

THE WOODLANDS  
**METHODIST**  
SCHOOL



## Student/Parent Handbook

Preschool  
Lower School  
Middle School

Serving Students 18 months through 8th grade

[twmschool.org](http://twmschool.org)  
[thewoodlandsumc.org](http://thewoodlandsumc.org)

The Woodlands Methodist School is an outreach program of  
The Woodlands United Methodist Church.

2200 Lake Woodlands Drive, The Woodlands, Texas 77380  
Preschool 281-297-5959 Fax: 281-297-5912  
Lower and Middle School 281-822-8220 Fax: 832-381-3025

The following procedures that have been put in place during COVID-19 will supersede the policies stated in the TWMS Student/Parent Handbook:

#### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

- All students will enter and exit the building via car line. No walk-ups.
- Parents must stay in car.
- Students must have mask on for arrival and dismissal.
- Late pick-ups will not go to Eagle Club. Late pick-ups will be charged a late pick up fee.

#### **LUNCH**

- All lunches will be eaten in the classroom.
- All students must bring a lunch from home. No hot lunches will be served.
- Microwave will not be accessible.

#### **WATER BOTTLES**

- Water fountains will be closed.
- Water bottle refill station will be open and available for use.

#### **VISITORS**

- No visitors will be allowed in the building.
- Parents/guardians may enter at the reception to show ID to pick up a child that is leaving early. Parent/Guardian will be asked to wait outside after ID is checked.

#### **DROP OFF ITEMS**

- We understand your child may forget an important item. A Drop Off Table will be available outside the building.
- Please label your child's items and call the receptionist at 281-822-8210 to let them know you have dropped an item off for your child.

#### **UNIFORMS**

- Monday – Thursday students wear regular daily uniforms.
- Fridays – TWMS Spirit Days! Students may wear a school t-shirt.
- No Chapel Uniforms will be required.

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# The Woodlands Methodist School

## Vision Statement

As an outreach ministry of The Woodlands United Methodist Church, we adhere to these core beliefs: *Win People to Jesus Christ – Disciple Them in Faith – Help Those in Need*

## Mission Statement

To provide a joyful, Christian education through which children develop a lifelong love of learning, pursue excellence, and positively impact the world.

## The Woodlands Methodist School Motto

Faith - Joy - Excellence

## Guiding Principles

 <p><b>Spiritual Growth</b> We believe each individual is created by God as a unique and special person with the potential to grow and learn. We employ Christian staff who share their faith and teach about God’s word daily.</p>	 <p><b>Learning Environment</b> We celebrate the unique learning potential of each child. Our small class sizes enable highly qualified Preschool teachers and certified Lower and Middle School teachers to meet individual, developmental needs in a safe, secure, nurturing environment.</p>	 <p><b>Accountability</b> We are both responsible to and supported by The Woodlands United Methodist Church, the TWUMC School Board, and the families we serve. Our school is accredited through Cognia and held accountable by TEPSAC (Texas Private School Accreditation Commission) for students ages three – 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and our program for children under age three is licensed by the state of Texas.</p>
 <p><b>Excellence</b> We uphold high individualized expectations while guiding students to discover their unique talents and interests. We strive to develop their hearts, minds, and bodies to their greatest potential, pursuing joyful excellence in all we do.</p>	 <p><b>Family Partnership</b> We believe learning extends beyond the classroom and that a collaborative relationship with families is essential to a successful education. We maintain open communication and opportunities for involvement.</p>	 <p><b>Compassion</b> We develop individuals of integrity with a heart for serving others. We demonstrate love and respect daily in all our interactions. We guide students to be Christ-like, responsible citizens who positively impact the world.</p>

# **SPIRITUAL BELIEFS**

## **THE WOODLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (TWUMC) MISSION**

Win People to Jesus Christ - Disciple Them in Faith - Help Those in Need

### **OUR BELIEFS**

*“In essential beliefs we have unity, in non-essential beliefs we have liberty, and in all beliefs, we have charity.”* <sup>1733</sup><sub>SEP</sub> John Wesley, Founder of the Methodist movement

### **ABOUT GOD**

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He exists eternally in three personalities: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is both holy and loving.

### **ABOUT JESUS CHRIST**

Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God. He lived a sinless human life and died on the cross to atone for our sins. He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven and will return again to earth.

### **ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. When we receive Jesus as the leader of our lives and the forgiver of our sins, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. He provides us with power for living, enables us to understand spiritual truth, and guides us in doing what pleases God. As Christians we seek to live under His control daily.

### **ABOUT THE BIBLE**

The Bible is God’s word written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the final authority for determining our Christian beliefs and how we are to live.

### **ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS**

People are made in the spiritual image of God — we are rational and moral beings. Because we are God’s creation made in God’s image, each person possesses great self-worth. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of self-centeredness which the Bible calls “sin.” This attitude and its resultant actions separate us from God, others and ourselves.

### **ABOUT BEING MADE RIGHT WITH GOD**

Becoming right with God and having our relationship with God restored is what the Bible calls salvation. Salvation is God’s free gift to us. We can never earn it or achieve it by self-improvement or good works. We accept God’s gift of a new life when we turn from our self-ruled life and accept Jesus as our Savior. The new life that God gives us is an abundant life in this world and eternal life in the world to come.

### **ABOUT THE KIND OF LIFE, WE ARE CALLED TO LIVE**

Though we are not made right with God by our own goodness, “good works” are not optional for the Christian life. When we give our lives to Christ, it is expected that we will grow towards loving God with all our being and our neighbors as ourselves.

### **ABOUT BAPTISM**

Baptism is our initiation into the church and our identification as children of God. God initiates this relationship and chooses us as daughters and sons, beginning our life-long journey of faith. God’s choice happens regardless of our age or our response. Because God chooses us once and for all, this is an act that should not be repeated. Those that are baptized as children must make the choice to confirm their belief in Christ to continue as members of the church.

### **ABOUT HOLY COMMUNION**

Communion is an opportunity for us to renew our relationship with Jesus Christ. On His last night before His death, Jesus ate a special meal with His disciples. He charged his church with repeating this meal to remember His sacrifice and celebrate our new life through His death and resurrection. God offers this relationship to everyone, so all who desire to receive are welcome to participate.

## **School History**

The Woodlands Methodist School is an outreach ministry of The Woodlands United Methodist Church. The school began as Children of The Woodlands preschool in 1981. In 2011, The Woodlands Methodist School was formed to include a Christ-centered elementary education. TWMS Lower School opened its doors in the TWUMC Family Life Center in April 2014, and Middle School started in the fall of 2015. Proudly graduating the first group of 8th graders in the spring of 2019, the school serves toddlers through eighth graders in two buildings on the church campus.

## **Accreditation**

The Woodlands Methodist School is committed to providing high quality Preschool, Lower and Middle School education. Our program is accredited through Cognia and held accountable by TEPSAC (Texas Private School Accreditation Commission) for students ages three – 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and our program for children under age three is licensed by the state of Texas.

Cognia accreditation, formerly AdvancED | Measured Progress, is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed more than 100 years ago by American universities and secondary schools and designed primarily to distinguish schools adhering to a set of high educational standards. The accreditation process is also known to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education.

While accreditation is a set of rigorous protocols and research-based processes for evaluating an institution's organizational effectiveness, it is far more than that. Today, accreditation examines the whole institution—the programs, the cultural context, the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of students.

## **Licensing**

Programs for children under age three are not part of Cognia accreditation but are licensed as required by the state of Texas. Our Preschool meets or exceeds all standards set by Health and Human Services (HHS) and our toddlers and twos programs are fully licensed as required by state regulations. A copy of the Minimum Standards is available on site for parents to review, as well as the most recent licensing inspection report. Parents can access the Minimum Standards online at <https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/protective-services-providers/child-care-licensing/minimum-standards>. The local licensing office can be contacted at 1-936-441-1775 or [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov). The child abuse hotline is 1-800-252-5400. The Preschool Director is available to discuss parent questions and concerns about policies and procedures. Call the Preschool receptionist at 281-297-5959.

Licensed programs are required to provide parents with information about product safety recalls. Important information for child safety can be accessed at the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or at the Health and Human Services website at [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov).

## FACILITY NOTIFICATIONS

- The church campus is a drug, alcohol and tobacco free campus.
- The church campus is a gang free zone.
- An area near the Preschool is available for nursing moms. Nursing mothers are welcome to bring refrigerated nurse milk for their babies, if necessary.

### Facility Safety

Adults must supervise children at all times. This includes siblings and young guests. Never leave a child unattended anywhere on the church property.

### Pets

Although some classrooms have pets, the administrative staff must approve any other animals brought to school prior to their visit. The school will notify all parents in advance. Leashes and cages are required when appropriate. When approved animals are on the school premises, owners must provide documentation that the animals are vaccinated according to state and local requirements. Please refrain from bringing your pets into the facility without prior approval from the Head of School.

### Policy Changes

The school provides written notification in the event that any policy changes occur after this handbook is published. Families are required to sign and date an acknowledgement of any revisions.

## Program Operating Schedule and Procedures

### School Hours

	Student Arrival Time	Student Dismissal Time
Preschool		
Toddlers/Twos	9:00 a.m.	1:00 p.m.
EC3/EC4		1:30 p.m.
Transition		1:30 p.m.
Lower School		
Kindergarten	8:45 – 9:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.
1 <sup>st</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup> Grades	8:10 - 8:30 a.m.	3:15 p.m.
Middle School		
5 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> Grades	8:10 – 8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.

### Eagle and Eaglet Club Hours (before and after care offered at additional cost)

	Morning	Afternoon
Preschool Eaglet Club (currently delayed)	8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	After school to 3:00 p.m.
Lower and Middle School Eagle Club	7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	After school to 5:30

## Reception and School Business Office Hours

	Morning Opening Time	Afternoon Closing Time	Phone and Email
Preschool Reception (Located in the main church building)			
School Day Hours	7:30 a.m.	3:15 p.m.	<a href="mailto:Preschool@twumc.org">Preschool@twumc.org</a> 281-297-5959
Summer Hours	9:00 a.m.	2:00 p.m.	<a href="mailto:Preschool@twumc.org">Preschool@twumc.org</a>
Lower/Middle School Reception (Located at the FLC Building)			
School Day Hours	7:30 a.m.	3:45 p.m.	<a href="mailto:School@twumc.org">School@twumc.org</a> 281-822-8220
Summer Hours	9:00 a.m.	2:00 p.m.	<a href="mailto:School@twumc.org">School@twumc.org</a>
School Business Office (Located near Preschool Reception Desk in the main church building)			
School Day Hours	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	<a href="mailto:Schoolbusinessoffice@twumc.org">Schoolbusinessoffice@twumc.org</a>
Summer Hours	9:00 a.m.	2:00 p.m.	<a href="mailto:Schoolbusinessoffice@twumc.org">Schoolbusinessoffice@twumc.org</a>

## SCHOOL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

Department	Contact Person	Contact Information
Head of School	Ken West	<a href="mailto:kwest@twumc.org">kwest@twumc.org</a>
Admission Office	Rebecca Coates	<a href="mailto:rcoates@twumc.org">rcoates@twumc.org</a>
School Business Office (Tuition/Billing)	Debi VerPloeg Ann Zuspan Kim Joraholmen	<a href="mailto:schoolbusinessoffice@twumc.org">schoolbusinessoffice@twumc.org</a>
Preschool Director	Linda Wilmoth	<a href="mailto:lwilmoth@twumc.org">lwilmoth@twumc.org</a>
Lower School Director	Amy Shaffer	<a href="mailto:ashaffer@twumc.org">ashaffer@twumc.org</a>
Middle School Director	Mike Bordelon	<a href="mailto:mbordelon@twumc.org">mbordelon@twumc.org</a>
Nurses Clinics		
Preschool	Paula Gamwell	<a href="mailto:preschoolnurse@twumc.org">preschoolnurse@twumc.org</a> (281) 466-8655
Lower/Middle School	Alison Whiddon	<a href="mailto:schoolnurse@twumc.org">schoolnurse@twumc.org</a> (281) 822-8211

The school calendar may be found on the school website <https://www.twmschool.org>

### Incllement Weather

School is cancelled if Conroe ISD cancels school due to weather. If Conroe ISD has a delayed start time, we will notify families by email and text that we will open as usual, open later, or close school for the entire day, based on weather conditions. Parents are contacted immediately if an unsafe condition arises while the students are at school. If we miss more than two school days, the School Board may meet and, alongside administrators, decide if make-up days are appropriate.

