

# WEXP PARENT HANDBOOK



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## **West End Extended Program Policies and Procedures Parent Handbook**

### Overview of West End Extended Program

Housed in the historic West End school building, West End Extended Program (WEXP) is a parent operated, private non-profit, licensed extended care program serving middle school students before and after school, on teacher in-service days, during most school holidays, and on snow days as applicable. Primarily designed to serve students from West End Middle School, it is open to other middle school children in the Metropolitan Nashville Area.

WEXP is operated by a parent governing board elected at an annual meeting to represent the best interests of parents and children served by the program. The governing board of WEXP is committed to providing a high quality, developmentally appropriate, recreational program that is safe, interesting, and fun for youth 10-14 years of age.

WEXP is licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS). WEXP will meet or exceed all licensure requirements, which maintain adequate health, safety and supervision of children while in care programs. A summary of licensure requirements is provided at the time of enrollment, re-enrollment, and/or when requested.

WEXP has a commitment to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. All employees, applicants for employment, applicants for enrollment, and families currently enrolled will be treated equitably and without regard to race, gender, age, national origin, religion, veteran, sexual orientation or disability status.

WEXP is based on the Eakin Care Program (ECP), an extended care model that has been in operation at Eakin Elementary School since 1980. With the guidance and assistance of the board and staff of ECP, WEXP was established to provide care to fifth through eighth graders. WEXP will have a ratio of one staff member for every nineteen participants. Our staff is qualified to work with adolescents, and is closely supervised each day as they strive to give individual care to each participant. All staff submit to a criminal background check.

### Philosophy of West End Extended Program

WEXP is guided by the philosophy that care programs exist to meet the needs of working parents and their children and should be planned in response to the developmental needs of the youth that are served. During the years the child may be in daycare, most of his/her developmental needs will be met by the home and the school; therefore it is our intention that this program will complement rather than supplement the school's curriculum and be more like that of a home environment. We feel that by offering a flexible activity curriculum and developmentally appropriate choices, we can provide for the

child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical needs. We encourage youth to be self-directed while participating in activities, and we strive to be supportive of each family and their values. Most importantly, we work to create an environment where youth may develop positive self-esteem.

### Snack

A DHS approved nutritious snack will be served each day. 2% milk and/or 100% juice will be served daily. We strive to meet the preference of as many children as possible while at the same time offering healthier snacks. Please discuss any special dietary requirements or food allergies with the Director.

### Program Objective and Goals

In addition to providing youth a safe and caring environment in which students may complete homework assignments, test preparation, reading, and relaxing with friends. WEXP will focus on four target areas: Arts, Practical Skills, Physical Fitness and Health, and Academic Support. The Arts-focused sessions will give youth a chance to try out activities such as painting, dance, photography, drama, pottery, newsletter, poetry, story writing, voice and music. The Practical Skill area may feature activities such as budgeting/personal finance, cooking, computer skills, volunteerism, communication skills, and cultural awareness. In addition to the conventional opportunities to participate in sports, the Physical Fitness and Health area will provide less competitive activities such as yoga, music and movement, nutrition, body image and stress management. The Academic Support efforts invite youth to discover their individual learning styles, build study habits, develop organizational and project management skills, and engage in math, science, and literature enrichment.

### Child Care Fees

During the school year, parent must pay childcare fees in advance on the first of the month. Fees are due and payable while the child is enrolled, regardless of the attendance of the child. If fees are not paid by the 6<sup>st</sup> of the month, the parent will pay a \$15.00 late fee. If fees are not paid by the end of the month, the child will not be accepted back into the program and his/her place will be filled by the next child on the waiting list. After two instances of non-payment by the 15<sup>th</sup>, or two instances of returned checks, the family may be asked to withdraw from WEXP. Returned check fee is \$20.00. CHECKS MAY BE MADE OUT TO WEST END EXTENDED PROGRAM (WEXP). Multiple payments may be put onto the same check. Please designate what your payment is for.

Monthly fees are established by WEXP Governing Board and cover the cost of childcare for the entire school year. Equal monthly rates are determined by dividing the annual cost of the program for each child by the number of calendar school days. The cost for full days, snow day care, and ½ day care (for before only participants) is not included in the monthly fee rate. During the school year, parents pay an additional daily rate for the cost of full day care and ½ day care (both are optional) when school is not in session. No

refunds or credits will be given after established registration deadline dates for full days or half days. An annual registration fee is collected at the time of enrollment and each year thereafter.

