



# The Whole Learning School

*Individualized Learning • Special Needs • Small Classes*

## **Parent and Student Handbook**

**2011-2012**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Parent and Student Handbook, which replaces all previous parent/student handbooks and other oral or written statements of school policy, is provided for informational purposes only and is not a contract between The Whole Learning School (TWLS) and its parents or students. The rules and procedures contained herein are not a complete list, and cannot cover all situations that may arise. Like any growing, developing organization, TWLS will add to and revise its procedures as necessary, with or without prior notice.

Concerns about compliance with this parent/student handbook should be brought to the attention of the Headmaster. TWLS will not retaliate against any parent or student who makes a good faith report regarding a known or suspected violation of this Parent and Student Handbook or laws or regulations applying to TWLS and its operations.

### **Mission Statement**

The Whole Learning School is committed to creating and maintaining a trusting, caring environment where teaching and learning are enjoyable and students are assisted as they develop responsibility and independence. All aspects of the school's organization, curriculum, and life-skills activities are student-centered and designed to accommodate individual learning styles so that all may experience success.

### **Staff**

Ann Rooney, Head of School

Extension 11 or [a.rooney@twls.org](mailto:a.rooney@twls.org)

Julie Hoff, Director of Marketing

Extension 12 or [j.hoff@twls.org](mailto:j.hoff@twls.org)

Sue McCrary, 14-18 year Classroom Teacher

Extension 14 or [s.mccrary@twls.org](mailto:s.mccrary@twls.org)

Adam Katz, 7-13 year Classroom Teacher

Extension 15, [s.trout@twls.org](mailto:s.trout@twls.org)

Kim Gallant, 7-13 year Classroom Teacher

Extension 16, [k.gallant@twls.org](mailto:k.gallant@twls.org)

### **Specialists**

To contact any of our Specialists please call 952-345-2295 x10 or [info@twls.org](mailto:info@twls.org).

Lori Opsal, Drama Specialist

Amy Madson, Music Therapist

Katherine Pierren, Karate

### **Board of Directors**

The Whole Learning School is governed by a Board of Directors who oversee the direction of the school. Our current Board of Directors are:

Rick Hartfiel, Chair  
Kate Hartfiel, Secretary  
Casey Nolan  
Lynda Boylson

Steve Benjamin  
Amy Proshek  
Sean Gallant

### **Admissions**

Students are admitted to The Whole Learning School based on their potential to succeed in our program as well as to meet eligibility requirements. TWLS does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national, or ethnic origin.

### **After- School Activities**

TWLS offers a before and after school care program called "Academic Enrichment". Hours are 7:00- 8:30 AM and 3:30- 5:30 PM. Contracted hours are \$15 a day or \$20 day drop in. Sign up in the office

### **Alcohol, Drugs, Cigarettes, Chewing Tobacco**

The Whole Learning School is a "substance-free" school. No student shall have in his/her possession or use any alcohol, illegal drugs or narcotics, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, or any drug paraphernalia or prescription or over-the-counter medications that are not administered by authorized school personnel, while on school property, or at school-sponsored activities. Anyone suspected or found to be involved in these activities may face suspension or expulsion. If this occurs, parents will be notified and required to attend a meeting with their child and the TWLS administration.

### **Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend school and classes regularly. A substantial amount of absences can severely hamper a student's educational progress. Please let us know as soon as possible if your child will be absent by calling and leaving a message in the general mailbox at 763-231-2700 or please send an email to [a.rooney@twls.org](mailto:a.rooney@twls.org).

#### Excused absences include:

Family obligations, special events, medical appointments, court-ordered appearances, and illness. These may need written verification, especially if absence is five consecutive days or longer.

#### Unexcused absences include:

All other reasons not included above. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, seven or more days of unexcused absences during a school year are cause for investigation.

Upon absence:

Parents will be notified if the student is absent without notification to the school. If the school determines that a student's absence is becoming chronic, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and create a plan to increase student's school attendance.

**Curriculum Night**

Parents are invited to attend the Curriculum Night at the beginning of the year to hear information about their child's school day, expectations, and curriculum. Our Specialists are also present to share about their program and answer any questions you may have. This is also a wonderful opportunity to meet other parents and our administrative staff.

**Campus**

TWLS has a closed-campus policy. All students must remain on school grounds during the school day unless the student has written parent permission for early excuse and will be picked up in the school office by that parent. Students may leave the campus for a school-sponsored activity with TWLS staff and parent permission. Some areas of the building are off-limits to students, or permissible with adult supervision: the boiler and furnace room, kitchen, and custodial areas. If a student is found violating this policy, parents and student will be contacted to discuss the issue and create a plan.