### Other School Closures

There may be times when TWMS varies from CISD. This decision will be made with the safety and best interest of our students as the priority.

## **ABSENCES/TARDIES/LATE PICK-UP**

Preschool (Toddlers through Transition Class) does not have a tardy or absence policy.

Lower and Middle School students who arrive after their designated start time are considered tardy.

In Lower School, arrival after 11:30 a.m. is counted as a full-day absence, unless a doctor's note is provided.

In Middle School, absences are recorded by class.

When possible, please schedule appointments on school holidays or after school hours. If your student is absent or tardy due to a doctor's visit, please bring in a note from the doctor to the school nurse. For the benefit of the child, notify the teacher and school nurse at least one week in advance of a planned absence. If absences exceed 2 days, please email your child's teacher for missed assignments. Students are expected to make up missed reports, assignments, tests, etc. that occur during any absence. Students have one day per day missed, to make up the assignments.

### **Excessive Absences**

In the rare case that a student is absent more than 10 days in a semester, a written doctor's excuse is required for any subsequent absences. Any Lower or Middle School student missing more than 20 days in a school year may be retained. If a student is absent for an extended amount of time, while under a doctor's supervision, an exemption may be granted.

### **Tardiness**

Each teacher records tardiness/absences.

- Preschool does not have a tardy policy.
- Lower School – An accumulation of seven tardies results in one absence. This is ongoing for the year, not limited to independent marking periods.
- Middle School – Four unexcused tardies in a class per nine weeks will result in a detention. Detention may be held during lunch, before or after school.

### **Late Pickup Fees**

Preschool students are to be picked up promptly by the end of their preschool day. After dismissal time, children may be picked up in the school office. A late fee will be assessed to the family's account for each offense.

Lower and Middle School students who are not picked up promptly at dismissal time will be and charged a late fee.

If you are unavoidably detained, please call the school.

### **Authorization to Pick Up a Child**

Students will only be released to a parent/guardian or an adult designated in Family Portal as an emergency contact/pick up by the parent. In the event of a temporary pick up by someone that is not listed in your Family Portal emergency contacts, an email will serve as written notification.

### **Arrival and Departure**

Please refer to the car line map for details.

## Arrival and Dismissal Times

	Age/Grade Level	Morning Car Line Begins and Classroom Doors Open (Car line for ages 3 and older)	Tardy	School Dismissal Begins (Car Line for ages 3 and older)
Preschool	Toddlers & Twos	9:00 a.m.	n/a	1:00 p.m.
	EC3 & EC4	9:00 a.m.	n/a	1:30 p.m.
	Transition	9:00 a.m.	n/a	1:30 p.m.
Lower School	Kindergarten	8:45 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.
	1 <sup>st</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8:10 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	3:15 p.m.
Middle School	5 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8:10 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.

## Safety

Student safety is the school's top concern. Please drive slowly and carefully in the busy parking lot. Hold young children's hands when crossing through the driveway or parking areas, as well as inside the facility. Each student must have an individual seat belt or car seat as required by law. Texas law states students 8 years and older, or at least 4'9", do not require a booster seat. It is the parent's responsibility to abide by state car seat laws.

The staff cannot deliver or install car seats and booster seats. If your student is riding home in another vehicle and needs the car seat/booster seat, please label and leave it at the reception desk. An adult must pick up the child and car seat/booster seat, inside the school, at dismissal time. Please remember an adult must supervise all children, including siblings, at all times.

Please respect the designated handicap parking areas. Make sure all cars are locked and valuables are out of sight.

## Walking in During Arrival

Parents of Toddlers and Twos must walk their child to the classroom. Parents of all Preschool students are welcome to walk their children in to their classes. Lower and Middle School parents are welcome to walk their children in for the first two weeks of school. After the first two weeks, parents of kindergarten and first grade students may continue to walk their child to their classroom but must sign in through our Raptor system. All Lower and Middle School parents may escort students to the school entrance while staff is present to receive children. If a student arrives after school has started, a parent must check them in at the front desk. Preschool parents arriving late must sign in through our Raptor system before escorting their child to class.

## Eaglet and Eagle Club Morning and Afternoon Times

	Age/Grade Level	Morning	Afternoon	Notes
Preschool Eaglet Club	Toddlers & Twos	8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Spots are limited and filled on a first come, first served basis through a registration form. Parents register their child(ren) prior to each session starting. Late pickups incur a fee.
	EC3, EC4, Transition	8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	1:30 – 3:00 p.m.	
Lower and Middle School Eagle Club	Kindergarten	7:30 - 9:00 a.m. or 8:10 - 9:00 a.m.	3:00 - 5:30 p.m.	Spots are limited and filled on a first come, first served basis through a registration form. Parents register their child(ren) prior to each session starting. Late pickups incur a fee.
		1 <sup>st</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
	5 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	3:30 - 5:30 p.m.	

## Mid-Day Departure

Photo ID is required to release a student to anyone, including those persons on the Family Portal/FACTS pick up and emergency contact list.

Preschool parents/approved pick up person will request their child for mid-day departure at reception. Students will be brought to the reception to meet their parent or approved pick up person.

A Lower or Middle School student may depart during the school day if:

1. Student has a Departure Pass
  - Student brings a note from parents to give reception first thing in the morning.
  - Reception gives Departure Pass with designated time for student to come to reception to meet their parent for early departure.
  - Student is responsible for giving Departure Pass to teacher or classroom assistant.
  - Teacher or classroom assistant will make sure that the student is packed and ready to depart by the time marked on the pass.
  - K-2 will be escorted to reception. 3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> may check out with the teacher/classroom assistant and use the Departure Pass to go reception.
2. Parent or approved pick up person is at reception with request to pick up student early. Reception will call classroom to have student sent to reception. K-2 will be escorted to reception.
3. TWMS will only release a student to a person who is physically in the building with their ID. TWMS will not send students outside to parent/approved pick up person.

## Walking in During Departure (Preschool Only)

Please sign your child's name and your name on the appropriate clipboard at the reception desk. Please wait near the reception desk and we will bring your child to you.

## Bicycle Procedures

Preschool and Lower School bike riders must be accompanied by an adult. Middle School students must have written parental permission and must review bike safety instructions with the Director of Middle School.

## Change in Transportation

In order to minimize delays during dismissal, submit pick up and transportation changes by email (Preschool: [preschool@twumc.org](mailto:preschool@twumc.org) Lower/Middle: [school@twumc.org](mailto:school@twumc.org)) at least an hour before dismissal. Photo ID is required to release a student to anyone, including those persons on the Family Portal pick up and emergency contact list.

## Using Car Line for Arrival or Departure

**When using car line, please follow these simple steps:**

1. Place car line sign in the car window and keep visible until you have gone through car line completely. This helps the staff greet students by name and helps with efficiency.
2. Stay in your car. The staff is happy to assist the students.
3. Upon arrival, have backpacks ready and be prepared to say goodbye quickly.
4. Put the car into **PARK** while children are loading and unloading. Do not allow children to exit the vehicle until a staff member opens the door.
5. The staff is happy to deliver notes and lightweight items to the office or classrooms.
6. If possible, please place car and booster seats on the side closest to the building and in the backseat. Staff members load and unload from the side closest to the building. Staff members will not walk in between cars to load a student.
7. The staff **always** loads Preschool - 2nd grade students into the backseat and assists with seatbelts and car seats if needed. Texas law states students 8 years and older or at least 4' 9" do not require a booster seat.
8. For the safety of everyone, please hold on to pets as students load and unload.
9. Reminder-car line is a "**Phone Free Zone**". Your undivided attention and assistance are needed.
10. Please be prompt. Some car lines are much faster than others! (If car line is finished when you pull up, you are **LATE**. Please park and walk in.)
11. Please proceed straight when exiting car line.
12. Only authorized individuals may pick up students. Photo ID may be required to verify permission of release.
13. Remember that these rules and procedures exist because of the school's constant commitment to school safety.

## **PARENT- SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

### **Family Portal/FACTS SIS (Student Information System)**

We rely on email and parent text alerts to communicate with families. Please update your information in Family Portal/FACTS and notify the school immediately of any email and phone number changes.

### **Newsletter**

Frequent school newsletters are posted on Family Portal under “Resource Documents” to provide parents with additional information concerning activities at the school.

### **Website and Facebook Page**

Access the school website at <https://www.twmschool.org/> and school Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TheWoodlandsMethodistSchool/>

### **Teacher to Student**

**Preschool – 4<sup>th</sup> grade:** The home visit is the first step toward building this important relationship. This brief visit helps each student feel more comfortable in a new classroom with a new teacher, and helps the teachers get to know the children on a personal basis.

### **Teacher to Parent**

A strong school/home relationship is very important, and we encourage regular communication. An email or note from parents about any changes at home (new baby, parents away, illness, even death of a pet) allows your child’s teacher to help.

Teachers communicate with parents through emails, newsletters, event updates and photos. Please check student backpacks, folders, and email daily.

Lower School: The school schedules two parent/teacher conferences one in the fall and spring. Parents may also schedule additional conferences with teachers or administrators.

Due to teachers’ full teaching schedules, they may not receive phone calls during class time. Please leave a message with the receptionist who will deliver messages by the end of the school day. Teachers are happy to meet with parents to conference about children. Kindly coordinate a day and time preference to meet via email.

Preschool parents may visit their child’s classroom at any time. We welcome Lower and Middle School parents in the classrooms as long as it is pre-scheduled with the teacher. Babies in arms are welcome, but strollers and other siblings are not, due to the limited space and the disruption to classroom routines. For safety reasons, siblings may not play on the school playground. All visitors must check in with the receptionist, be screened with our Visitor Management RAPTOR System, and wear a name badge while on school property. Parents/guardians who wish to volunteer on a regular basis will need to complete a Background Check. Please refer to “TWMS Volunteer Policy” in the Appendix for more information.

