



Westford Academy Parent/Caregiver Newsletter VOL I – August 2023
From the Desk of Daniel P. Twomey, Principal
August, 2023

Greetings,

This document will hopefully provide valuable information to start the school year for students and parents/caregivers. Please take a moment to review the information provided as it will help with a smooth transition to this school year.

Sincerely,
Dan Twomey
Principal

Overarching Mission & Vision

We value the development of curious lifelong learners who are responsible, empathetic members of the community, demonstrating innovation through a wide variety of opportunities within inclusive, joyful learning environments that embrace their variability and honor their diversity.

We believe in preparing our students for active, positive participation as both local and global citizens by developing and fostering creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Westford Academy - School Calendar

- Tuesday, August 22 and Wednesday, August 23, Freshmen Building Tours, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- Tuesday, August 29, Grade 9 Orientation 7:35 AM – 1:55 PM, Senior Class Kick-off meeting for Students and Parent/Caregivers 6:30 PM
- Wednesday, August 30, Grades 9 -12 First Day of Classes, Fall Sports Information Night 6:30 PM
- Friday, September 1, No School, Labor Day Weekend
- Monday, September 4, No School, Labor Day Weekend
- Tuesday, September 12, Senior Parent/Caregiver meeting hosted by the School Counseling Department 6:30 PM, Late buses start
- Monday September 25, No School, Yom Kippur Observed

- Thursday, October 5, Back to School Open House for Parents/Caregivers (Students have early release)
- Friday, October 6, School Picture Day
- Monday, October 9, No School, Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Wednesday, October 11, MEFA Financial Aid Presentation, 6:30 PM, in the PAC
- Thursday, October 12, NHS Induction Ceremony
- Saturday, October 14, PSAT Test, 7:00 AM
- Thursday, October 26, Early Release/Professional Development Day
- Thursday, November 2, End of Quarter 1
- Friday, November 3, Beginning of Quarter 2
- Friday, November 10, No School, Veteran's Day
- Wednesday, November 22, Early Release, Thanksgiving Break
- Thursday & Friday, November 23 and 24, Thanksgiving Break
- Friday, December 22, Early Release, December Break Begins
- Monday, December 25 through Friday, December 29, December Break
- Monday, January 1, No School, New Year's Day
- Friday, January 5, ASVAB Test
- Thursday, January 11, Career Exploration Breakfast
- Monday, January 15, No School, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 17-22, Mid Term Assessments
- January 22, End of Semester 1/Quarter 2
- Wednesday, January 24, Early Release, Professional Development
- Tuesday, January 30, Junior Parent/Caregiver Seminar, 6:30 PM, in the PAC
- Tuesday, February 13, 8th Grade Parent Night, 6:30 PM, in the PAC
- Monday, February 19 through Friday, February 23, February Break
(Dates are subject to change)

Building Tours of Westford Academy

Tuesday, August 22nd and Wednesday, August 23rd
10:00 AM to 1:00 PM (No appointment necessary)

Please come to the Bell Lobby (just inside the main entrance of Westford Academy). Westford Academy's Peer Leaders will be ready to guide you. Bring your schedule and find out where your classrooms are!

(Please note that the custodians are busy waxing floors and cleaning, so unfortunately no one will be able to walk around the building until August 22nd at 10:00 AM.)

Late Buses

Late Buses will begin running on September 12th

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays

Late buses will pick students up at 3:00 PM at the back of the building (Flag Lobby exit)

WELCOME NEW STAFF!

Dean of Students	Amanda Welch
Fine & Performing Arts	Sarah Scherini Zackary Sawyer
PE/Wellness	Valerie Meiners
Science	Shannon Taylor
Social Studies	Anthony Brown
Student Support	Mathew Noferi Sara Spaanenburg Laura Sporel Joe Van Gelder
World Language	Bethany Beauchesne Olivia Fennel

Universal Free School Meals

Dear Parents and Caregivers, we want to update you with exciting news about universal free school meals. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has approved free school meals for all students permanently! This means that breakfast and lunch will continue to be served at no cost to all students.