**Code of Conduct**

TWLS students are expected to treat other members of the school community with courtesy and respect. Behavior that does not demonstrate consideration of others or interferes with the educational process of others is unacceptable. Inappropriate, threatening, or abusive language, disruptive or physically abusive actions, or failure to respect the rights and well-being of others will not be tolerated. If a student fails to comply with this Code of Conduct, the student will meet with the appropriate school staff and administration and parents to develop a plan to improve behavior. If the student continues to violate this Code, despite a plan and repeated efforts, the student may face suspension and/or expulsion.

**Communication**

We at TWLS value communication between faculty, staff, parents, and students. It is the foundation of our program and your child's success. We strongly recommend email as our main form of communication. If you would like to speak to someone directly, please feel free to call or email during regular school hours. We would be glad to speak to you as soon as we are available. After school hours you may leave a voicemail or you may email at any time. We value your input and respect your concerns.

**Conditional Status**

TWLS makes every effort during the admissions process to get to know each child as well as possible and carefully identify students that meet TWLS eligibility criteria. At times, TWLS may need to enroll a student on "Conditional Status" if concerns arise during the admissions process that may hinder a student's success or ability to "fit in" at TWLS. Parents will be notified of this during the admissions process and in the Enrollment Contract. Enrollment will be specified for a trial time period and reviewed

before that time period expires. If it is determined that the student's needs cannot be met by TWLS, the school and the family may work together to find a more appropriate program.

### **Conferences**

Conferences will be held three times per year.

### **Consent for Release of Information**

Obtaining student records is an integral part of the admissions process and, once admitted, of the ongoing communication between parents and professionals about a child's needs and progress. Written parent permission is necessary to acquire records from schools or other agencies. Similarly, the same written authorizations are necessary for The Whole Learning School to transmit official school records. Parents should note that it is a policy of The Whole Learning School Board of Directors not to release any documents until all outstanding financial balances are paid or arrangements for payment are worked out with the business office.

### **Crisis Management**

Our main goal at TWLS is to ensure a secure, caring environment where students feel safe learning and exploring in order to reach their full potential. A crisis management plan has been developed by TWLS staff. Staff reviews the plan yearly and updates it as needed.

### **Curriculum**

Our curriculum is designed and adapted to meet the unique learning styles of each student. It is developed to maximize each child's innate intelligence and is supplemented with materials and activities to ensure learning success and enjoyment. As an extension to the firm academic foundation that learners obtain, each student has the opportunity to celebrate their gifts and talents through art, music, drama, and gross motor skills.

The teaching at TWLS is hands-on and multi-sensory, integrated and cross-curricular. We do not use any textbooks. All print materials that students encounter, with the exception of literature books, are available for student consumption. Students are taught a variety of methods to demonstrate their knowledge and celebrate their strengths. All instruction is individualized and designed at each student's instructional level. More specific information is available upon request.

### **Disciplinary Actions**

We expect all students to follow all guidelines and rules established in this handbook upon enrollment at TWLS. However, if the student is unable to follow these policies the following steps will occur, keeping in mind each student's individual needs:

1. The student is immediately redirected to appropriate behavior.

2. Removal of student from environment to appropriate staff for behavior intervention. Parental notification when deemed necessary by involved staff.
3. If student behavior continues to be disruptive or inappropriate, the student, parents, teacher, and appropriate staff will communicate to create a plan for success for the student.
4. If student behavior continues to be disruptive or inappropriate with a plan in place, the team will meet again to discuss options for the student, including conditional enrollment for the remainder of the year, discontinued enrollment on a given date, or alternative placement.
5. Physical and verbal aggression will not be tolerated. If a student lashes out physically or verbally at a student or staff, parents will be notified immediately and a determination will be made as to what the student needs for the day. Any student removed from school for behavioral issues will require a team re-entry meeting. A team meeting to develop a plan for behavioral success or other options must occur before the student can return to school.

### **Dress Code**

TWLS believes that students should arrive at school dressed in a manner that promotes good student morale and school spirit. We feel that the students' attire has a significant impact on how they feel about themselves, their school, and their readiness to learn. We ask students to dress in a clean, neat manner and follow these guidelines:

- Refrain from wearing hats, hoods, or coats in the building at all times, unless for religious or medical purposes.
- Clothing must be free from writing or pictures pertaining to rock bands, cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, sexual connotations, or other negative attitudes as determined by school administration.
- Clothing must be free from rips, tears, and holes.
- All underwear (including bras and boxers) must be concealed under appropriate clothing.
- Midriffs must be covered at all times. Shirts must come to the top of the pants/shorts/skirt line.
- Shorts, skirts and dresses must be longer than one adult hand length from the knee.
- Personal hygiene must be adhered to—hair combed, faces washed, teeth brushed, showered, and deodorant as applicable.

If a student does not follow the dress code, the parent will be contacted and asked to bring appropriate clothes to school; if the parent cannot be contacted, the school will provide clothes for the student for the day that must be laundered and returned to the school within two days.