Your phone calls, e-mails and written messages are encouraged. The key to the success of our school is the open communication between parents and staff. An annual survey also provides an opportunity for parental input.

**Parent Questions/Concerns**

If you have a concern about your child or the curriculum, we ask that you follow these guidelines in resolving your concern. Please first contact your child's teacher. If the problem is not resolved, you may contact the Director for your child's grade level. If the problem is not resolved after coordinating with the Director of the school level, contact our Head of School, Ken West [kwest@twumc.org](mailto:kwest@twumc.org).

**Board Communication**

If you would like to ask questions or present an idea concerning The Woodlands Methodist School, please contact the Head or School at [kwest@twumc.org](mailto:kwest@twumc.org) or the School Board [twmsschoolboard@twumc.org](mailto:twmsschoolboard@twumc.org).

**TWUMC to Parents**

As an outreach ministry of TWUMC, TWMS families may be contacted periodically with information about other TWUMC programs and events.

**Campus Activities**

Please refer to the School Event Calendar on our school website for details.

**Family Activities**

We believe learning extends beyond the classroom and that a collaborative relationship with families is essential to a successful education. Some family events include the Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas Celebration, Spring Family Night and End of the Year School Celebrations. Parents are also invited to participate in our Book Fair and to volunteer to help with special events. Children of visitors, during regular school days, may not participate in class activities.

**Chapel and Family Fridays**

Students of all ages attend chapel each week. TWUMC Children's Ministry staff shares age appropriate chapel lessons, Bible stories, songs and activities. Parents and siblings are welcome. Our Lower School and Middle School hosts All School Chapels and Family Fridays several times each semester to bring together families and staff to pray, highlight students, and share messages.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **Beliefs and General Curriculum Information**

At The Woodlands Methodist School, we encourage our learners to participate in their own education process. We engage students in authentic learning experiences through hands-on learning and activities that encourage the student to experience a sustained disciplined process of learning. The Woodlands Methodist School operates the school with a global perspective. Best practices encourage parental involvement, small class sizes, one to one teacher and student interaction, meaningful technology experiences and varied learning environments to support the educational belief that all students can learn. Preschool's small class sizes enable highly qualified preschool teachers and classroom assistants to meet individual, developmental needs in a safe, secure, nurturing environment. Preschool classroom target ratios: Toddlers 2 adults to 8 students; Twos 2 adult to 10 students; Threes 2 adults to 12 students; Fours 2 adults to 14 students; Transition 2 adults to 16 students. In Lower School classrooms (K-4<sup>th</sup> grade) there is a certified teacher as well as a trained classroom assistant. K-2<sup>nd</sup> target ratio is 2 adults to 16 students in a classroom, and 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> target ratio is 1 certified teacher with a shared assistant to 18 students. Every class in the Middle School has certified teachers and maintains low teacher to student ratios with 20 students or under per class. Middle School classroom assistants are utilized and are based on student needs. Our content-area standards academically meet or exceed the grade level TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills).

### **Academic and Personal Integrity Policy**

Cheating (attempting or aiding in the attempt to receive undeserved credit or to gain unfair advantage) and lying (making an assertion which intentionally deceives or misleads) will not be tolerated at The Woodlands Methodist School.

Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Unauthorized aid given or received during or in preparing for a quiz, test, exam, paper, or project. (Examples include copying work, having parents do a student's work, obtaining work, including previous test, quizzes or exams from a student who previously took the class.)
2. Failure to comply with examination guidelines.
3. Failure to properly acknowledge any source utilized in the writing of a paper or other class work.
4. Lying for the purpose of obtaining an extension of time or other exception from a teacher.

Administrators will address any alleged infraction of the Academic and Personal Integrity Policy on an individual basis, working with the teacher, student, and parents. The minimum consequence for violation of this policy will be a "zero" on the task (homework, class work, project, or test), the parent will be contacted, and notification will be sent to an administrator.

### **Homework Policy**

The Woodlands Methodist School sets high academic standards for its students. Preschool students do not have homework. For our Lower and Middle School student's homework is an essential part of your child's education. While every effort is made to keep the homework load from being overwhelming, age appropriate daily homework should be expected.

Homework is not busywork. Meaningful assignments offer preparation, practice and extension outside of class. The purpose of homework is threefold: to prepare students for instruction by pre-reading material before it is presented in class, to reinforce what is taught in school by practicing new concepts (math, vocabulary, spelling), and to show achievement by preparing reports, projects, presentations or studying for tests.

Teachers explain their homework policies to students and parents at the beginning of the year. Please contact your child's teachers anytime you have questions about the homework policy. Although students

should expect to spend extra time on homework occasionally due to projects or special events, contact the teacher if your child is consistently spending an excessive amount of time on daily homework.

### **Assessment/Grading Scales**

#### **Preschool Assessment Scale:**

Proficient  
Progressing  
Beginning

#### **Lower School Assessment Scale:**

Exceeds Standards (1 documented grade-level higher)  
Meets Standards (80-100)  
Approaching Standards (70-80)  
Needs Support (below 70)

#### **Middle School Grading Scale:**

90-100	A
80-89	B
75-79	C
70-74	D
Below 70	F

### **Report Cards**

Preschool parents will see their child's developmental checklist during conferences bi-annually. For Lower and Middle School, report cards are emailed to parents at the end of the grading period via email.

### **Watch/Probation Academic Grades 5-8**

If a student receives a failing grade in one or more core\* classes on a report card, the student is placed on Academic Watch for the remainder of the semester. Students on Academic Watch are placed on an Academic Plan that may include the following interventions:

- Parent conference with all core teachers
- Tutoring schedule
- Study Hall in lieu of elective(s)

If a student is unable to achieve passing grades on the next report card, the student is placed on Academic Probation.

The status of Academic Probation will also result when a student is placed on Academic Watch twice during one school year or at the close of the academic year.

When a student is placed on Academic Probation, a parent conference is held to determine if it is in the best interest of the student to continue at The Woodlands Methodist School. If the student continues at The Woodlands Methodist School, expectations and a timeframe for academic success will be set at the conference. These expectations must be met within the timeframe in order for the student to continue at The Woodlands Methodist School.

## **Consequences**

- A grade below 70 is earned on report card.
- Teacher will send student information to counselor.
- Counselor will schedule a conference.
- An academic growth plan will be agreed upon and recorded at the conference.
- At the next grade report, the student will be either released from Academic Watch or placed on Academic Probation based on grades.

\*Core class is defined as:

- Grades 5-8; any science, mathematics, language arts, or social studies class.

## **Developmental Foundation**

Our developmentally appropriate environment is designed to provide learning opportunities for a wide range of abilities. Depending on facilities and resources, we make every effort to accommodate special needs. Students with special needs will be considered carefully for placement. We reserve the right to request a formal, professional evaluation in order to better serve our students. Because providing the best possible care for all of our students is a high priority, a copy of the results should be mailed directly from the specialist to the TWMS school level Director within seven working days of the evaluation or diagnosis. If we are unable to meet the needs of a student, TWMS has the right to release the family from their financial commitment and unenroll the student. On occasion, a TWMS student will attend school with a shadow who helps the individual student with their needs. Shadows are paid by the student's family.

## **Support and Guidance for Individual Students**

Students will be taught using differentiation strategies within the classroom. If intervention services are needed, the interventionist will communicate with parents. The School will make every effort to support individual students during the school day. In the event that outside services are necessary, the interventionist will communicate the process and possible cost with parents.

## **Outside Services by School Staff**

Occasionally school employees offer outside services such as tutoring or childcare. While parents are welcome to take advantage of these services, they are independent of and not sponsored by TWUMC, and may not take place in TWMS rooms.

## **Library Policy**

The Woodlands Methodist Lower and Middle School library is available for students, faculty, staff, and our church community. Each Language Arts class is scheduled to visit once each week. Students may borrow books for a two-week period. If a book is lost or destroyed, the borrower is expected to pay full replacement cost and shipping as necessary. Should a parent choose to replace the lost/damaged item, only like items are accepted. (Example: We do not accept a paperback replacement for a hardcover or library bound book of the same title.) The Preschool library is available for teachers and staff to enrich the students' learning.

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE**

### **Expectations**

The Woodlands Methodist School desires to team with parents in the training of children to respect authority, treat others with kindness, honor God's creation and the resources that He has bestowed upon us, and follow the commands of scripture in how to act as children of God. We recognize that people are a work in progress in learning to obediently follow the precepts of the Bible. We will look to the Bible as the guide for behavior principles.

### **Discipline Policy**

The purpose of all "discipline" at TWMS is to help students become increasingly self-managing and socially responsible. Teachers help students express their feelings, cooperate with other classmates, and negotiate conflicts. At no time is a student physically punished, threatened, or intimidated.

### **Discipline Protocol:**

#### **Preschool**

If a distressed student needs help to regain self-control, he or she is allowed a supervised private time, away from the situation. Once the student regains composure a reassuring adult seeks to help him or her re-enter the classroom activity. If the disrupting behavior is persistent, parents are contacted so that we can work together to find a solution. Techniques our staff use are:

1. Redirection, verbal warnings
2. Notify parent
3. Parent-Teacher Conference
4. Parent-Teacher-Administration Conference

#### **Lower and Middle School**

1. Verbal redirection
2. Verbal warning
3. Parents emailed by teacher
4. Natural Consequences (including detentions)
5. Parent-Teacher Conference
6. Referral to Administration

Escalated behaviors may warrant more immediate action.

#### **Extreme Circumstances**

In extreme circumstances, immediate disciplinary actions may be necessary. Although every effort is made to avoid termination, our school reserves the right to dismiss any student who is:

1. Disruptive to the learning process
2. Destructive
3. Causing deliberate bodily injury
4. Using abusive language or profanity
5. Referred to the Director repeatedly without obvious positive result
6. In need of individual assistance or care which cannot be provided in our school setting

## **Bullying**

Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. This behavior is against the fundamental tenet of "Love your neighbor as yourself", and destroys respect for the dignity of the student, undermines the Christian atmosphere of the school, and deprives the student of a safe and caring learning environment.

"Bullying" is defined as any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity, in which acts are repeated against the same student over time. This policy includes provisions addressing bullying outside of the school setting if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school. Bullying includes but is not limited to physical intimidation or assault, extortion, oral or written threats, teasing and putdowns, name calling, threatening looks, gestures or actions, cruel rumors, false accusations, and social isolation.

### **Staff Responsibilities and Intervention**

Teachers, administrators and other professional staff such as classroom assistants and school nurses, who become aware of potential bullying behavior, as defined above, shall promptly notify their Director of the events observed and shall promptly file a written incident report concerning the events witnessed. The Director will then investigate all bullying allegations.

Faculty members are encouraged to address the issue of bullying in other interactions with students. They may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. Staff should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, harassing, humiliating, or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of "bullying".