Please note that even though first meals will be free for all, it is very important for families who would qualify for free or reduced meals based on household financial needs to continue to complete the household Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals for the 2023-2024 school year. The application is available on the district website, each school's main office and in the Food Service Office in the Millenium Building. If you are unable to print the application from the district website, contact the Food Service Office and an application will be mailed to you. Please note that all children who qualified based on financial need last year (those families who submitted financial based applications or were directly certified for free/reduced lunches) will have a carryover grace period of thirty days into the school year.

We strongly encourage ALL families who would qualify based on financial need to submit this form as it is very important to the district's records, and allows us to also waive fees, etc. for those who qualify.

In addition, please consider applying for SNAP, the federal nutrition program that provides eligible residents with monthly financial assistance to purchase groceries. The application for SNAP is available now. More SNAP information can be found at gettingsnap.org.

The Food and Nutrition Department at Westford Public Schools thanks you for your participation in our program. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide nourishing and healthy meals to all Westford Public Schools students so please reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

Colleen J. Wallace
Food Service Director
Westford Public Schools

Student Dismissals

Have your student bring in a dismissal note (given to the attendance secretary, Karin Brown, who sits in the Counseling Department).

OR:

Call the attendance line at 978-692-5570 then press #1 to leave a detailed message.

Have your student pick up their dismissal pass from the Attendance Secretary (Karin Brown) prior to the dismissal time. Please note that a dismissal is NOT valid unless these steps are followed.

Excused Absences/ Excused Tardy/ Excused Dismissal

Examples of excused absences/tardies/dismissals are for illness of the student with a doctor's note, medical appointments, death in the student's family, observance of a religious holiday, court appointments, college visits (limited to three (3) such visits per year), extraordinary circumstances or school sanctioned absences such as field trips. All excused absences will need documentation provided to the attendance secretary. All work missed because of an excused absence/tardy/dismissal will be made up following the Make-Up Policy of the Student Handbook. Most importantly, the student should make contact with each teacher involved because different arrangements may be made at the sole discretion of the teacher.

Unexcused Absence /Tardy /Dismissal

An absence/tardy/dismissal occurs when a student is absent from school, late to school or dismissed from school, with or without Caregiver/Parent approval, for any other reasons, including, but not limited to, family vacation, no reason given, doing errands, driver's ed, cutting classes, etc. Students who have an unexcused absence, tardy, or dismissal on the day of an assessment may not be allowed to make-up the assessment unless Administrative approval is given.

Items Forgotten at Home

Should your student contact you during the school day and ask that you drop off their homework, project, lunch, sports equipment, musical instrument etc., please know that the main office will not take responsibility for getting these items to your student. Should you choose to bring these items in for your student, we ask that you please place them on the "drop-off" bookcase in the main office. It will be up to you to communicate to your student that these items are in the main office ready to be picked up.

Lost and Found

The lost and found box at WA is located in the Main Office.

Working Papers:

Working papers are requested online. If your student has been offered a job, please have them go on the Westford Academy webpage. Click on “For Students” and then click on “Working Permit – Ages 14-18”.

<https://www.westfordk12.us/wa/students/links/working-permit-ages-14-18>

Important Information Regarding Military Recruiters

Federal law requires that the District release the names, addresses and telephone listings of students to military recruiters and institutions of higher education upon request for recruitment and scholarship purposes. However, in all instances listed above, parents may request that such directory information not be released without prior consent by notifying the school in writing by September 2023.

Freshmen Activities Fair – Tuesday, August 29, 2023

Students have an incredible range of clubs/organizations/teams in which to get involved. Here's a sample of some attending this year's Activities Fair! Clubs will begin the week of September 12th (Late buses begin running September 12th - Tuesday's, Wednesday's, and Thursday's)

Photography Club	Programming Club	Science Team
Art Club		Ski Club
Project Purple		S.A.D.D.
South Asian Student Association (SASA)		Latin Club
Human Rights		Crew
Best Buddies		ADL
HOSA – Future Health Professionals – Red Cross Blood Drives		International Club
Robotics		Mock Trial
Broadcast / Communications Club - WABC		WA PRIDE (Community Service Org)***
Chess Club		Troubadours – Strings
Cirrus (Outward Bound type of program)		JSA – Junior State of America
SMASH Club		DECA
Asian Cultural Club		Dance Team
Bollywood Dance		Brighter Place
Spanish Club		Math Team
Knitting Club		WA Capella
Model UN		Environmental Club
French Club		English Literacy Outreach/WA PRIDE
Museum Club		Literary Magazine - Beyond Words
Outing Club		Hands to Haiti
Gardening Club		Speech and Debate
Student Council - Freshmen ELECTION information ***		Swim team
Westford Academy Theater Arts (WATA)***		Yearbook ***
Jewish Student Union		Shakespeare Club
Book Club		EdRising (formerly Future Educators)
NHS ***		Relay for Life

