate facts relevant to a complaint, determine appropriate sanctions against the perpetrator and remedies for the complainant, and determine interim measures for a complainant after learning of a complaint. Their responsibilities also include:

- Ensuring all policies and procedures are in place and followed for working with local law enforcement and other services if an incident occurs
- Evaluating confidentiality requests and determining how to proceed when such requests are made
- Assistance in any training to employees about what conduct constitutes sexual and gender-based harassment and how to respond appropriately to this conduct
- Development of researching methods to survey the campus climate, evaluate if discriminatory attitudes pervade school culture, and decide whether harassment is occurring, where it is occurring, who is responsible for the harassment, who is targeted by the harassment, and how best to remedy these conditions
- Be informed of all Title IX reports and complaints at our school
- Coordination of recordkeeping, monitoring of incidents to help identify any repeat offenses by specific individuals or towards specific individuals, addressing any patterns or systemic problems, and making school administrators aware of any patterns
- Recommending increases in safety measures (monitoring, supervision, security) in any areas where harassment has occurred
- Regular review of effectiveness of our school's efforts to ensure we are free from sexual and gender-based harassment, and using information compiled to recommend future proactive steps that our school can take to comply with Title IX and protect our school community.



V. Grievance Policy and Procedures

Title IX requires that our school adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee sex discrimination complaints. Our grievance policy is as follows:

Erika Kaftan, Education Director and Joel Skelton, Coordinator of Community Engagement, located at 32 Norway Street, Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01106, and can be contacted at 413-567-0374 and ekaftan@wrsdeaf.org or jskelton@wrsdeaf.org are responsible for investigating and resolving discrimination complaints made on behalf of employees and students. Students or parents can register complaints with these individuals. We are committed to providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints from both students and employees alleging discrimination based on legally protected categories (race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, and disability) that includes specific timeliness and the appeals process.



VI. Retaliation

Retaliation from the perpetrator or any individual from our school in response to a complaint is prohibited under Title IX. Prohibited retaliation includes any retaliation against any individual who filed the complaint or any individual participating in the Title IX investigation, hearing or proceeding. Our school will ensure that individuals are not intimidated, threatened, coerced or discriminated against for engaging in this process.

COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES



From time to time, concerns may arise at Willie Ross School. Students or parents should complete the Complaint/Grievance Form if they believe that their concerns are not being addressed. Forms should be sent to the Education Director, Erika Kaftan, or the Director of Operations, Alyssa Kristek. In the event that the complaint involves the Education Director or the Director of Operations, then it should be immediately forwarded to the President & CEO.

The Education Director or the Director of Operations shall act upon the complaint as soon as possible by arranging a meeting with the person/people involved to discuss the nature of the complaint and to develop an appropriate and mutually acceptable agreement to resolve the issue.

Appropriate staff and/or administration will be called by the Education Director or the Director of Operations to attend the meeting. The administration and staff of the Campus program will work together to assure that the complaint is resolved in an appropriate and expedient fashion.



HEALTH REGULATIONS

Immunization Regulations & Yearly Physicals:

All students entering Willie Ross School for the Deaf must meet the Mass DPH Immunization Requirements under state regulations. **Current and new students must present a physician's certificate verifying their immunizations and yearly physical.**

The School Nurse and Administration have the authority to refuse school admittance and/or exclude a student from school for non-compliance with the immunization requirements. Religious or medical exemptions may apply if requested documentation of such exemption is provided. However, in situations when one or more cases of disease are present in a school, all susceptible students, including students with medical or religious exemptions, are subject to exclusion.

Mandated Screening

Postural screening will be administered to students yearly in grades 5 through 9. No parental permission is required for this screening however, you will be notified in advance of when the screening will take place.

Vision screening shall be performed in the school by a school nurse on every student, each school year. Hearing evaluations are performed annually by our audiologists on staff.