### **Exit Criteria**

We believe that all students are welcome at TWLS as long as the program meets the student's needs and the student is appropriate for the program. We encourage families

to consider TWLS a home for their child through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade or as long as appropriate.

Exiting TWLS is a team decision including input from parents, the student (if appropriate), TWLS staff and teachers. Consideration for a student exiting TWLS will be made on an individual basis. Areas to consider may be a student's level of independence, progress, goals, emotional well-being, or disruptive behaviors. Parents will be notified of the specific concerns regarding their child at a conference prior to the commencement of the exit procedure. The team may then develop a plan for the student to continue, be monitored, or exit TWLS. The transition process resulting from exiting TWLS will be supported by TWLS to the extent possible.

### **First Aid**

In the event of a minor injury or illness, students should come to the main office for first aid. Parents will be notified if the injury or illness appears serious. If the student requires medical attention beyond the capabilities of the staff, the student will be transported to Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park.

### **Homework**

The purpose of homework is:

- To provide reinforcement of classroom instruction
- To develop organizational and study skills
- To foster independence and self-motivation.

The amount and nature of homework is individualized for each student and each family's needs. We understand that many students are "burned-out" at the end of the school day and the family may desire quality time together without the added strain of homework. We also understand that many students crave the additional reinforcement outside of school. In determining homework, teachers take parent requests seriously and respectfully. When homework is assigned, teachers ensure that students clearly understand the purpose and directions for the assignment, and that it is at the student's "instructional" level, clearly reinforcing previously learned skills.

### **Individual Learning Portfolio**

Each student will have an Individual Learning Portfolio. This plan will be created at the fall conference by the student, parents, teacher, and specialists. The Team is encouraged to develop goals in the following areas: Academics, Arts, Social Skills, and Life Skills. Parents will receive a letter explaining all the details of this plan in the fall before conferences. This plan will be reviewed and modified as needed, plus at least three additional times per year at conferences.

### **Leaving School During the Day**

#### Advanced notification

If a student needs to leave school grounds during the day for a prearranged appointment, the student is required to bring a note from home informing the office and the teacher of the reason and time for leaving.

### Unexpected school day leave

If a student needs to leave school grounds during the day due to illness or other emergency reasons, the student must check out through the school office with verbal notification from the parent.

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day without an authorized adult and school approval.

### **Length of School Day**

The TWLS school day is from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Students may arrive any time between 8:15-8:30 a.m., and are to be picked up at 3:30 p.m. Difficulties adhering to this policy will be managed on an individual basis.

### **Lost and Found**

If your child lost an article of clothing please contact the teacher or the front office. Please mark all clothing with the student's name. All clothing unclaimed at the end of the school year will be donated to TWLS as extra clothing or to a charity of school choice.

### **Medical Information**

Health Forms – All parents receive health forms from TWLS that must be completed and returned to the school by September of the current school year.

Immunizations - Minnesota State law requires that all children who are enrolled in a Minnesota school must be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella. A child may not attend school until all immunizations are completed, or a conscientious objection document is signed.

Prescription Medication - Students requiring daily prescription medication need written parental consent for each medication. Students are given their medication by a trained TWLS staff member, under the direction of a Health Services Specialist from the St. Louis Park School District. Medication must be supplied in the original prescription bottle with the correct label, name of student, name and dosage of medication, name of doctor, pharmacy, and date. Notify our Office Manager of any changes of medication or dosages.

Non-Prescription Medication - Students who have non-prescription medication (over-the-counter such as Tylenol, Benedryl, etc.) available during school hours need written parental consent for each medication. Students are given their medication by a trained TWLS staff member, under the direction of a Health Services Specialist from the St. Louis Park School District. Medication must be supplied in the original packaging with the correct label, name of student, name and dosage of medication, and date. Notify our Office Manager of any changes of medication or dosages.

### **Photographs**

Throughout the year TWLS takes pictures of students during a variety of activities. These pictures may be used for the school yearbook and/or publicity for the school. Parents are asked to sign a photo release at the beginning of each school year indicating consent for photographs of their child to be used in TWLS publicity. If a parent chooses not to sign the release, photos of their child will not be used in outside publicity, but will be included in the TWLS yearbook unless notified in writing that such photo should be excluded.

### **Pop and Candy**

Pop and candy are not permitted in school with the exception of school-sponsored special events. We strongly encourage sending nutritious snacks and lunches.

### **Property Damage**

Students are expected to respect school property, grounds, and property of others. Vandalism and theft are not tolerated. Students are responsible for any damage other than normal wear they cause to school property and may be required to make restitution by performing service to the school or paying for repairs or losses.

### **Recess**

Students will go outside daily after lunch unless the temperature is colder than ten below zero (actual temperature or wind chill), or it is raining. Please send appropriate clothing daily for outdoor gross motor activity to school.