## **FAILURE TO PAY CHILD CARE FEES MAY BE SUBJECT TO COLLECTIONS.**

### ARRIVAL and PICK-UP PROCEDURES

#### AM Arrival:

WEXP will open at 7am. Upon arrival in the mornings, parents need to sign their child in on the roll sheet. When the youth are dismissed to school at 8:40, they will walk to their classrooms unescorted.

#### P.M. Arrival:

Children are responsible to come to WEXP when school is dismissed at 3:55. Parents will be contacted if their child has not signed in within 20 minutes of school dismissal, unless he/she is at a predetermined other activity. **Please notify the director if your child will be absent from WEXP on any day. This will help to reduce the number of calls we make each afternoon in the effort to locate every "absent" child. WEXP is not responsible for your child until he/she shows up to the program.**

#### Pick Up:

When picking up the child, parents must come inside WEXP, personally provide their signature on the sign out sheet and inform the staff that the child has been picked up. This is for the safety of your child.

Children are required to give their name to staff when going to the restroom, outside, gym, or any extracurricular activities.

#### When picking up your child may we suggest that you:

- a. Allow time for your child to finish what he/she is doing.
- b. Encourage your child to put away equipment and supplies.
- c. Briefly connect with a staff member for any updates regarding your child.

#### Pick Up Authorization

Parents have filled out the three-page information form on each child before starting the program. On the form there is a section for those authorized to pick up your child. It is the parent's responsibility to keep this list updated. Your child will only be released to people on that list OR written permission has been given to the director (must include date, time, and signature of parent). **WE WILL NOT LET YOUR CHILD GO WITH ANYONE UNLESS THEY PRESENT A FORM OF PICTURE IDENTIFICATION.** Notify the Director if non-custodial parents are restricted from picking up your child. Proof of custody must be provided in such cases.

### Outside Activities

It is important that you give WEXP clear, written instructions when your child is released to an "outside" activity such as Community Education classes, sports practices, rehearsals, etc.

### Hours of Operation

Regular care is available from 7:00am to 8:40am each morning before school and from 3:55pm to 6:00pm each afternoon. We charge a late fee for children picked up after 6pm. Parents will be assessed a late charge of \$ 1.00 per minute per child for children who are present at the program after 6:00pm. The fee is payable directly to the staff person who stayed. The fee is due no later than 2 days after the late pick up; if the fee is not paid by the deadline, the child will be suspended from the program until it is paid.

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT WEXP IS NOT STAFFED TO CARE FOR CHILDREN AFTER 6:00 PM. PLAN TO BE AT WEXP BY CLOSING TIME.**

WEXP is available on days when school is closed for teacher in-service, parent conferences, and some school holidays. **Hours may vary on these days.** Holidays that WEXP is closed are included in the yearly calendar. A fee and pre-registration deadline is due for all planned full days.

### Snow Policy

If the weather is beginning to cause hazardous driving conditions during a snow day or regular school day, please arrange to pick up your child as soon as possible so that WEXP staff will be able to drive home safely. On announced snow days, WEXP hours of care will vary. In the case of worsening conditions, the WEXP Director will have the discretion to close early and each parent will be notified.

### Notification of Absence from WEXP

**Please notify the WEXP Director or staff if your child will be absent from WEXP due to illness, vacations, or other absences from school. We call parents of children who do not "show up" at WEXP 20 minutes after dismissal from school. We call the home, then one or both parents at work. It is not necessary to call the program if your child will be absent for morning care.**

### Toys

Parents are welcome to contribute new or used (in good condition) toys, games, school supplies, books, cards, etc. WEXP maintains a variety of toys, which will interest children of different ages and abilities. New toys, games, supplies, books, etc. are always welcome. Staff cannot be responsible for personal toys and items

brought to WEXP. Please label all toys and clothing from home. Children are not to bring toy guns or weapon-like toys to WEXP.

### Clothing

Please allow your child to experience contact with a variety of art materials as well as playground dirt by dressing him/her appropriately. During the cold months, please be sure to send outerwear including mittens/gloves, hat, warm coat etc. We offer outside play as an option every day except in extreme weather conditions. We ask youth to wear outer garments that parents send to school. Unlabeled, lost and found items will be transferred to West End Middle's Lost and Found.

### Health Requirements

Medication will be administered to a child only if the parent completes a medication authorization form, including signature. Salves and ointments require a written notice. Staff will not give fever-suppressing drugs of any kind unless the listed physician provides written instructions on his/her stationary to the WEXP Director.

A child with fever may not come to WEXP or remain in childcare. Parents will be notified when a child has a fever and will be expected to pick up the child promptly. A child may not come to WEXP until he/she has been fever free for 24 hours. This health policy is required by state licensing standards.