### **Consequences of Actions**

Once the investigation is complete, the Director shall determine the consequences for the individual(s) on a case-by-case, age appropriate basis. Bullying can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. Conduct that rises to unkind behaviors and/or verified bullying behaviors, as defined above, will generally warrant disciplinary action against all students responsible for bullying. Whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action is a matter for the professional discretion of the Directors. It is the goal of the administration, faculty, and staff to have the student achieve redemption, learn life lessons from the situation, and to cease the bullying. The following are possible interventions to enforce the prohibition against bullying.

### **Interventions**

When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when acts do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying.

Depending upon the severity of the situation, the administrator may also take steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan, separating and supervising students involved, providing staff support for students as necessary, requesting a parent conference, requiring that a student/family obtain professional counseling, and developing a supervision plan with parents. Continuous bullying behavior is disruptive to the learning practice and could lead to dismissal from the school.

## **ADMISSION**

### **Age**

Students are placed in classes based on their age as of September 1 of the current school year. This is consistent with the public school placement policy. In order to enroll in the next grade level, Lower and Middle School students must successfully complete the previous grade.

### **Placement**

At The Woodlands Methodist School, we strive to meet the individual needs of each student. For many, this begins with careful class placement. Taking into consideration a variety of factors, administrators decide on the class rosters. Each student's learning style, Preschool developmental checklist or "Summary of Academic Progress", and teacher recommendations are all considered. Parent requests are also a determining factor. If you feel that you have important information to share in this process, you may write an email to the school level director at the conclusion of each school year.

Please remember that we approach this tremendous responsibility carefully and prayerfully. A class is like a family. Every personality greatly influences the overall balance and chemistry of the group. We do our best to honor each request, but because there are so many factors to consider, and they are so interconnected, we cannot make any guarantees.

### **Non-discrimination Policy**

The school admits students of any race, color and nationality or ethnic origin. Our curriculum and philosophy are based on Christian beliefs. However, we welcome children of all faiths.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Current information on tuition, fees and the school's financial policy is available on our school website.

### **Enrollment Procedures**

New and returning student enrollment procedures can be reviewed via our school website at [www.twms.org](http://www.twms.org).

# UNIFORM INFORMATION

Uniforms may be ordered from Lands' End at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com) or click [here](#)

\* Lands' End TWMS Preferred School Number # 900147968

## Preschool

A school t-shirt is provided and is optional to wear anytime. Lands' End logoed shirts are available to order, if desired. All students must wear athletic shoes. Appropriate athletic shoes for our school MUST include tongues, be fastened by either laces or Velcro straps, and provide complete coverage for the toes, sides and heel of the foot. Athletic shoes may be traditional or ankle height, but no higher.

## K-8 Dress Code Policy

- Students may wear their choice of socks and hair accessories as long as they are not a classroom distraction.
- One earring per ear lobe is appropriate. Dangling jewelry and additional piercings are not allowed.
- Leggings may not be worn as pants.
- Shorts, skirts and dresses must be no shorter than 4" above the knee.
- All students must wear athletic shoes. Appropriate athletic shoes for our school MUST include tongues, be fastened by either laces or Velcro straps, and provide complete coverage for the toes, sides and heel of the foot. Athletic shoes may be traditional or just above ankle height, but no higher, and not include cleats or wheelies or non-traditional athletic soles.
- Torn or ripped clothing is unacceptable (including modifying the school T-shirt).
- All skirts, pants and shorts must be plain and unadorned.
- All tops/outerwear must have the school logo. Hoodies/jackets/coats without school logo may be worn to school but left in locker throughout the day.
- Hats, headware, and gloves should not be worn while inside the classrooms.
- Students' hair should be neat and well-groomed with no extreme hairstyles or unnatural colors.
- Lower school students may not wear make-up.
- Middle School girls may wear minimal natural looking make-up.
- Visible tattoos are prohibited.
- The school provides students with a school t-shirt that may be worn with uniform bottoms on designated t-shirt days.
- Belts are required for pants with loops for 4th-8th grade students.
- Administration has the final say on appropriate dress standards.

## Dress Down Days

### K-8<sup>th</sup>

Designated days by the Head of School in which students are not required to wear their school uniform; however, students must be in dress code as to length, style, and proper fit.

## Girls

	Shirts	Skirts	Pants or long shorts	Other	Chapel	Field Trip
Preschool	Lands' End options available, not required					
K-4	Lands' End collared shirt with the school logo	Denim navy black khaki or Lands' End logoed polo dress	Denim navy black khaki	Plain denim, navy, black, khaki colored shorts or leggings under skirts	White, Peter Pan Collar logoed, Lands' End shirt, long or short sleeve  Navy plaid logoed jumper preferred (Khaki shorts or pants-alternate)  Navy socks or tights; Not leggings	
5-8	Lands' End collared shirt with the school logo	Denim navy black khaki	Denim navy black khaki	Plain denim, navy, black, khaki colored shorts or leggings under skirts	White, button down collar Logoed, Lands' End shirt, long or short sleeve  Navy plaid skirt or skorts preferred (Khaki shorts or pants- alternate)  Navy logoed blazer or navy logoed Vest  Navy socks or tights; Not leggings	<b>Navy</b> logoed polo uniform shirt with khaki shorts or pants or navy plaid skirt
				Fifth through Eighth graders also have the option to purchase a navy blazer and plaid accessories		

## Boys

	Shirts	Pants or long shorts	Other	Chapel	Field Trip
Preschool	Lands' End options available, not required				
K-4	Lands' End collared shirt with the school logo	Denim navy black khaki		White, long or short sleeve, logoed polo shirt khaki shorts or pants  Navy socks	
5-8	Lands' End collared shirt with the school logo	Denim navy black khaki	Fifth through Eighth graders also have the option to purchase a navy blazer and plaid accessories	White, long or short sleeve, button down logoed shirt khaki shorts or pants  Navy logoed blazer or navy Logoed v-neck sweater vest  Navy socks	Navy logoed polo uniform shirt with khaki shorts or pants

## **DAY TO DAY ITEMS**

### **What To Bring Each Day**

A backpack is essential for transporting valuable items and messages home. Please be sure the backpack is large enough to hold all the items coming back and forth to school. The students wear their backpacks at dismissal, as we need their hands free. Wheeled packs are prohibited.

Each student's backpack should contain:

- Preschool through fourth grade should bring an extra set of clothing, including shoes. Please label all items with your child's name.
- A complete healthy lunch or purchase a school lunch.
- Students should pack a healthy snack daily.
- Students must bring a water bottle, labeled with their name, daily for outside play and lunch.
- Preschool students may not bring hand sanitizer, lip balm, or sunscreen.
- Parents may apply sunscreen or insect repellent prior to school. Staff may not apply either of these to students.
- Lower and Middle School students are allowed to bring hand sanitizer and lip balm and may bring sunscreen to school as long as they can apply themselves. Teachers and staff will not apply sunscreen to students.

### **What Not To Bring**

**These items must not be brought to school:**

- Toys from home
- Medicine, essential oils, cough drops or gum
- Party invitations or favors
- Latex balloons
- Commercial or promotional materials
- Presents or other "delivery" items

### **Cell Phones/Connected Devices**

- Preschool through fourth grade: Prohibited
- Fifth through eighth grade: Students may have cell phones/connected devices at school. Cell phones and connected devices must be turned off during school hours. Teachers will require them to be placed in a designated area in the classroom. Students should not use cell phone/connected devices during lunch or between classes.
- Students with nurse approval due to a medical condition may have use of their cell phone for medical purposes.
- Any misuse of the privilege of having a cell phone/connected device at school will result in suspension of use.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Birthday Policy

**Preschool, Lower School, and Middle School Parents** may recognize their child's birthday by:

1. Donating a book to the school library in their child's honor
2. Being a guest reader to their child's class
3. Joining their child for lunch

### TWMS Preschool

If your child wishes to share his/her birthday with classmates, please make arrangements ahead of time to send a special snack. Check with the teacher for number of children, possible allergies, and to coordinate the date. No favors or parties please. Do not send invitations or gifts to school for delivery. They will be returned to sender.

**Preschool** will recognize student birthdays by:

1. Singing "Happy Birthday" to child at lunch time
2. Giving birthday crown/sticker/card to child from the teacher
3. Inviting parents to attend

### TWMS Lower and Middle School

Birthdays are special days for our students. We want to acknowledge and honor your child's special day with non-food alternatives. We are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle for our students while maximizing student learning. (Sending in a food treat for the class to celebrate excludes those children who have food allergies, diabetes, celiac disease or other dietary restrictions.)

**TWMS Lower and Middle Schools** will recognize student birthdays by:

1. Having classmates sing "Happy Birthday" to the child at lunch time
2. **"Popsicles with the Director"** once a month for birthdays celebrated that month. Summer birthdays will be celebrated as follows:  
August with September birthdays  
June with May birthdays  
July with January birthdays

### Trips Off Campus

The concept of "... the world as a classroom..." summarizes the philosophy of The Woodlands Methodist School toward field trips. Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of the many educational experiences available in this geographical area to supplement classroom instruction.

Preschool students do not have field trips, but special classroom experiences and visitors are scheduled to enhance curriculum activities. Preschool students will never be transported in a vehicle unless it is an emergency or evacuation.

Please note the following requirements for off campus Lower and Middle School off campus trips:

- All students **MUST** have a signed permission slip form on file **BEFORE** they are allowed to leave campus.
- Bus or van transportation is provided by the school. Students attending field trips must ride to the field trip on the school provided vehicles.
- The school provides chaperones through teachers and staff.
- The parent of a student with specific medical needs must make arrangements with the School Nurse and Director.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Parent Enrichment Organization (P.E.O.)**

There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer, either with special events or in the classroom. All parents are members of the P.E.O. A committee organizes parent activities and assistance. The group has two main objectives. The first objective is to provide an opportunity for parents with common interests to meet, learn and support our programs. The other purpose is to enrich the school's capabilities by helping to organize volunteers. Check with your child's teacher and watch our school website for P.E.O. activities. Please make arrangements for sibling care when volunteering in the classroom, as the church nursery is not an option. Please refer to TWMS Volunteer Policy for more details on volunteering.

### **Goals**

The goals of the P.E.O. are to enrich the learning experiences of our students by supporting school events and to provide opportunities for parents to expand their knowledge through informational programs and fellowship. The Lower and Middle School P.E.O. also organizes an annual fundraiser that raises funds for school initiatives.

### **Membership**

All parents or guardians with children enrolled in our school are considered members of the P.E.O. with no dues or fees. Leadership is provided by the P.E.O. Board, with implementation of activities by parent volunteers. P.E.O. meetings are held monthly and open to all.

### **The Woodlands Methodist School Volunteer Policy**

Please see "TWMS Volunteer Policy" in Appendix C for more details on how to become a volunteer at TWMS.

### **The Woodlands Methodist School Board**

The School Board is the governing body of TWMS. All Board members must be members of The Woodlands United Methodist Church. Issues that are unresolved by meeting with teachers and or administrators may be brought to any Board member. For a list of current School Board members please contact the school office. To contact the School Board please send emails to [twmsschoolboard@twumc.org](mailto:twmsschoolboard@twumc.org)

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

### **Visitors**

Parents and other visitors are required to sign in at the reception desk and be screened and cleared by our Raptor Visitor Management System. Raptor is a visitor registration system that is used to protect the students, faculty, and visitors at school campuses. It enhances school security by reading visitor driver's licenses or identification cards, comparing information to a sex offender database, alerting campus administrators if a match is found, then (assuming no match was made) printing a visitor badge, which includes a photo.