SICK CHILD POLICY

For the health and safety of Willie Ross School community please read the following guidelines when deciding to send a sick child to school:

PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF THEY HAVE:

1. **Fever** – If your child has a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater, they must be kept home until fever free (**without medication**) for 24 hours. Liquids should be encouraged as tolerated.
2. **Diarrhea or vomiting** – If your child has repeated episodes of either, they must be kept out of school until the illness passes (24 hours after the last episode).
3. **Rash** – If your child has an unexplained rash they may return to school with a note from the doctor stating the child does not have a communicable disease.
4. **Sore Throat** – Severe sore throat could be strep, even if a fever is not present. Other symptoms of strep can be headache and stomach ache. If a throat culture is positive for strep, your child may return to school 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins.
5. **Communicable Diseases** –No child should be sent to school if they have a communicable disease. Large numbers of young people and adults are brought together in school, creating ideal circumstances for transmission of a variety of diseases. Exclusion is necessary when the student's illness requires a greater degree of observation or care than the school staff can safely provide, poses a threat to the health or safety of others, or precludes any benefit of

attending school because of inability to focus and learn. Responsibility for the care of the individual student rests with the family and their source of medical care.

6. If they have Head Lice – see Head Lice Policy below.



HEAD LICE POLICY

Lice is a common problem among school age children. Please remember to check your child's head periodically and prior to starting school. Head scratching and complaints of an itchy scalp are good indications of head lice.

If your child has head lice, treat them and notify the school.

Identification:

1. Students referred by staff, parents or self-referred will be screened.
2. Siblings (if they are also students at WRSD) of the identified student will also be screened.
3. Parents of students who are identified as having head lice will be informed. Information will be provided, as needed.

Students suspected of having “LIVE LICE” will be dismissed from school immediately to receive treatment.

Treatment:

1. Medicated shampoo or cream rinse prescribed by M.D. or products recommended by pharmacist. Apply as directed.
2. Removal of nits with a metal fine tooth comb. It may even be necessary to use tweezers or even fingernails. A rinse of a vinegar solution may be helpful to loosen the nits.

Return to School: WRSD has a “NO LIVE LICE” protocol.

1. Student may return to school the morning after treatment.
2. Student must be screened by the nurse or an administrator before they can return to the classroom.
3. If nits remain, parent/guardian will be asked to re-comb hair at home until nits are removed and child will be re-screened by the nurse or an administrator.
4. The student will be re-screened for 10 – 14 days after they return to school.

Two or more reported cases within 10 days in a classroom then:

1. The entire class will be checked for lice.
2. Dismiss students suspected of live lice, until the morning after the first treatment.

3. If the same child is infected twice within a 1 – 2 month time frame, we will require an evaluation by their PCP and a note from the doctor deeming that the child is non-infective and okay to return to school.
4. Letter to parent/guardians of students in class with two or more cases of head lice.



FRAGRANCE-FREE POLICY

Due to the potential medical issues that could occur from employees and students being exposed to a strong scent, we have determined that Willie Ross School for the Deaf is now a fragrance-free school. Employees and/or students that arrive with a strong scent that might potentially physically affect others (e.g. migraines), will be asked to eliminate the odor by washing it off or will be sent home. A strong scent could be from the application of a perfume based product, poor hygiene, or other similar issues.

To ensure that Willie Ross School for the Deaf is a fragrance-free school, employees and students are prohibited from bringing / wearing onto the premises natural or artificial scents that could be distracting or harmful to others. This includes personal fragrant products (fragrances, colognes, lotions, powders, body washes and other similar products) that are perceptible to others. Other fragrant products (scented candles, bathroom spray, potpourri and similar items) are also not permitted on school grounds or vehicles.

Employees/students required by medical necessity to use medicinal lotions or skin creams or other products that contain odor perceptible to others, as substantiated by a qualified licensed provider, may request a reasonable accommodation from their supervisor/school nurse.

Any employee or student with a concern about scents or odors should contact their supervisor, teacher and/or nurse.



HEALTH AND EMERGENCY CARE PROCEDURES

If a student becomes ill or has an accident, the procedures listed will be followed:

- The school will contact you to report the situation, or if unable to reach you, will call the emergency numbers that you have provided.
- In cases of suspected communicable ailments, a doctor's note clearing them will be required before your child may return to school. Students diagnosed with a communicable disease will not be allowed to return without a written note from their physician clearing them.