***ORGANIZATIONS: WA PRIDE, WATA, Student Council, NHS, Yearbook might have tables – and are listed on webpage as well. **WA website:** http://wa.westfordk12.us/pages/WestfordWA_Activities/index
Club Fee: \$100/student /one-time fee for one or more clubs. If you'd like to take care of the one-time fee for any and all clubs, please [CLICK HERE TO PAY](#).

SENIOR PARKING PASSES

All seniors will be eligible for a parking pass to park in the senior lot this year. If your child has their license now, and has a vehicle to drive to school, please feel free to pay for the \$200 parking pass now, then passes will be distributed after the SENIOR NIGHT on Tuesday, August 29th. [Class of 2024 Parking Pass Payment](#). Passes can also be purchased that night with cash or check as well.

Counseling Department

The Counseling Department wishes to extend a warm welcome to our new and returning students and their families. Students and parents/caregivers are encouraged to work closely with their assigned counselor. The counseling staff is highly skilled in the areas of school adjustment, course selection, interpersonal relationships, post secondary planning and personal growth and development. We seek to provide support for students and parents/caregivers during these school years.

It is difficult to accept a request for a changes in counselor assignments except for an egregious reason. The management of records and the monitoring of students are aided by alphabetical student assignments.

Monitoring Student Progress

Please help us in monitoring your student's progress by reading all school notices and reports and by readily conferring with teachers. A valuable first step would be to transfer important school dates from the school calendar to your family's calendar. Place reminders 2 to 3 weeks before progress report and report card dates to let your child know you're interested and looking toward the upcoming school reports. Whenever you have a question or concern, please do not hesitate to call.

Counseling Department - Press #2

Leah Birnkrant , Counselor	x 7409
Lauren Clark, Director of School Counseling	x 7419
Samantha DeMagistris, Counselor	x 7422
Brian Doherty, Counselor	x 7412
Karen Halloran, Counselor	x 7414
Heidi Hider, Counselor	x 7410
Patti Lonergan, Social Worker	x 7495
Susan Lynch, Counselor	x 7420
Tracy McLaughlin, Counselor	x 7439
Micaela McQuaide, Social Worker	x 7496
Lynda Vernalia, Administrative Assistant	x 7407

Dual Enrollment Program

Dual Enrollment with Massachusetts state colleges and universities are available to qualified students wishing to take college courses while still in high school. Have your student request

information early from their school counselor.

Test Dates

PSAT Saturday, October 14, 2023

ASVAB Friday, January 5, 2024

SAT Saturday, March 9, 2024

Senior Parent/Caregiver Night

Parents/Caregivers of the Class of 2024, the Counseling Department invites you to Senior College Night on Tuesday, September 12 at 6:30 PM in the PAC. Students do not have to attend, as they will receive the same presentation during the school day.

Financial Aid Planning

MEFA Financial Aid Night is online via MEFA.org for virtual seminars throughout the fall. A college representative experienced in determining financial need will walk parents/caregivers and students through the federal financial aid forms and answer questions regarding this process.

Nurse's Notes**Students with Life- Threatening Allergies and Updated Epipens**

We need your help to ensure the safety of our students with life-threatening allergies. Please take note of the following guidelines:

Medical Documentation:

Provide us with the latest medical documentation regarding your student's severe allergy diagnosis and the need for an EpiPen. Forms can be found on the WPS Health Service website under Health Forms. <https://westfordpshealthservices.weebly.com/>

Please note: Students will not be allowed to attend field trips without the proper documentation and medication in our clinic.

Communication:

Please ensure that your student carries an updated EpiPen while at school. Expired epipens may not be effective during emergencies. Lastly, inform us promptly of any changes in your student's health status or allergy management.

Thank you,

Joan Mitchell RN and Kathy Bourdeau RN (978-692-5570 ext 7415/7437)