Accepted form of identification includes:

- all state licenses
- state identification cards
- concealed handgun licenses
- consular ID cards
- green cards
- active military cards
- passport

Preschool parents who are escorting their children at arrival time or any parent attending TWMS monthly chapel are not required to sign in or wear Raptor name tags.

Classrooms may have special visitors. These could include:

- Parents of students.
- Prospective parents touring the school.
- Education professionals or students. (Local colleges may send students to observe our exemplary program.)
- A “shadow” or helper for a child with special needs.
- A specialist observing a child or a classroom, such as a speech therapist.
- School staff observing classroom activities.

### **Magnetic Doors**

The magnetic doors limit access to strangers and unwelcome visitors. All doors are locked during school hours and visitors are required to check-in and get a Raptor name tag at the reception desk before entering. This is vitally important because not every teacher knows every family member, and school safety is a top priority. During arrival time until car line ends, a staff member holds the entry doors open and greets families as they enter. Depending on the circumstances, and time of day, someone from the school office may escort guests.

### **On-Site Emergency**

The school has written procedures for evacuation, relocation and sheltering/ lock down of children. In case of an on-site emergency that would necessitate relocation, the school evacuates under the direction and assistance of local authorities. Students walk with their teachers to the Loft, FLC or Main Building, as determined to be a safe evacuation site. In the event the school needs to evacuate further, the classes walk to the Montgomery County Sheriff's facility on Lake Front Circle (near the corner of Grogan's Mill). Local emergency authorities coordinate emergency transportation.

In the event of emergency evacuation, the school notifies parents by e-mail, text or phone call, as services are available.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

### Medical Staff

TWMS employs registered nurses as part of the daily school staff. A nurse is usually available during school hours to assist with health concerns.

### Student Screening

Preschool students enrolled in a Threes class are required to be screened annually for speech and hearing. Students in Fours and Transition classes are screened annually for speech, language, hearing and vision. This policy is based on the Texas Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act and a decision of the School Board. Parent releases are secured at enrollment. A copy of the screening results is provided to the parents. Screening is available for younger children enrolled in our program at an additional cost. We welcome additional screening or assessment from your school district or private practitioner.

Lower and Middle School screens K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and newly enrolled students for vision and hearing. Kindergarten students and newly enrolled students are screened for speech as appropriate. Spinal screenings will be performed on students as required by the state of Texas. Screening occurs during normal school hours. A copy of the screening results is provided to the parents. Parents give permission (Screening Permission Form) at the time of enrollment.

### Medication Policy

For the safety of your children, please abide by the school policy on medicines. The school nurse will dispense approved medication during the school day for the comfort and well-being of your child. The Texas Nurse Practice Act allows registered nurses to refuse to administer medications anytime the nurse believes the medication is contra-indicated for the child. Medication requirements are listed below:

- Preschool staff does not administer any medications except those medications required for life threatening emergencies or chronic health conditions.
- Most medication can be given at home to avoid interrupting your child's school day.
- A physician must complete a Physician Request for Administration of Medication Form for the nurse to administer prescription and nonprescription medications at school. These forms are available in the clinic. **The parent must also sign the form.**
- **Prescribed medication** must be in the original prescription container and must include the student's full name, medicine name and dosage, student's date of birth, doctor's name and instructions.
- **Nonprescription medication** must be in the original unopened container. Label it with the student's full name, date of birth and the date that the parent brought it to school.
- The student must take the initial medication dosage outside the school setting with the exception of medications given for life threatening conditions.
- Medication is administered only according to the orders written by the physician.
- The medication is only given to the child for whom it is intended.
- Medication is not administered after its expiration date. The school is required to keep all medications in a locked cabinet in the clinic.
- Only the school nurse and authorized administrative staff may administer medications.
- **An adult** must bring all medications to the clinic; children may not bring medication to school.
- The nurses maintain a record of all administered medication.
- Medication is not administered unless it meets the above requirements.
- A parent may sign a Parent Permission to Administer Nonprescription Medication Form for their student if they require a **nonprescription medication** *for a period up to 5 school days*. If a student will require the nonprescription medication for longer than 5 school days, a Physician Request for Administration of Medication Form **must** be completed.

## **Middle School Self-Administration of Asthma or Anaphylaxis Medication Policy**

The Texas Legislature amended the Texas Education Code to entitle a student with asthma or anaphylaxis to possess and self-administer Prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medicine while on school property or at a school related event or activity. As students enter middle school and reach appropriate maturity, self-carry may be necessary to ensure quality of life. Due to the nature of asthma and anaphylaxis medication, proper technique and understanding medication actions are crucial. A process has been developed to support self-administration of appropriate medications assuring the student has proper medication administration technique and an ability to understand symptoms and disease and/or allergy management. A case by case evaluation for each request for a student to carry and self-administer a prescription asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector will be standard practice and will be in compliance with Texas Legislature and TWMS school policy.

## **Medical Assistance and Devices**

If your child requires specialized medical assistance or devices while at school, parents must submit a written note from the health care provider with the diagnosis and directions for adaptations to the nurse before your child attends school. Medical assistance is any necessary medical device, or assistance other than medication, that the child needs (i.e. casts, splints, walker, wheelchair, crutches, orthotics, hearing aids, etc.). According to TX House Bill 434, the health care provider must sign and date the written diagnosis and directions, and any changes.

## **Allergies**

Please notify us in writing if your child has a specific allergy and include all allergy information on the Medical History form. Allergy Action Plan forms are required if a child has a life-threatening allergy (i.e. food, insect stings or bites, latex, etc.). The school nurses contact parents to discuss allergies prior to the first day of school or immediately after diagnosis.

## **Incident Report Form**

Minor accidents sometimes occur. Parents will be notified of scrapes, bumps and bites with a Minor Incident Report, which will be sent home with your child. Parents will be called immediately if an incident requires medical attention and a detailed Incident/Illness Report will require the parent's signature.

## **Nutrition**

Good nutrition is important to our school's program. Students participate in some food preparation experiences. Clearly explain any food allergies on your child's Medical History form. Parents of children with food allergies must meet with the school nurse prior to the first day of school. Please notify the school nurse of any changes in food allergies during the school year.

## **Preschool**

- **Snack:** Students should bring a healthy snack each day. It must be low in sugar and high in protein.  
**Lunch:** Students should bring a healthy lunch each school day. We highly recommend including only whole grains, non-processed foods. We strongly encourage water to drink, which we provide. Please do not send any soft drinks, red or dark colored beverages, food that requires refrigeration or heating, or convenience foods with hazardous packaging. **Emergency Brown Bag Lunches** are on hand at the school and will be provided for a \$10 fee if a child does not have a lunch. This is an emergency back-up option and should not be considered an alternative to sending a lunch with your child. **Fireside Cafe**, on site, will deliver a lunch to your child's classroom for a fee. The lunch must be ordered at the cafe in the morning.

In order to reduce the dangers of choking in children less than 4 years old, the following foods may be considered choking hazards based on recommendations of American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education:

- Nuts (such as peanuts, walnuts, cashews, pecans, almonds or corn nuts)
- Whole grapes\*
- Whole grape tomatoes\*
- Whole raw carrots\*\*
- Whole celery\*\*
- Popcorn
- Seeds (such as pumpkin or sunflower)
- Marshmallows
- Whole hot dogs\*\*
- Whole string cheese\*\*
- Raw peas
- Hard pretzels
- Rice cakes
- Spoonful of Peanut Butter (peanut butter should be thinly spread on bread or crackers)
- Hard, gooey, sticky or jelly candies

\*These items MUST be cut in half lengthwise then half again crosswise, so each is 4 bites

\*\*These items MUST be cut lengthwise and then in bite size pieces.

Any foods not cut as described are choking hazards and will be sent back in the child's snack or lunch container uneaten. Occasionally a food item not on this list may raise a choking concern. If this occurs, the teacher and/or school nurse may choose to send the food item back in the snack or lunch container uneaten with a letter to the parent.

### Lower/Middle

- **Snack:** Students should bring a healthy snack each day. It must be low in sugar and high in protein.
- **Lunch:** Students may bring a complete lunch each day. Although the school is not responsible for the nutritional value of lunches provided by parents, we highly recommend whole grains, non-processed foods, 100% juices, milk that has not been sweetened, or water. We strongly encourage water, which we provide. Students may bring a lunch in a traditional lunch box or brown bag, but must be able to open any containers, packaging or beverages independently. Students may also purchase a school lunch. Each day, the school offers a hot lunch, as well as a cold sandwich or salad. Lunches include a choice of milk or water.

If your child forgets lunch, a school lunch is provided at the cost of \$10 per lunch. (Your account will reflect the charge.)

### Good Health Policy

TWMS provides a healthy and safe environment for each student and staff member. We work hard to maintain safe and hygienic conditions at all times. For this reason, we adhere to a strict Good Health Policy.

Our policies regarding common childhood illness are on the following pages. While we realize doctors may diagnose illnesses differently, and an illness may manifest itself in one way with one child and differently with another, **these policies supersede any written notes from a physician.** We encourage you to follow up with your child's pediatrician for clarification of any illness your child may have. However, it is due to these varying differences that our policies have been established for the overall health of everyone in our program.

We are required to care for ill students apart from other students, and our limited facilities and staff require this be kept to a minimum. Therefore, parents are contacted to pick up their child immediately. We appreciate your understanding and support of these important rules. In order to maintain a healthy environment for everyone, children who are ill or not responding to medical treatment should remain at home.

It is important to be able to contact parents and arrange for pickup quickly. If you are unable to pick up your child or we are unable to reach you within 20 minutes, we will contact the person(s) you have listed as emergency contacts on your behalf. Please make sure the contact information is current and up to date.

### Immunization Policy

Exemptions from the Texas Department of State Health Minimum Vaccine Requirements will only be allowed for medical contraindications. To claim exclusion for medical reasons the parent or legal guardian is required to present a statement or letter, written and signed by the child's physician.\* The letter must state, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child or any member of the child's immediate household. The statement/letter will be valid for one year from the date signed by the physician unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists.

Provisional admittance will be allowed for students whose vaccine series are not up to date. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as medically feasible and provide written documentation of evidence of vaccination to the school nurse. A school nurse shall review the immunization status of the provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of the vaccines. If at the end of this 30-day period a student has not received a subsequent dose of the vaccines, the student is not in compliance and the school will exclude the student from attendance until the required doses are administered.

Any student exempt from some or all immunizations will be excluded from school if a vaccine-preventable disease is present in the school or an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable illness occurs in the community as declared by the local health authorities and/or the Texas Commissioner of Public Health. The school nurse will notify the parent when exclusion from school is necessary and when it is safe for the student to return to school. If the student is at school at the time of the outbreak, the parent must pick up the student from school immediately. The student will be excluded from school until the school nurse determines the threat of illness has passed.