- Whenever any first aid is administered to a student of a serious nature, or whenever a child is injured, teachers or individuals in charge must make every effort to call you and notify you directly. You will also receive written notification of the occurrence from the school nurse or their designee.
- In case of a serious accident, you will be contacted immediately and if necessary, the school will contact the Police Department (911) for an ambulance.
- **It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s)** to ensure that we have, on file, a functioning home, work and emergency contact phone number at all times. If you are unable to be reached by the phone numbers provided, 911 will be called, your child will be transported to the hospital and the police will be notified and told that we were unable to reach you.

POLICY AND GUIDELINES REGARDING THE DISPENSING OF MEDICINE TO STUDENTS AT WILLIE ROSS



No medications can be administered at any time, under any condition, by any staff member of Willie Ross School to any student of the school.

- In the event that a student has been prescribed medication, a doctor's order must be obtained and signed by both their parent or guardian and the attending physician in order for the school nurse to dispense the medication during school hours. Forms are available upon request.
- **Under no circumstances should a student bring their own medication to school.** Only the parent(s) or an adult designated by them should bring the medication to school. Medication must be delivered in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container. Authorized staff and/or school nurse will accept the medication(s) and a "Receiving Medication form" will be signed by both the parent/guardian and school nurse/authorized staff.
- **NO** medications are kept in the classrooms. All medications are stored in a double-locked, metal box in the Nurse's Office/First Aid Station designated for this purpose.
- A registered nurse and trained staff authorized by administration and school nurse will dispense prescribed medication to the student(s) according to doctor's orders on file.
- Whenever a student is taking prescription medication at home, the parent(s) are asked to notify the school. They are also asked to inform the school when prescription medication taken at home is changed or stopped.
- All written correspondence regarding medication(s) should be on file in the school's Main Office **AND** in the Nurse's Office/First Aid Station.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING



WRSD employees are **mandated reporters** and **must report ANY QUESTIONABLE EVENTS SEEN OR REPORTED BY YOUR CHILD**. All incidents will be documented by one of the school's social workers and/or an Administrator who will file a report (51-A) with the Department of Children and Families.

CELL PHONE/ELECTRONICS POLICY



ALL STAFF WILL EXPLAIN THE POLICY THE FIRST DAY IN EACH CLASSROOM.

A recent report by the Surgeon General outlines a profound risk of social media to adolescent mental health. In addition, there has been a detriment to student learning, social relationships, student behaviors, and academic outcomes directly related to the use of cell phones and other electronics during the school day and outside of school.

In order to create a safe learning environment in which all students can succeed, our policy is as follows:

Willie Ross does not allow the use of personal electronic devices (including but not limited to cell phones, portable gaming consoles, smart watches, and earbuds) during academic periods. Each teacher will ask that the student's phone will be placed in a designated classroom location at the start of each academic period. Phones will remain in this location throughout the period.

If phones are being used during class inappropriately, staff will follow the Continuum of Consequences immediately.

High school students will be permitted to use their cell phones during lunch for the last 15 minutes of the lunch period. If they are not respectful while using their phones, they will be asked to put their phone away.

Upon request and at the discretion of staff, students may be allowed to use their phone in specific circumstances. In this case, the students will be responsible for appropriate phone use and etiquette.

Absolutely no photographs or videos may be taken inside the school building without staff permission. Video calls or phone calls during lunches with people outside of the school are not permitted for the safety and security of everyone present.

We ask that parents/guardians not contact their student on their cell phone during the school day. In case of emergency, please contact the front desk at 413-567-0374 (voice) or 413-798-4221 (videophone) and we will help you reach your student.

This policy is subject to change.

This policy will be handed out to all our middle and high school students with the expectation that they sign the agreement. A copy will be kept on file.