### **Recommendation To Return to TWLS**

Each student's needs and progress are evaluated by teachers before recommending a student's return to TWLS. Questions asked in determining the recommendation may include:

- Will TWLS be able to provide the most appropriate and effective education for the student?
- Has the student progressed socially, academically, and behaviorally and is continued growth projected?
- Has the student shown a history of compliance with school and classroom policies?

If a student is no longer appropriate for TWLS, school staff, parents, and others involved with the student will work together to create a transition plan for the student that best meets his/her needs.

### **School Closings**

In the event that school must be closed, WCCO Radio (830 on the AM dial) or TV channel 4 or wcco.com and Kare 11 (Channel 11) will be notified to broadcast the school closing. We are listed in the "W" section in alphabetical order. Questions about school closings should be directed to the school office. If school needs to be closed midday parents will be directly contacted.

**Sexual Harassment Policy**

The Whole Learning School strongly disapproves of any form of sexual harassment and has therefore adopted a policy to maintain a supportive community. All members of The Whole Learning Schools' community are to be treated with respect and dignity.

It is recognized that not every advance or comment of a sexual nature constitutes harassment. Whether a particular action or incident is harassment requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

This policy shall apply to students, teachers, administrators, Board members, and other school personnel and volunteers and is designed to protect both accused and complainant during the investigation of a complaint.

Any person who believes he/she has been the victim of sexual harassment, or any third party with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment, should report the alleged acts immediately to the Headmaster. If the complaint involves the Headmaster, the complaint shall be filed with the Chair of the Board of Directors. The Headmaster, with the knowledge and support of the Board of Directors will take such disciplinary action as he/she deems necessary and appropriate, including warning, suspension, or immediate discharge to end sexual harassment and prevent its recurrence. Any action taken pursuant to this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable employment contracts, Minnesota statutes, and The Whole Learning School policies.

**Specialists**

All students receive as a part of their regular coursework at TWLS: Karate, Drama, and Music Therapy. Students do not need to meet any additional criteria to participate in these services.

**Tardy Policy**

Students are expected to arrive anytime between 8:15–8:45 a.m. School begins promptly at 8:45 a.m. Any time of arrival after 8:45 a.m. is considered tardy. If a student is tardy, he/she must be escorted to the office by a parent.

**Telephone Calls**

Telephone calls by students should only be made in an emergency. If a student must use a telephone, permission from the teacher or office staff is necessary. Additionally, if a parent needs to speak to their child during the school day, school staff will take a message and relay it to the student. No pagers or cell phones are allowed on at school.

**Testing**

Students are tested to measure annual progress twice each school year—once in the fall and again in the summer. Throughout the year students create a portfolio to observe their accomplishments and growth. Students at TWLS are exempt from participating in standardized testing, but may do so at parent request. More specific information is

available upon request. We also suggest that students remain on a three-year psycho-educational re-evaluation cycle. TWLS, at this time, does not perform the testing, but does have a list of referral sources upon request.

### **Transportation**

Parents are responsible for arranging transportation for their children. When arranging busing, we suggest you first call your local school district office and speak with the person in charge of transportation. Inquire if the school district is already busing a child to The Whole Learning School or would be willing to do so. The Whole Learning School will provide names of other students who live in your area if you choose to carpool.

### **The TWLS Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

The TWLS Parent Teacher Organization arranges activities and special events to supplement the academic program and enhance the school's sense of community. For more information, please contact Julie Bensen at [jhbensen@msn.com](mailto:jhbensen@msn.com) or 952-933-0854.

### **Valuables and Personal Property**

Students are discouraged from bringing personal property to school. They bring them at their own risk. The Whole Learning School does not assume any responsibility for loss of personal property. If a valuable item is needed for class, the item should be given to the teacher upon arrival to school.

### **Weapons Policy and Procedures**

The Whole Learning School bans guns on the premises. The possession and/or use of weapons are not permitted on school grounds and will result in one or more of the following:

- Confiscation of the weapon
- Notification of parent(s)
- Suspension from school
- Expulsion from school

“Possession” refers to having a weapon on one’s person or in an area on school grounds subject to their control (locker, car, etc.). A “weapon” may include any firearm, whether loaded, unloaded, or a look-alike, or any instrument that is capable of causing bodily harm or death. Some examples are guns, knives, clubs, metal knuckles, throwing stars, and explosives.

**THE WHOLE LEARNING SCHOOL  
PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK RECEIPT**

By signing this receipt, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of The Whole Learning School Parent and Student Handbook. I agree to abide by the rules, regulations, and policies contained therein, or hereafter added. I also understand that this is not a contract between the Whole Learning School and its parents or students.

\_\_\_\_\_

Student

\_\_\_\_\_

Dated

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Dated