\*Physician is defined as an M.D. or D.O., duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the U.S. The physician may not be a parent or family member of the child.

### **Illness**

The school will not admit students with fever, diarrhea, rash or other symptoms of contagion. Students must be free from fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours without using symptom reducing medication before returning to school following an illness. For details please refer to the Good Health Policy and the Common Childhood Illnesses chart in this handbook for further information. If a student is ill during the school day, a parent or emergency contact is called to pick up the student immediately. For this reason, it is imperative that emergency contacts and numbers are up to date. Ill students wait in the clinic for a parent or emergency contact to pick them up. **A doctor's note is required** for your student to return to school if your student has strep, staph, impetigo, conjunctivitis or a rash. If your student will not be able to participate in PE or Recess, a **doctor's note** is required.

### **Medical and Emergency Forms**

A current Medical Release signed and stamped by a physician, and signed by a parent, must be on file for each child. Current immunization records and an Emergency Form must be on file, in case your child should need emergency medical attention.

### **Annual Physical**

School policy requires that each student have an annual physical examination. The examination is due within 30 days after the **child's birthday or last annual physical**. If a student is not in compliance with both immunization and physical exam requirements, he/she may not attend school.

### **Staff Health Policy**

Staff are encouraged, but not required, to receive any recommended vaccinations before being employed by The Woodlands Methodist School. Specific vaccines as an adult vary on such factors including age and overall health.

## Common Childhood Illnesses

Illness	Symptoms	When To Exclude From Care	When The Student May Return To Care
<b>Chickenpox (Varicella)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Slight fever, loss of appetite, irritability, itchy, blister like rash</li> <li>•Blisters in various stages of oozing and crusting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When evidence of fever, lesions or blisters are present</li> <li>•Usually about 6-9 days before able to return</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the student is fever free without medication assistance for 24 hours</li> <li>•When all lesions are dried and are crusted over</li> </ul>
<b>Cold Sores Herpes Simplex 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fever, runny nose, cold sores, tingling, pain, itching, swelling</li> <li>•Or fever blisters on the lips or in the mouth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fever is present</li> <li>•When child is unable to comply with good hygiene practices while lesion is weeping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Once the student is fever free for 24 hours without medication or able to comply with good hygiene practices.</li> </ul>
<b>Cold, congestion or upper respiratory illness – Nasal Discharge is green or yellow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sore throat, cough, headache, nasal discharge, fatigue, muscle aches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When persistent yellow or green discharge or copious discharge – continues after several wipes</li> <li>•When unable to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)</li> <li>•If student requires extensive individualized care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Once a pediatrician evaluates the student, on treatment and responding to treatment (minimum of 24 hours)</li> <li>•When able to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)</li> </ul>
COVID	Please refer to the Appendix for the COVID Policies and Procedures		
<b>Diarrhea – infectious</b> (may be caused by bacteria, virus, or parasites)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Stools decreasing in consistency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If student has 1 or more stools decreasing in consistency in a 24-hour period</li> <li>•If student requires extensive individualized care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When the student is symptom free for 24 hours without further diarrhea</li> </ul>
<b>Diarrhea – non-infectious</b> (may be caused by food intolerance and some antibiotics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Stools decreasing in consistency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Unless or until the information mentioned to the right is presented and extensive individualized care is not required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If related to food intolerance</li> <li>•Must have written authorization from a physician to attend school</li> </ul>
<b>Ear infections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Pulling at ear, irritability, fever</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If fever is present</li> <li>•If student requires extensive individualized care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Once fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications</li> <li>•Able to participate in group care (including outdoor play)</li> </ul>
<b>Fifth Disease</b> (slapped cheek rash)  Incubation period usually 4-10 days	<p>First symptoms can be mild and nonspecific:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fever, runny nose, headache, and sore throat</li> </ul> <p>After a few days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Red rash on cheeks,</li> <li>•Possibly a second lacy rash over body</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Children with Fifth's disease are most contagious before they get a rash.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If fever is present or does not feel well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Once fever free for 24 hours without medication and able to participate in all activities</li> <li>•Pregnant mothers with children, who have been exposed, should check with their doctor.</li> </ul>

Illness	Symptoms	When To Exclude From Care	When The Student May Return To Care
<b>Head Lice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistent itching or scratching at the back of the head or around the ears</li> </ul> <p>*Check hair shafts for head lice or their nits (eggs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When lice or nits are present</li> </ul> <p>*Exclude from care and send home all linens.</p>	<p>*Treatment must include medicated shampoo &amp; tick /nit removal with specialized comb. Prior to re-entering classroom, the student must be checked daily for evidence of new infestation for 10 days after treatment.</p>
<b>Impetigo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reddish spot or bump on the skin which breaks</li> <li>• Releases a yellow cloudy fluid, leaving a weeping sore</li> <li>• Fluid dries, leaving a yellow, golden or honey-colored crust</li> <li>• Usually involves the face, neck, and limbs but may be anywhere on the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Until on treatment and responding</li> <li>• If student requires extensive individualized care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After receiving treatment and responding (minimum of 24 hours after receiving treatment)</li> <li>• Doctor's note is required stating impetigo is being treated and is no longer infectious.</li> <li>• Recommend cover lesions.</li> </ul>
<b>Molluscum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virus causing small white, pink or flesh colored raised bumps or growths (wart like)</li> <li>• May be indented in the center.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If areas of molluscum cannot be covered and kept covered during the school day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May participate in all activities if all molluscum growths are covered by clothing or Band-Aids</li> </ul>
<b>Pertussis (Whooping Cough)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cough following a cold that the child has difficulty in catching a breath of air</li> <li>• Characteristic of a "whooping cough" (sound)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Until on treatment and responding</li> <li>• If student requires extensive individualized care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only after they have taken antibiotics for at least the first 5 days of the 14-day course of treatment</li> </ul>
<b>Pinkeye / conjunctivitis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redness that involves the whites of the eye or surrounding tissues</li> <li>• Itching and burning of the eye</li> <li>• Discharge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the tissue or whites of the eye are red OR the eye has persistent colored (green or yellow) discharge or copious amounts of white discharge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When child has been on treatment and is responding</li> <li>• Clearing of the redness AND no discharge must be evident</li> <li>• Doctor's note is required stating when they may return to school</li> </ul>
<b>Teary Eyes (allergic)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teary eyes</li> <li>• Discharge is clear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluated by pediatrician if continues for more than 3 weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not excluded from care</li> </ul>
<b>Rashes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised, reddened areas of inflammation of the skin</li> <li>• May or may not have fever</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When fever is present</li> <li>• If student requires extensive individualized care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the rash has been identified by the pediatrician</li> <li>• When fever free for 24 hours without medication</li> <li>• When rash is gone</li> <li>• If student is able to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)</li> </ul>

Illness	Symptoms	When To Exclude From Care	When The Student May Return To Care
<b>Roseola</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sudden fever that can go up to 106 and last 3-5 days</li> <li>•May have sore throat with swollen glands</li> <li>•Rash will appear after fever breaks</li> <li>•May fade within hours or last 1-2 days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When fever and rash are present</li> <li>•If student requires extensive individualized care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When fever free for 24 hours without medication</li> <li>•When no rash is evident</li> <li>•If student is able to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)</li> </ul>
<b>Strep Throat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fever, red painful throat, swollen tonsils</li> <li>•Ear infections possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Until on treatment and responding (minimum of 24 hours) and fever free</li> <li>•If student requires extensive individualized care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When fever free for 24 hours without fever lowering medication</li> <li>•Once on antibiotic treatment and responding</li> <li>•Doctor's note is required to return to school</li> </ul>
<b>Vomiting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Disgorging the contents of the stomach through the mouth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If there is a vomiting episode in a 24 hour period (may indicate a bacterial or viral infection)</li> <li>•If student requires extensive individualized care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When child has been symptom free for 24 hours without further episodes and not on medication.</li> </ul>
<b>Scarlet Fever</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sandpaper-like red rash</li> <li>•First appears on trunk, localizes in groin; beefy red throat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rash present</li> <li>When fever present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Can return when fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication</li> <li>•After receiving treatment for a minimum of 24 hrs.</li> <li>•<b>Doctor's note required to return to school.</b></li> </ul>
<b>MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Nodule, redness, induration, single or multiple sizes, abscess formation</li> <li>•Tender, painful lesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluated by physician and treatment for minimum 24 hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When identified by physician and treated for minimum 24 hours.</li> <li>•Recommend cover lesions.</li> </ul>

## **Suicide Prevention Policy, Procedures, and Guidelines**

The purpose of this policy is to protect the health and well-being of all TWMS students by having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to suicide. The school:

- A. recognizes that physical, behavioral, and emotional health is an integral component of a student's educational outcomes,
- B. further recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among young people,
- C. has an ethical responsibility to take a proactive approach in preventing deaths by suicide, and
- D. acknowledges the school's role in providing an environment which is sensitive to individual and societal factors that place youth at greater risk for suicide and one which helps to foster positive youth development.

### **Definitions**

1. **At risk:** A student who is defined as high risk for suicide is one who has made a suicide attempt, has the intent to die by suicide, or has displayed a significant change in behavior suggesting the onset or deterioration of a mental health condition. The student may have thought about suicide including potential means of death and may have a plan. In addition, the student may exhibit feelings of isolation, hopelessness, helplessness, and the inability to tolerate any more pain. This situation would necessitate a referral, as documented in the following procedures.
2. **Crisis team:** A multidisciplinary team of primarily Head of School/administrative, mental health, safety professionals, and support staff whose primary focus is to address crisis preparedness, intervention/response and recovery. These professionals have been specifically trained in crisis preparedness through recovery and take the leadership role in developing crisis plans, ensuring school staff can effectively execute various crisis protocols, and may provide mental health services for effective crisis interventions and recovery supports.
3. **Mental health:** A state of mental and emotional being that can impact choices and actions that affect wellness. Mental health problems include mental and substance use disorders.
4. **Postvention:** Suicide postvention is a crisis intervention strategy designed to reduce the risk of suicide and suicide contagion, provide the support needed to help survivors cope with a suicide death, address the social stigma associated with suicide, and disseminate factual information after the suicide death of a member of the school community.
5. **Risk assessment:** An evaluation of a student who may be at risk for suicide, conducted by the appropriate school staff (e.g., school nurse, school counselor). This assessment is designed to elicit information regarding the student's intent to die by suicide, previous history of suicide attempts, presence of a suicide plan and its level of lethality and availability, presence of support systems, and level of hopelessness and helplessness, mental status, and other relevant risk factors.
6. **Risk factors for suicide:** Characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to take his or her life. Suicide risk tends to be highest when someone has several risk factors at the same time. Risk factors may encompass biological, psychological, and or social factors in the individual, family, and environment.
7. **Self-harm:** Behavior that is self-directed and deliberately results in injury or the potential for injury to oneself. Can be categorized as either non-suicidal or suicidal. Although self-harm often lacks suicidal intent, youth who engage in self-harm are more likely to attempt suicide.
8. **Suicide:** Death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior. Note: The coroner's or medical examiner's office must first confirm that the death was a suicide before any school official may state this as the cause of death.
9. **Suicide attempt:** A self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person had at least some intent to kill himself or herself. A suicide attempt may result in death, injuries, or no injuries. A mixture of

ambivalent feelings such as wish to die and desire to live is a common experience with most suicide attempts. Therefore, ambivalence is not a sign of a less serious or less dangerous suicide attempt.