STUDENT TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

I. Introduction

Willie Ross School for the Deaf (WRSD) offers Internet access and the use of technology to its students and staff. Access to the school network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. This Acceptable Use Policy applies to school-owned technology equipment and also applies to privately-owned devices while on school property. The intent of this policy is to ensure that students utilize this access in a manner consistent with the purpose of providing this service. The policies outlined in this document cover all current technology now and into the future, not just those specifically listed. Willie Ross School for the Deaf reserves the right to amend this policy.

II. Purpose

The primary purpose of use of technology in the classroom is to support the educational objectives of WRSD. Network use provides valuable opportunities for research, curriculum support, and career development.

Additionally, this policy explains the roles and responsibilities of students by showing appropriate and responsible behavior with regard to technology use. In order to use technology and the Internet, students must take full responsibility for their own actions. While the benefits are tremendous, there is also potential for abuse of this policy. WRSD is not liable for the actions of anyone accessing the network whether it is from a WRSD device or a student's personal device. Students will assume full responsibility for any issues or costs that come up from the way the students choose to use their access.

A student's use of WRSD technology constitutes their agreement to abide by this policy as set forth below, or as modified in the future.

III. Internet Usage Guidelines

Students are expected to follow this policy and to abide by the rules of acceptable use, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

It is the policy of WRSD to maintain a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. Students shall observe this policy in the use of the Internet and technology.

- They shall use appropriate, non-abusive language, refrain from making defamatory remarks or racial slurs, bullying, or obscene language.
- Do not reveal personal information such as last names, addresses, phone numbers, photos, etc. that could identify yourself, another student, or a staff member, except when required by a teacher to complete school-related work.
- Tell a teacher or other school staff immediately if you see something that is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Do not do anything to the internet that could cause damage.
- Students must not vandalize school computers by causing physical damage, reconfiguring the computer system, or adding viruses to the computers.
- Passwords should not be shared with anyone. Students must not use another person's password. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you must have it changed immediately.
- Any use for, or in support of, illegal purposes or activities is not allowed.
- Students should assume that most materials available on the Internet are protected by copyright. Unauthorized copying of copyrighted materials is prohibited. Additionally, any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be properly cited regardless of copyright status.
- Not all material accessible through the Internet is of educational value. Students are expected to refrain from seeking, accessing, uploading, downloading, transmitting, or distributing material that is not relevant to their assignments or course work. No student may upload or download material to or from Internet sites without permission from their teacher.
- Students shall not access, upload, download, transmit, or distribute material that is deemed inappropriate by WRSD administration.
- Students must not access chat apps or social networking sites. Students are also prohibited from using the Network to blog or to send or receive instant messages.
- Students shall neither download nor install any commercial software, shareware or freeware onto network drives or disks without prior permission of the teacher. Students shall not change settings on the browser or any other application.
- Students must not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any file servers or data. This includes logging in through another person's account and/or accessing another person's files. Students shall not seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other students.

- Students' personal devices such as tablets, cell phones or smart phones are not allowed access to the WRSD network without permission from an administrator.

Chromebooks used in the classroom are owned by WRSD. There is no expectation of privacy; as such, WRSD has in place on all devices, a 24/7 monitoring application to ensure proper use of the device for education.

IV. Privacy

Students should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files sent and received and/or stored on the school computer network. Students should be aware that the data they create, receive, or send on the Internet is property of WRSD, and that the data may be recovered and reviewed, even after it has been deleted. WRSD also reserves the right to monitor use and examine all data stored on school servers. All communications are public and are not private. All communications may be shared with law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver.

V. Violations

WRSD may take away or suspend specific user privileges and/or take other disciplinary action if there are any suspected violations of the policy. In the event that there is a claim that a student has violated any of the guidelines in this policy, they will be provided an opportunity to be heard.