**Children with communicable diseases may not come to WEXP. Any child showing or developing symptoms of fresh cold, sore throat, lice, inflammation of the eyes, fever, rash, or diarrhea must be excluded from the group until picked up by the parent. WEXP cannot assign one staff person to the exclusive care of one ill child. Please notify the Director if your child has exposed others to a communicable disease so that other parents may be warned of possible exposure. This is especially important with regards to lice.**

### First Aid:

Our staff will administer basic first aid if needed. In case of an emergency, WEXP will contact the parent first, and your designated emergency contact person second. In case of extreme emergency, or if a parent cannot be reached WEXP will contact the child's physician and/or provide transportation to the ER at Vanderbilt Hospital. 911 will be called for life threatening situations.

### General Discipline Policy

The discipline policy for WEXP is that youth will be involved in establishing expectations for their own behavior and should be praised when they meet these expectations. Youth as individuals and youth as part of a group will be rewarded. Positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior will be given. The child will first be re-directed to another activity. If the behavior continues the

child will be removed from the activity for a cooling off period. A staff person will discuss the behavior with the child and encourage the child to regain control so that he/she can rejoin the activity. Discussion of behavior choices will follow. In the event that a child's behavior threatens their own health or safety or that of others and does not improve after positive reinforcement, that child's parent will be contacted for a conference. The Director may dismiss a child whose behavior is judged to be a threat to that child or the health and safety of others, as in the case of repeated physical contact such as hitting, pushing or kicking, etc.

The discipline procedures that will be followed are:

1. Verbal warning
2. Re-direction to another activity
3. Meeting with Director
4. Parents notified

Suspension from our program from one to five days can occur if the following inappropriate behavior is used:

1. Harming another child or staff person
2. Stealing
3. Damaging or destroying property
4. Excessive use of foul language
5. Being totally disruptive and uncontrollable in the group

Weapons of Any Kind will not be permitted. West End Extended Program follows the Metro Schools Zero Tolerance policy, which includes suspension from the program for possession or use of any weapon-like toys.

#### Special Needs Policy/Guidelines

(A). WEXP is open to all students age 10-14 years of age. We believe it is important to create an inclusive community responsive to the individual needs of all children enrolled.

In order to meet needs of all children enrolled, we strive to be responsive to children under stress, and to the children who need a higher level of supervision than is typical of his/her age peers. Some children who are in the program may be experiencing unusual stress, such as adjusting to the separation and/or divorce of parents, or living in a family with an alcoholic parent. Some children have developmental disabilities, or emotional or behavioral disturbances, which are known before the child is enrolled in the program.

If children with mental, physical, or other impairment or with a medical disorder are enrolled, and special care is needed, their health records (registration form) shall include a physician's statement which identifies the condition and which the physician's or other appropriate care professional's special instructions for the child's care are included.

It is important for WEXP to provide affordable, quality childcare for all children enrolled. These guidelines were developed to ensure that the program quality is maintained for all children enrolled.

We have adopted these guidelines for WEXP families and staff to make every effort that the objectives are met while providing an inclusive community. It is important to us that the families of children with special needs are assured that every effort will be made to make the child's inclusion in the program successful. We have also developed this policy to insure that staff are adequately informed and trained to deal competently with the needs of all children enrolled in WEXP.

(B). When a child receiving special education services through Metro Nashville Public Schools is enrolled in WEXP, we will do the following in order to assure that we utilize all available resources to better serve the child:

1. Before the child begins attending WEXP, the Director and other appropriate staff will meet with the child's parents to learn more about the child's special needs, the parent's expectations of WEXP, and the parent's suggestions regarding guidance of the child. In addition to the usual WEXP orientation information, the director will give the parents a copy of this policy and remind them of the release for our staff to communicate with Metro Nashville Schools regarding their child (parents will give written permission).
2. Within the first month of enrollment, the WEXP Director will arrange with the Principal to have an appropriate member of the M-team staff visit WEXP to observe the program and the child. The same person will have a follow-up meeting with the WEXP Director to give their recommendations for the program modifications that would be helpful for integrating the child, and to answer the WEXP staff's questions. A meeting with the child's teacher may be requested also.
3. The WEXP Director will also meet with the child's parents to share observations about the child's adjustment to WEXP, as well as WEXP's adjustment to the child. If previously agreed upon, this may be done through informal conversations at pick-up time, and/or written communications with the parents.

All of these observations, meetings, and/or conversations will be summarized in writing for the child's WEXP file with copies (if requested) given to the parents.