**10. Suicidal behavior:** Suicide attempts, intentional injury to self-associated with at least some level of intent, developing a plan or strategy for suicide, gathering the means for a suicide plan, or any other overt action or thought indicating intent to end one's life.

**11. Suicide contagion:** The process by which suicidal behavior or a suicide influences an increase in the suicidal behaviors of others. Guilt, identification, and modeling are each thought to play a role in contagion. Although rare, suicide contagion can result in a cluster of suicides.

**12. Suicidal ideation:** Thinking about, considering, or planning for self-injurious behavior which may result in death. A desire to be dead without a plan or intent to end one's life is still considered suicidal ideation and should be taken seriously.

### **School Policy Implementation**

1. The school level suicide prevention coordinator shall be the Head of School (HOS). The school suicide prevention coordinator/HOS will be responsible for planning and coordinating implementation of this policy for the school. All staff members shall report students they believe to be at elevated risk for suicide to the HOS or designated crisis team member, i.e., counselor, nurse, administrator.

2. All Lower and Middle School staff will receive annual professional development on risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, response procedures, referrals, postvention, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention. Additional professional development in risk assessment and crisis intervention will be provided to school employed school counselors and school nurses.

3. Developmentally-appropriate, student-centered education materials will be integrated into the curriculum of all K-12 classes. The content of these age-appropriate materials will include:

- the importance of safe and healthy choices and coping strategies,
- how to recognize risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others,
- help-seeking strategies for oneself or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help. In addition, schools may provide supplemental small-group suicide prevention programming for students.

4. This policy will be distributed annually and included in all student and teacher handbooks.

5. In the case of a suicide threat, attempt or death the school will address the possibility of suicide contagion and sensationalism.

### **Assessment and Referral**

When a student is identified by a staff person as potentially suicidal, i.e., verbalizes about suicide, presents overt risk factors such as agitation or intoxication, the act of self-harm occurs, or a student self-refers, the student will be seen by the school counselor or school nurse within the same school day to assess risk and facilitate referral. If the school counselor or school nurse are not available, the Head of School or an administrator will be meet with the student.

For youth at risk:

1. School staff will monitor the student to ensure their safety.

2. The Head of School will be made aware of the situation as soon as reasonably possible.

3. The school counselor, school nurse, Head of School or an administrator will contact the student's parent or guardian, as described in the Parental Notification and Involvement section, and will assist the family with urgent referral. When appropriate, this may include calling emergency services or having the parent transport to

local Emergency Department. Most cases will involve the parent setting up an outpatient mental health or primary care appointment and communicating the reason for referral to the healthcare provider.

4. Staff will ask the student's parent or guardian for written permission to discuss the student's health with outside care.

### **In-School Suicide Attempts**

In the case of an in-school suicide attempt, the health and safety of the student is paramount. In these situations:

1. First aid will be rendered until professional medical treatment and/or transportation can be received, following school emergency medical procedures.
2. School staff will supervise the student to ensure their safety.
3. Staff will move all other students out of the immediate area as soon as possible.
4. The Head of School, school counselor, school nurse or administrator will contact the student's parent or guardian.
5. Staff will immediately notify the head of school regarding in-school suicide attempts.
6. The school will engage as necessary the crisis team to assess whether additional steps should be taken to ensure student safety and well-being.
7. Parents will be notified with as much information as possible to help parents know what to be aware of as students deal with the attempt or death. The school will respect the confidentiality of the student and family involved and share only information which will help parents take precautions to protect the health and well-being of their children. Some things we encourage parents to look for are listed below
  - Change in behavior
  - Change in dress
  - Change in grades
  - Change in attendance at school
  - Giving items away to family or friends
  - Change in friends
  - Becoming less engaged in normal family activities

### **Possible Families Resources**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare: 24-hour Helpline 800-659-6994

The Harris Center for Mental Health: 24-hour Crisis Line 713-970-7000

Cassidy Joined for Hope: [www.cassidyjoinedforhope.com](http://www.cassidyjoinedforhope.com)

### **Re-Entry Procedure**

For students to be considered for re-entry to The Woodlands Methodist School after a mental health crisis (e.g., suicide attempt or psychiatric hospitalization) the Head of School and other support staff will meet with the student's parent or guardian, and if appropriate, meet with the student to discuss possible re-entry and the appropriate next steps to ensure the student's readiness for return to school.

The Woodlands Methodist School may determine return to TWMS is not the best placement for the student.

All of the following must be met before the student will be considered for re-entry to the Woodlands Methodist School.

1. The Head of School or other administrator will be identified to coordinate with the student, their parent or guardian, and any outside mental health care providers.
2. The parent or guardian will provide documentation from a mental health care provider that the student has undergone examination and that they are no longer a danger to themselves or others.

3. Obtain releases of information so the school can talk directly to the student's hospital and outpatient treatment team.

If re-entry to TWMS is allowed, the following steps must also occur:

1. A written plan for re-entry will be developed to include the plan, goals and expectations for the student. The plan will be presented to both the parents and the student.
2. Make a social contract with the student and parents to include agreement on the following: a) Student will not post any material regarding suicide attempt on any social media site, b) Student and parent will adhere to all treatment conditions prescribed by the physician, psychiatrist and therapist and c) Student will not share details of suicide thoughts and/or attempts with other students to avoid the potential of suicide contagion.
3. The designated staff person will periodically check in with student to help the student readjust to the school community and address any ongoing concerns.

### **Out-of-School Suicide Attempts**

If a staff member becomes aware of a suicide attempt by a student that is in progress in an out-of-school location, the staff member will:

1. Call the police and/or emergency medical services, such as 911.
2. Inform the student's parent or guardian.
3. Inform the Head of School.

### **Postvention**

1. Development and Implementation of an Action Plan The crisis team will develop an action plan to guide school response following an attempted suicide or a death by suicide. A meeting of the crisis team to implement the action plan should take place immediately following news of the suicide attempt or death. The action plan may include the following steps:

- A. Verify the death. Staff will confirm the death and determine the cause of death through communication with a coroner's office, local hospital, the student's parent or guardian, or police department. Even when a case is perceived as being an obvious instance of suicide, it should not be labeled as such until after a cause of death ruling has been made. If the cause of death has been confirmed as suicide but the parent or guardian will not permit the cause of death to be disclosed, the school will not share the cause of death but will use the opportunity to discuss suicide prevention with students.
- B. Assess the situation. The crisis team will meet to prepare the postvention response, to consider how severely the attempt or death is likely to affect other students, and to determine which students are most likely to be affected. The crisis team will also consider how recently other traumatic events have occurred within the school community and the time of year of the suicide attempt or death. If the attempt or death occurred during a school vacation, the need for or scale of postvention activities may be reduced.
- C. Share information. Before the death is officially classified as a suicide by the coroner's office, the death can and should be reported to staff, students, and parents/guardians with an acknowledgement that its cause is unknown. Inform the faculty that a sudden death has occurred, preferably in a staff meeting. Write a statement for staff members to share with students. The statement should include the basic facts of the death and known funeral arrangements (without providing details of the suicide method), recognition of the sorrow the news will cause, and information about the resources available to help students cope with their grief. Public address system announcements and school-wide assemblies should be avoided. The crisis team may prepare a letter (with the input and permission from the student's parent or guardian) to send home with students that includes facts about the death, information about what the school is doing to warning signs of suicidal behavior, and a list of resources available.

- D. Avoid suicide contagion. It should be explained in the staff meeting described above that one purpose of trying to identify and give services to other high-risk students is to prevent another attempt or death. The crisis team will work with teachers to identify students who are most likely to be significantly affected by the attempt or death. In the staff meeting, the crisis team will review suicide warning signs and procedures for reporting students who generate concern. The school will need to address the area of sensationalism and contagion and the impact on fellow students.
- E. Initiate support services. Students identified as being more likely to be affected by the attempt or death will be assessed to determine the level of support needed. The crisis team will coordinate support services for students and staff in need of individual and small group counseling as needed. In concert with parents or guardians, crisis team members will refer to community mental healthcare providers to ensure a smooth transition from the crisis intervention phase to meeting underlying or ongoing mental health needs.
- F. Develop memorial plans. The school should not create on-campus physical memorials (e.g. photos, flowers), funeral services, or fly the flag at half-mast because it may sensationalize the death and encourage suicide contagion. School should not be canceled for the funeral. Any school-based memorials (e.g., small gatherings) will include a focus on how to prevent future suicides and prevention resources available.

2. **External Communication** The Head of School (or designee) will be the sole media spokesperson. Staff will refer all inquiries from the media directly to the spokesperson. The spokesperson will:

- A. Keep the Head of School informed of school actions relating to the death.
- B. Prepare a statement for the media including the facts of the death, postvention plans, and available resources. The statement will not include confidential information, speculation about victim motivation, means of suicide, or personal family information.
- C. Answer all media inquiries. If a suicide is to be reported by news media, the spokesperson should encourage reporters not to make it a front-page story, not to use pictures of the suicide victim, not to use the word suicide in the caption of the story, not to describe the method of suicide, and not to use the phrase “suicide epidemic” – as this may elevate the risk of suicide contagion. They should also be encouraged not to link bullying to suicide and not to speculate about the reason for suicide. Media should be asked to offer the community information on suicide risk factors, warning signs, and resources available.

***The Woodlands United Methodist Church welcomes you to our church family. Please reference the church website at [www.thewoodlandsumc.org](http://www.thewoodlandsumc.org) for all of our programs, events, and services. You are encouraged to contact the church office at 281-297-5900 if the church can be of further service.***

## **Some Ministries that might interest you...**

**Noah's Nook** Our busy church nursery is committed to providing high quality care while parents participate in church activities. The nursery is often prearranged for specific school events, but it is not available for "drop-in" care.

**Children's Ministry** Our mission is to partner with families to reach and teach children in such a way that they have the greatest opportunity to become fully developed followers of Jesus Christ.

**Junior and Senior High Rebel Base** We want to reach our teenage students with the gospel and connect them with other Christians. [rebelbaseonline.com](http://rebelbaseonline.com)

**Recreation Ministry** Our Recreation Ministry team provides a first-class sports experience for children (and adults) that emphasizes healthy competition, sportsmanship, skills building and fun!

**Women's Ministries and Mom2Mom** TWUMC has many options, including monthly "moms" meetings, weekly Bible studies and small group opportunities.

**Special Blessings** Families with a child with special needs will find friendship, fellowship and support at The Woodlands United Methodist Church.

**Woodlands Academy of Fine Arts** helps all ages study and develop their gifts through a variety of fine art programs.

**Divorce Care for Kids** coincides with an adult divorce recovery program (Divorce Care). Classes are offered two times a year. Scholarships are available upon request.