TAKE HOME TECHNOLOGY USE AGREEMENT

Willie Ross School for the Deaf, Inc. (WRSD) is pleased to be providing technology (including hearing assistive technology or HAT) to students for home use when necessary. A full list of included devices is listed in the Devices Cost section below. This includes all students in grades PreK through grade 12. Students will be issued a device or devices as needed, including a charger for each device. The student is responsible for their device at all times. *An agreement (sent home separately) signed by student and/or parent is required before any technology device is allowed to go home with a student.*

Use of WRSD technology devices in school and at home by students is subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. The student must be actively enrolled in WRSD.
2. The device and peripherals (charge cord) are on loan and remain the property of WRSD.
3. The student agrees to adhere to the WRSD's Student Technology and Internet Use Policy as outlined in the Parent & Student Handbook (*in preceding section*).
4. The student shall be the exclusive user of this device and shall not grant access to any other individual.
5. The student must comply with all applicable software license agreements.

6. Devices and peripherals must be returned to WRSD no later than the last day of school, time of transfer, withdrawal, or graduation from WRSD.
7. Devices and peripherals will be returned in good condition with reasonable wear and tear.
8. The care and maintenance of the device and related peripherals are the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian while in their care.
9. There will be a fee assessed if the device and/or related peripherals are lost, broken, or damaged in cases where the device is not covered by warranty. Full replacement costs are listed in the devices cost section below. The student and parent/guardian of the student will be billed and are responsible for said repair and/or full replacement cost.
10. Care and maintenance of the device include the following:
 - i. Keep away from liquids.
 - ii. Students must not deface or place any stickers or other material on any device.
 - iii. Do not remove or alter any identification tag or label from the device
 - iv. Students will leave all settings as installed and not attempt to “jailbreak” or remove or bypass the device settings-this includes not changing the sim card or any settings on the hotspots
 - v. Chromebooks are owned by WRSD. There is no expectation of privacy; as such, WRSD has in place on all devices, a 24/7 monitoring application to ensure proper use of the device for education.

DEVICE COSTS



WILLIE ROSS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, INC. TAKE HOME TECHNOLOGY USE AGREEMENT

Listing of Devices and related replacement costs covered by policy:

<u>DEVICE NAME</u>	<u>REPLACEMENT COST</u>
Chromebook	\$400.00
Chromebook Charger	\$25.00
iPad	\$450.00
Hot-spot Mobile Device	\$90.00
Hot-spot Mobile Device Charger	\$16.00

Hearing Aid Technology (HAT)

Laptop wire/connection	\$15.00
ConnectClip	\$250.00
EduMic	\$625.00
Cochlear Mini Mic	\$425.00
Roger Touchscreen Microphone	\$1,925.00
Roger Receivers	\$350.00 per receiver
Roger Neckloop	\$675.00

Shipping and handling may be additional.



Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), including tools such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot, is a rapidly evolving type of technology designed to create content ranging from text and images to data-based solutions. At Willie Ross School for the Deaf (WRSD), we recognize that, when used appropriately, generative AI can be a powerful tool to support teaching, learning, and communication across our school community.

This policy outlines WRSD's expectations for the use of generative AI to ensure its integration is safe, responsible, inclusive, and aligned with our school's mission to empower our students through access to high-quality education and communication.

This policy applies to **all members of the WRSD community** including students, educators, administrators, and support staff who engage with generative AI tools in any capacity on school grounds or in connection with school-related activities.

Guiding principles:

- **Educational Support:** Generative AI may be used to supplement student learning, assist with differentiated instruction, and enhance communication tools, especially when it supports accessibility and language development in both ASL and English.
- **Professional Use:** Staff may utilize AI to streamline workflows, generate ideas, and support planning, as long as it aligns with ethical standards and respects student privacy and data protection.

- **Ethical Considerations:** Users must avoid using AI to plagiarize, fabricate content, or generate inappropriate, biased, or harmful material. Transparency and attribution are essential when AI has contributed to the creation of content.
- **Privacy and Security:** Any use of AI tools must comply with student confidentiality requirements (e.g., FERPA), and no personally identifiable information should be entered into public or unsecured platforms.
- **Digital Literacy:** WRSD is committed to teaching staff and students to become critical thinkers and responsible users of AI tools, emphasizing discernment, ethical decision-making, and the importance of human oversight.