(C). Responding To a Child Who Presents Special Needs:

When the WEXP Director and/or staff observe a child who shows on-going symptoms of unusual stress the Director will:

1. record the observed behaviors
2. meet with the child's parents to share these observations and to get their insights into why the child might be acting this way, and get input on how to help the child
3. meet with the child's teacher to see if the teacher shares the same concerns, and to learn if the child has been referred for observation, teacher consultation, or assessment by school specialist.

If the WEXP Director and staff have expressed serious concerns about a particular child, the Director will:



1. make a referral to the principal of the child's school, asking that there be intervention by an appropriate specialist if this is not already being done. The Director will share with the school specialist copies of the observations and meeting summaries.
2. request that the school specialist observe the child at WEXP and meet with the staff to make recommendations about how to help the child.

All of these observations and meetings will be summarized in writing for the child's WEXP file with copies, if requested, going to the parents, and to the school specialist.

#### Emergency Management Plan

In the event that a fire is reported in the building, the children will be evacuated out of the building to the soccer fields. Evacuation routes are posted at the parent center. Fire drills are practiced once a month during WEXP hours in addition to monthly drills practiced during the school day at West End Middle School.

In the event that extreme weather warnings are issued, the WEXP director and staff will evacuate the children to the auditorium.

We will have an emergency evacuation site put into place and this information will be located on the parent information board. Or we will move to a site assigned to us by professional emergency personnel. **Tennessee Emergency Management Agency phone # 615.741.0001. Local Emergency Management Agency phone #615.862.8530.**

In case of emergency evacuation, a sign on the WEXP entrance door at the cafeteria will identify the evacuation site. Staff and/or parent volunteers will also contact parents with information regarding child pick-up location. The Director will notify local TV news stations to request a media announcement of the emergency and the relocation site.

#### Risky Behavior:

In accordance with the new DHS child care center rules centers must have "a clear policy concerning the release of children to anyone whose behavior may place the child in immediate risk."

The WEXP policy is as follows:

**WEXP staff will look for signs of risky atypical behavior and immediately notify a supervisor. In case of obvious intoxication or erratic behavior, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to notify the adult that the child will not be released until an alternate pick-up person is contacted. The supervisor will contact the police if necessary, and provide secure and safe location for the child until the alternate pick-up arrives.**

**RISKY BEHAVIOR includes, but is not limited to:**

1. Intoxication (smell of alcohol, slurred speech, balance/walking problems, or driving problems)
2. Confrontational (extreme display of irrational anger)
3. Any other atypical behavior

#### Parent Involvement/Governing Board

WEXP welcomes and encourages parent support and involvement. Sharing ideas and concerns, volunteering time for specific projects, and serving on the parent elected governing board are some ways parents can become involved with WEXP. Parents are welcome to visit anytime...no appointment necessary. When staff are busy supervising children, parents should keep conversations with staff brief. Please arrange for a conference with the Director or staff if a longer conversation is needed. Parents should schedule a time to speak to the Director in private about concerns or if you would like to know anything about what your child spends his/her time doing at WEXP.

Yearly conferences may be scheduled during West End Middle School's Parent/Teacher Conference Days. All parents are urged to schedule an appointment at this time to discuss their child's development, adjustments to WEXP, peer interactions, or any other concerns with the director or staff. Parents may call at any time to schedule a meeting to discuss their child.

WEXP calendars are distributed occasionally to provide information about center activities. Calendars may include announcements about full day registration, meetings, special events, and planned activities so that you may converse with your child about day care happenings.

#### Governing Board

The WEXP Governing Board is a volunteer advisory group that works closely with the WEXP Director to identify needs, solve problems, monitor finances, and establish policy. The WEXP Governing Board is responsible for hiring the WEXP Director.

WEXP board meetings are regularly unless special circumstances warrant a called meeting at West End Middle School. Advance notice is given to all members. All interested parents are welcome to attend meetings. If the parent meets with the Director about a concern and feels that the concern is still unresolved, he/she may send a written statement to the Chairman of the Board requesting board review of the problem at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

#### 13. Enrollment Procedures

WEXP seeks to balance the ages of the youth in the program. School year enrollment will be opened first to currently enrolled WEXP children and their siblings. Any available spaces will be taken as a first come first serve basis or the

next available person on the waiting list, which is updated when vacancies become available.

All new families are asked to schedule a brief orientation with the Director to discuss the workings of the program before their child actually starts.

**Disenrollment Policy:**

**Parent/guardian must give written notification that is received by WEXP at least thirty (30) days prior to the intended last day, or its monetary equivalent will be charged on a pro-rated basis. Verbal notification does not fulfill this requirement.**

Parents are always welcome to visit WEXP. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. Our phone number is 615-944-2937, or we will be glad to schedule a time to talk.