*For more information about these or other programs please go to [www.thewoodlandsumc.org](http://www.thewoodlandsumc.org)*

## Appendix A

### TECHNOLOGY

Preschool students do not use electronic technology in the classroom

### **TWMS LOWER AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

#### **OVERVIEW**

The Woodlands Methodist Lower and Middle School provides a wide range of information technology (IT) resources for student use. The purpose of this technology is to advance and promote education for each student and is intended to assist in the collaboration and exchange of information.

#### **SCOPE**

This agreement governs all activities when using the technology resources of TWMS, regardless of physical location. Every student is expected to follow all of the rules and conditions listed, as well as those given verbally by TWMS teachers and administrators, and to demonstrate good citizenship and ethical behavior at all times.

#### **FILTERING**

The Woodlands United Methodist Church (TWUMC) filters what online content is accessible by students at TWMS. The filter is designed to prevent access to controversial and/or inappropriate materials. It is important to understand that no filtering system is perfect. Due to the nature of the Internet and evolving technology, even with supervision, TWMS cannot guarantee that students will not reach inappropriate content. TWMS firmly believes that the valuable information and interaction available online far outweighs the possibility that students may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of TWMS.

#### **DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTIES AND LIMITATION OF LIABILITY**

TWMS makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the resources it is providing. TWMS will not be responsible for any damages suffered while using information technology. These damages include loss of data as a result of delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by the technology or the user's errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained online is at the user's risk. TWMS specifically disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through its resources.

#### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY: GENERAL USE**

As a student of The Woodlands Methodist School, I understand that the use of technology, including tablets, computers, network and email is a privilege, not a right. The teachers, administration or staff of TWMS and TWUMC may deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts at any time.

I understand that my school accounts are owned by TWMS and are not private. TWMS may access my information at any time, including email and online activity.

I will only use TWMS technology for education and research and within the educational goals and objectives of TWMS.

I will use TWMS technology in a manner that complies with the laws of the State of Texas and the United States.

I understand that I am to notify an adult immediately if I encounter material or behavior that violates this policy.

I understand that TWMS administrators will deem what conduct is inappropriate if such conduct is not specified in this agreement.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY: SECURITY**

I understand that I am prohibited from altering or bypassing security measures on technology resources and other software/online security measures.

I understand that passwords are private and that I should not share my password with anyone other than my parent or guardian.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY: SECURITY**

I understand that I am responsible for all activities done through my account. I will not allow others to use my account name and password or try to use that of others.

I understand that it is important to log off the computer at the end of every session so another person cannot use my account.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY: OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

I understand that it is unsafe to post any personal information about myself, including but not limited to: my name, address, phone number, email address or school.

I will not post photos of students with their first and last names on any online site, including but not limited to: websites, chats or social media.

**PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR**

**Social Media:** The use of any social media website, app or service, such as WhatsApp, Kik or Snapchat, except as directed by a TWMS teacher (e.g., Google Classroom).

**Criminal Acts:** These include, but are not limited to, attempting to access technology without authorization, threatening/harassing messages, cyber-stalking, child pornography, unauthorized tampering with technology, using misleading domain names, using another person's identity and/or identity fraud.

**Libel:** Publicly defaming people through publishing material online, sending email, etc.

**Copyright Violations and Plagiarism:** Copying, selling or distributing copyrighted material without the express written permission of the author or publisher (students should assume that all materials available online are protected by copyright), or engaging in plagiarism (using other's words or ideas as your own).

**Vandalism:** Accessing, modifying or destroying equipment, programs, files or settings, attempting to bypass security settings or filters, or interfere with the operation of the network by installing software or apps, including viruses and other malware.

**Code of Conduct:** Any behavior prohibited in the classroom, including, but not limited to, inappropriate language, racism, sexism, pornography and unethical or illegal solicitation.

**Commerce/Politics:** Any use for commercial activities by for-profit institutions, including product advertisement, or political lobbying.

**DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

If a student violates any part of this policy, their account may be terminated, and future access may be denied. The loss of privileges may be appealed within seven (7) calendar days. The Head of School will conduct a hearing but will be a different person from the one who imposed the loss of privileges.

Additional disciplinary action may be taken as outlined in the TWMS Parent Handbook. All students are subject to enforcement of state and federal laws governing technology use. Any violation of state and federal statutes can and will be investigated and enforced to the fullest extent under the law.

**PARENT OR GUARDIAN**

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy of The Woodlands Methodist School (TWMS) and have discussed it with my child. I understand that information technology resources are made available by TWMS for educational purposes, and that student use for any other purpose is prohibited. I understand that it is not possible for TWMS to restrict access to all controversial materials that may be found online, and I will not hold TWMS responsible for material acquired online. I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child uses TWMS resources outside of a school setting (e.g. using a Google Classroom account at home). I also agree to report any misuse of the TWMS technology to a TWMS teacher or administrator. Users may be held responsible for any loss or damage caused by intentional or negligent acts in caring for school electronic devices while under their control.

I hereby give my permission for my child to use technology resources at TWMS and be issued any necessary account.

In lieu of a signature please click the box to acknowledge agreement to the conditions in this handbook and the Student Acceptable Use Policy for Information Technology.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT TEXTBOOK AND LIBRARY BOOK POLICY**

Library books and Textbooks are the property of The Woodlands Methodist School.

#### **Students are responsible for the school textbooks checked out to them:**

- Write your name inside the front cover of your book in the signature box.
- Be sure you always have your own book! If you turn in another student's book you will still be responsible for the copy number checked out to you.
- Students are issued **ONE** textbook to use at home and one online subscription for each textbook.
- Students will receive an obligation to replace lost or stolen books.

#### **ALL TEXTBOOKS ARE TO BE RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DAY OF CLASS:**

- it is the students' responsibility to return their own books to the library and make sure they have been checked in. Turning in another student's book does not clear your library account; you must return the book you checked out.
- At the end of the semester, students with textbooks and library books that have been lost, unreturned or damaged beyond repair will be placed on the obligation list and charged for a replacement book.
- The obligation stays on the student's record until the book is returned, the fine is paid, or an identical replacement book is provided.

If the property has been willfully cut, defaced or otherwise damaged, or if the student refuses to return it at the request of TWMS staff, TWMS shall afford the student his/her due process rights and subsequently may withhold the student's grades and transcripts until the student or parent/guardian has paid all damages. As provided by law, the parent/guardian of a minor shall be liable for all damages caused by the minor's misconduct.

#### **Students are expected to:**

- Be responsible for the school property loaned to them.
- Do not write, highlight or draw in school textbooks.
- Keep your book away from all liquids (e.g. rain, spilled drinks, and leaky water bottles). Wet books that develop mold cannot be used; students will receive an obligation.
- Keep books in a safe place at home, out of the reach of pets and small children.
- Return textbooks in good condition on or before the last day of class.
- Please remove any tape, labels or post-it note papers.
- Return books to the school library as soon as possible when you know you will be dropping a class or moving.

## 2020-2021 TWMS Lower/Middle School Volunteer Policy

All visitors and volunteers at The Woodlands Methodist School must have a National Sex Offender Registry check conducted every time they visit or volunteer at the school through our RAPTOR System. This is completed at reception when visitors and volunteers check in. A name badge will be printed to be worn while visiting or volunteering at The Woodlands Methodist School.

	<b>Level I Volunteer</b>	<b>Level II Volunteer</b>
<b>How often can I volunteer?</b>	Up to 2 times per semester (up to 4 times per year)	3 or more times per semester (5 or more times per year)
<b>Requirements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill out TWMS Volunteer Interest Form</li> <li>2. Present ID and check-in at reception when volunteering at TWMS.</li> <li>3. Wear name badge received from reception after check-in.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill out TWMS Volunteer Interest Form</li> <li>2. Background Check</li> <li>3. Present ID and check-in at reception when volunteering TWMS.</li> <li>4. Wear name badge received from reception after check-in.</li> </ol>

- Level I – This level requires the presence and supervision of a TWMS employee at all times. Please see guidelines below:
  - Volunteers may assist a TWMS staff member at a one-time school event or in the classroom periodically. Examples listed below. This is not an exhaustive list.
    - Big Art Day
    - Field Day
    - one-time classroom volunteer or speaker
- Steps to become a TWMS Level I Volunteer
  1. Complete TWMS Volunteer Interest Form. <https://forms.gle/2Yoz7eZ21Wdafu5C7>
  2. Basic Background Check will be completed by TWMS with no fingerprinting through the Raptor System.
  3. If a Basic Background Check does not clear, TWMS can request that a volunteer complete a Background Criminal Check to clear any misidentification based on the result of the name and DOB search.
  4. Level I volunteers must check in at reception each time they volunteer. Photo identification must be presented for verification.

\*Level I Volunteers may volunteer up to 2 times per semester or up to 4 times per year. If you plan on volunteering 3 or more times per semester, more than 4 times per year, or as the examples listed below, please see Level II Volunteer description and steps.

- Level II – This level allows for frequent or regularly scheduled volunteering and interaction with students. Level II volunteers must have a Background Check, which is good for five years. The Background Check process may take up to 2 weeks to conduct. Please plan accordingly to ensure enough time before volunteering. Please see guidelines below:
  - Volunteers may assist 3 or more times per semester, at reoccurring events, be a frequent visitor at the school, or be in charge of a student group. Examples listed below. This is not an exhaustive list.
    - Destination Imagination
    - Room Parent
    - Regularly scheduled volunteer (for library, classroom, etc.)
    - Chaperone for field trip
    - PEO Board Member
- Steps to become a TWMS Level II Volunteer
  1. Complete TWMS Volunteer Interest Form. <https://forms.gle/2Yoz7eZ21Wdafu5C7>
  2. Complete the Background Consent Form and return in person to the School Business Office along with both of the following identifications:
    - Original Social Security Card
    - Picture ID such as a Driver’s License or Passport
  3. The Background Check is completed with fingerprinting at the volunteer’s choice of location. (process of clearing the Background Check may take up to 2 weeks to complete after fingerprinting).
  4. Volunteers must check in at reception each time they volunteer. Photo identification must be presented for verification.

All TWMS Volunteers will fill out the TWMS Volunteer Interest Form yearly.

A Level II Volunteer Background Check is good for 5 years.

TWMS Preschool Volunteers must meet state licensing standards.

## HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

**This form should be turned in to your child's homeroom teacher for grades Preschool - 8 by Friday August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

The 2020-2021 Parent/Student Handbook provides important information related to student learning, expectations for student behavior and other information related to student and parent rights.

Please review carefully this edition of the Parent/Student Handbook. The Woodlands Methodist School requires that a parent/guardian for each student signs this form to acknowledge that they have read and understand the guidelines and expectations set forth in the handbook.

Student Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please review the items below with your child, and sign where indicated.***

By signing below, parents and students confirm that they have read and fully understand The Woodlands Methodist School Parent/Student Handbook and acknowledge that they agree and will abide by the school's policies and procedures listed therein. By signing below, parents and students also understand the consequences and actions that may be taken as a result of their non-compliance with the policies and expectations stated within the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lower and Middle Student Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_