Expectations for Use of Generative AI

We expect all use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, to be collaborative, transparent, responsible, and aligned with the school's educational mission. Generative AI should serve as a supportive tool, not a substitute for authentic learning, creativity, or professional judgment.

The following expectations are in place to ensure that AI is used ethically and safely by all members of the WRSD community.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

- **Create original work** and use AI only as a support for thinking or revising, not as a replacement for their own ideas and output.
- **Ask teachers or staff** before using AI tools for any assignment, to clarify when and how use is allowed or appropriate.
- **Protect personal information** by not entering names, birthdates, addresses, phone numbers, photos, or other identifying data into generative AI platforms.
- **Keep a record** of the prompts they use and the AI-generated output, and **give proper credit** when AI tools contribute to their work.

- **Critically evaluate** all AI-generated content for **accuracy, bias, and relevance**, especially when using it in assignments or projects.

Staff Expectations

Staff are expected to:

- **Clearly communicate expectations** around the use of AI in both academic and support settings, including:
 - Identifying assignments where AI use is **prohibited**.
 - Encouraging **collaborative and responsible** use by requiring students to submit AI prompts and responses when appropriate.
 - Supporting **transparency** by teaching students how and when to cite AI-generated content.
- **Provide instruction and modeling** on how to:
 - Use AI tools ethically and effectively.
 - Properly **cite AI-generated material** in student work.
 - **Recognize errors, bias, or misinformation** that may appear in AI-generated content.

At WRSD, the integration of AI should always reflect our shared values: academic integrity, digital responsibility, language access, and student-centered learning. By adhering to these expectations, we ensure that AI enhances, not replaces, the thinking, effort, and creativity of our community. By establishing this policy, WRSD aims to foster a safe, inclusive, and forward-thinking environment in which generative AI can be explored as a constructive resource while safeguarding the values, privacy, and integrity of our school community.



SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURE

In the event that weather conditions become severe enough to warrant either the delay or closing of school at the Longmeadow Campus of Willie Ross School and our partnership campuses, announcements will be made over the following TV channels. We will also post on our website www.wrsdeaf.org and Facebook page www.facebook.com/wrsd1967 as well as through our Notification system via your cell phone.

Please watch specifically for **WILLIE ROSS SCHOOL** delays or closings, **NOT** Longmeadow or East Longmeadow Public Schools.

WWLP TV 22

WGGB TV 40

WSHM CBS – TV 3

If one of the programs at any partnership campus is closed early, all Willie Ross students will be transported to the Longmeadow Campus via a school vehicle. Their bus companies will be notified, and the students will be dismissed at the normal time from the Longmeadow Campus to their respective buses.



PARTNERSHIP CAMPUS CLOSINGS ONLY

If for any reason one or more sites should close during the day, the Lead Teacher or Assistant Director (BPU) at the affected location(s) will notify the Education Director and the Coordinator of Student and Administrative Services. Arrangements will be made for the Willie Ross School vehicles to pick up students, who will be brought to the Administration Building on the Longmeadow Campus or another WRSD location.

The teachers and staff will keep the students together until the school vehicle arrives to pick them up and drive them to the Administration Building on the Longmeadow Campus. Buses will be called by staff at the reception desk regarding **picking up the students at the end of the school day.**

STUDENTS WILL NOT BE SENT HOME EARLY.

APPENDIX A

Willie Ross School for the Deaf



BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. Check whether you are the:

☐ Target of the behavior

☐ Reporter (not the target)

3. Check whether you are a:

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Staff member (specify role) _____
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

Your contact information: _____

4. If student, state your school: _____ **Grade:** _____

5. If staff member, state your school or work site: _____

6. Information about the incident(s):

Name of Target (of behavior): _____

Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior):

Date(s) of Incident(s):

Time when incident(s) occurred:

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible):

7. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

Name: _____ Student Staff Other _____

Name: _____ Student Staff Other _____

Name: _____ Student Staff Other _____

8. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on another page if necessary.

Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____

Date: _____ (Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

Form Given to: _____ **Position:** _____

Date: _____ **Signature:** _____

Date Received: _____ **By:** _____

II. INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____

Position(s): _____

2. Interviews:

Named Aggressor - Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Target Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Witnesses

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

3. Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, have incidents involved a target or target group previously? ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION ☐ Yes ☐ No

Summary of Investigation:

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation: ☐ YES ☐ NO

☐ Bullying ☐ Incident documented as _____

☐ Retaliation ☐ Discipline referral only _____

Reasoning for finding:

2. Contacts:

☐ Target's parent/guardian Date: _____

☐ Named Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: _____

☐ Law Enforcement Date: _____ N/A

3. Action Taken:

☐ Loss of Privileges ☐ Detention ☐ Internal Suspension ☐ External Suspension

☐ Community Service ☐ Education ☐ Other _____

4. Describe Safety Planning:

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____

Initial and date when completed: _____

Notes:

Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for _____

Initial and date when completed: _____

Notes:

Report forwarded to Education Director:
(If the Education Director was not the investigator)

Date_____

Education Director's signature: _____

Date: _____

Report forwarded to President & CEO:

Date_____

President & CEO's signature: _____

APPENDIX B



Willie Ross School for the Deaf

HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND HATE CRIMES REPORTING FORM

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report: _____

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged event solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. Check whether you are the: ☐ Target of the behavior ☐ Witness (not the target)

3. Check whether you are a:

- ☐ Student ☐ Staff member (specify role) _____
☐ Parent ☐ Administrator ☐ Other (specify) _____

The best way to contact you regarding this report: _____

4. If student, state your school site: _____ **Grade:** _____

5. If staff member, state your work site: _____

6. Information about the incident(s):

Name of target (of behavior): _____

Name of person(s) you believe harassed or discriminated against you/target: _____

Date(s) of incident(s): _____

Time when Incident(s) occurred (approximate time is fine): _____

Location of incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): _____

7. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have firsthand information about it):

Name: _____ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other _____

Name: _____ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other _____

Name: _____ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other _____

8. Describe the details of the incident—including names of people involved and witnesses present, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used. Please use additional space on the back if necessary.

9. Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ **Date:** _____
(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

10: Form given to: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date Received: _____

II. INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____

Position(s): _____

2. Interviews:

☐ Interviewed accused Name: _____ Date: _____

☐ Interviewed target Name: _____ Date: _____

☐ Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

3. Any prior documented Incidents by the accused? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Any previous incidents with findings? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Summary of Investigation:

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of discrimination, hate, or harassment:

☐ YES

☐ NO

☐ Incident documented as _____

☐ Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts

If students involved:

☐ Target's parent/guardian

Date: _____

☐ Accused's parent/guardian

Date: _____

☐ Law Enforcement

Date: _____

If staff involved:

☐ Target

Date: _____

☐ Accused

Date: _____

☐ Accused's supervisor

Date: _____

☐ Law Enforcement

Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

☐ Loss of Privileges ☐ Detention ☐ Internal Suspension ☐ External Suspension

☐ Community Service ☐ Education ☐ Warning ☐ Termination

☐ Other _____

4. Describe Safety Planning:

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Follow-up with Accused: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

If student involved, report forwarded to Education Director:

Date: _____

(If the Education Director was not the investigator)

Report forwarded to President & CEO:

Date: _____

Signature and Title: _____

Date: _____

Signature and Title: _____

Date: _____

Revised July2024

APPENDIX C
Complaint/Grievance Form

TO: Erika Kaftan, Education Director
Alyssa Kristek, Director of Operations



CC: Robert Carter, President & CEO

DATE: _____

NAME(S) _____

REGISTRATION OF COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE – Parent/Guardian/Student

I/We, a member of the Willie Ross School for the Deaf community, is/are concerned about the following events:

Description of events:

I/We wish to have a meeting with the President & CEO, Robert Carter, as soon as possible to discuss my/our concerns and to develop a mutually acceptable solution.

Minutes of the meeting: _____

Action Plan to resolve the issues:

Signature of those in attendance:

Date: _____

Plans for follow up:
