

# STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK

The mission of Walt Whitman High School is to prepare our students for the rigorous demands of the academic and work worlds so that they may reach their potential as self-directed, creative, and socially responsible individuals. This mission will be accomplished through excellence in teaching and learning, made stronger through active partnerships with parents and the community.



Walt Whitman High School

2018 -2019

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*“Honoring our past, teaching our future” – Robby Dodd*

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## **Academic Program**

With "success for every student" as a goal, Whitman offers many opportunities for students of all abilities to be successful. Advanced and honors classes are available for students with the ability and willingness to work very hard at difficult subjects. A large and exceptionally varied number of college-preparatory classes challenge the college bound students. Vocational and technical courses prepare students for jobs after high school, and internships and service opportunities give students practical real world experience. Special English-language courses are offered for those not fluent in English.

There are programs to help students with learning disabilities, minor handicapping conditions, severe handicapping conditions, and serious emotional handicaps. There is help for students with hearing impairments and speech problems. As much as possible, students in these programs are mainstreamed in regular classes, when appropriate.

For more options and requirements: [Click Here](#)

## **Attendance Intervention Plan**

Students will receive a warning letter generated and mailed from central office when they reach three unexcused absences. At this time, counselors will also be alerted and may meet with these students to encourage them to improve their attendance and/or avoid further tardiness.

Teachers may choose to alert counselors and the grade-level administrator as they see the unexcused absences/tardiness begin to accrue in their attendance program. They may also choose to email or call parents to discuss the impact on learning as a result of the absences and/or tardiness. Administrators, counselors, or parents may provide details that will be helpful, such as advising if a student is experiencing a health-related issue. Also, teachers should meet with students any time they feel it is appropriate to discuss their progress or attendance concerns.

When the student reaches 5 unexcused absences another letter will be generated and sent from central office. At this time, teachers will have the opportunity to develop an AIP (Attendance Intervention Plan) with the student to include the goals/strategies the student must attain/use if they want the opportunity to earn credit for the course. The teacher must provide a copy of the AIP to the parent, counselor, and grade-level administrator. This can be done by hard copy or sent electronically.

The AIP will be reviewed (can include periodic review during the semester) at the end of each semester. The teacher will have the option of determining if the student should receive an E3 for the course (loss of credit) based on compliance with the AIP and improvement in attendance. The teacher will sign and indicate if the student did not successfully complete the AIP and submit it to the grade-level administrator so they can make the grade change in the system.

## **Athletic Program**

Whitman teams have won numerous state, regional, county, and divisional titles. Approximately 60 percent of the student body participates in the interscholastic sports program.

Whitman has excellent athletic facilities -- two full gyms, an updated weight room, a wrestling room, six team rooms, and trainer's facilities. Whitman also has a stadium for field sports (with a press box, concession stand, and ticket windows); an eight-lane track; a softball field; a baseball and field hockey field and eight tennis courts.

A student must meet the MCPS standards for academic eligibility in order to participate in a sport. That is,

students in grades 9-12 must maintain a 2.0 average with no more than one E (failure) in the previous marking period. The policy does not apply for their first quarter to students entering from outside the MCPS system or entering ninth grade.

Athletes must have a current medical form on file. Parents and students are also required to sign a contract/consent form indicating not only parental consent to participate but also the athlete's understanding and willingness to adhere to policies regarding eligibility, conduct, training, attendance, participation on outside teams, and substance abuse. Parents will also need to complete medical cards and transportation forms. The contract and medical card forms can also be found on

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/athletics/parent/forms.aspx>

The transportation forms are handled on an individual team basis and will be distributed by the coaches.

### Standards for Spectator Behavior

In order to promote appropriate spectator behavior at sports events, a committee of students and administrators set the following standards for acceptable spectator behavior:

- Spectators are to remove their headgear and stand respectfully during the playing of the National Anthem and/or the pledge to the flag.
- Spectators are not to engage in confrontations with spectators from the opposing team's school. The competition is between the teams, not the fans.
- Spectators are not to engage in confrontations with or harass the opposing team's cheerleaders, band members, dance team members, etc.
- Spectators are not to harass injured players.
- Spectators are not to use profanity, make racial remarks, refer to a player's personal problems, or make remarks that may be interpreted to be insulting or demeaning to the opposing team or that team's community (including economic or educational presumptions).
- Spectators are not to use noisemakers or flash equipment in the gym during indoor activities.
- Spectators are encouraged to cheer for their team to help the team members do their very best in an atmosphere of respect for one another and good sportsmanship.

See Our Teams/Coaches/Seasons: <http://whitmanathletics.net/>

### Bell Schedule

Please use the Whitman App or visit this link: [Click Here](#)

### Boosters

If you are the parent of a student enrolled in one of the performing ensemble classes, you are automatically a member of the respective booster club. There is no membership fee but the clubs do ask for parent support, financially and otherwise, to augment the Music Department budget and the lab fees that each music student is required to pay. In this way, the music directors are better able to enhance the quality of their programs by acquiring sheet music, maintaining and replacing concert dress, sponsoring guest performances and clinicians,

and expanding festival competitions and performance activities. The clubs sponsor various fundraising efforts each year. For example, once a year each booster club hosts its own get-together for parents at the home of a volunteer music family. This is a time for parents to mingle with each other and the music directors while enjoying light refreshments and performances by some of the Whitman ensembles.

The Choral Boosters sponsor the “*Shop for Chorus*” program which solicits parents to purchase Giant and Safeway gift cards. Additionally, many parents make a voluntary donation to their booster club.

The Booster Clubs also play an important communication role for the music programs. Newsletters are published and club meetings are held two to three times a year in an effort to keep music families fully informed about upcoming events, results of festivals and other department news. Announcements are also posted on Whitnet and in the *Viking Voice*.

All music parents are encouraged to become actively involved in the Music Booster Clubs. Doing so not only supports the music program but also provides a wonderful opportunity to connect with other Whitman parents.

### **Building**

Whitman's building contains up-to-date facilities that are exceptional for a high school. Classrooms are grouped by department, and each is linked by a local network computer. The building is accessible to the handicapped, and room locations are notated in Braille.

The building houses computer labs, ten science labs, a suite of art classrooms and darkrooms, and a suite of technology education classrooms. In addition, there are two gymnasiums, and two workout rooms, including a weight training room. The Whittier Woods building next door houses an annex of additional classrooms and labs.

### **Cafeteria News & Secondary School Meals Information**

For information on the cost of food and how students can pay, plus more. Please, [Click Here](#)

### **Counselors**

Counselor Assignments: [Click Here](#)

### **Driving Privileges**

Students requesting space on the Walt Whitman High School parking lot must apply for a permit. This permit is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked for failure to adhere to school policies not limited to those shown below. The Montgomery County Board of Education has established a non-refundable permit fee of \$37.50 per semester.

YOU ARE NOT GUARANTEED A PERMIT.

Students, upon satisfying the above criteria, may submit the completed and signed application along with photocopy of [their](#) license for the semester to the Athletics Office. Applications will be accepted during lunch at the Athletic Director office. [Payment will be online ONLY. Do not pay unless you receive a permit.](#)

Parking permits must be displayed in the vehicle on the rear view mirror with the number facing out. Permits are non-transferable and will be revoked if used by vehicles other than the registered student. Permit holders are expected to observe the following regulations, which will be strictly enforced. (Note that Whitman High School cannot revoke any ticket issued by the Montgomery County Police for parking or traffic violations.)

Activities listed below are prohibited, and violations will result in temporary or permanent loss of the parking permit:

- Exceeding reasonable speeds or otherwise driving recklessly.
- Leaving school grounds without permission and not signing out in attendance office.
- Unauthorized transporting other students off school grounds during the school day.
- Parking in spaces designated for staff, visitors, or marked as reserved.
- Parking a vehicle without a current parking sticker.
- Parking anywhere on school grounds not designated as a student parking space.
- Parking in a designated handicapped parking spot without a handicapped permit.
- Littering.
- Violations of the school discipline policy.
- Parking in the bus lane.

### Lost/Found

Found items should be turned into the Security Office or the lost and found bin in the cafeteria where they will remain until claimed. If a student has lost an item, he/she must see a member of Security Personnel and file a lost item report.

**A word of caution – prevention is still the best policy. Students should make sure that their personal belongings are never left unattended. Items should be kept in secure lockers, particularly while students are eating lunch, using the locker room or participating in an extracurricular activity. *The best prevention is to leave high value items at home. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.***

### Media Center

The Media Center blends state-of-the-art resources for data searches and computer networking, a television studio, and inviting areas for reading, with space for as many as two classes to work on projects. It hosts up to as many as three classes at a time.

The resources of the Media Center are available to all students, staff, and parents. The Media Center is open daily until 3:30 p.m.

Library materials in the Media Center have been chosen to support the curriculum and areas of special concern to students. The book collection holds approximately 20,000 volumes, 80 percent of which are non-fiction and 20 percent are fiction.

Students must use their official photo identification cards to check out books for a period of three weeks and to renew them thereafter. Some reference materials may be checked out overnight after 2:10 to be returned by 7:15 the following morning. Fines are not assessed for overdue books, but lost materials must be paid for before quarterly report cards can be issued.

Rich resources for research are available through the many online databases to which the Media Center subscribes through the Internet. One such database provides access to hundreds of additional newspapers and magazines. All computers in the Media Center are governed by the MCPS appropriate use policy. Students are also encouraged to obtain a library card from Montgomery County Public Libraries, so that their complementary databases can be accessed from the Whitman Media Center.

A television production and broadcast studio enables students to produce programs related to the school curriculum. In-house broadcasting and cable television programs are available in every classroom.

### **Montgomery County Board of Education**

The Montgomery County Board of Education (BOE), the official educational policymaker in the county, is responsible for the direction and operation of the public school system. The Board consists of seven county residents elected by voters to four-year terms and a student member elected annually by all MCPS secondary school students.

With the approval of the state superintendent of schools, the Board appoints the county superintendent of schools to a four-year term, and the county superintendent then administers the schools according to Board policies.

The Board prepares and requests annual capital and operating budgets based on proposals from the superintendent. The budget requests are presented to the Montgomery County Executive and County Council, which have the final authority in setting local fiscal-year appropriations for the public schools.

The Board holds two regularly scheduled meetings monthly on the second Tuesday (generally beginning at 10:00 AM) and the second Monday following the Tuesday meeting (generally beginning at 8:00 PM). The Board also holds special meetings as needed or public hearings on specific topics, such as the capital and operating budgets. Most Board meetings are held in the Boardroom of the Carver Educational Services Center. Meetings are televised on MCPS Cable TV, Channel 60.

The Board is located at the Carver Educational Services Center, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville 20850. The telephone number of the Board of Education is 301-279-3617.

MCPS Website: [www.Montgomeryschoolsmd.org](http://www.Montgomeryschoolsmd.org)

### **Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)**

The PTSA at Walt Whitman HS supports the entire Whitman community -- the parents, the staff and the students. We hold several informational meetings throughout the year, advocate for students on many levels, support a wide range of programs and projects, communicate school-related information to the community, and coordinate parent volunteers for a variety of school needs. We invite all members of the community to take an active role in what we do.

The PTSA relies primarily on membership dues and contributions to sponsor and support our many programs and events. These programs include student support, classroom enhancements, staff appreciation, Stressbusters events, informational speakers, Principal's Coffees, Whitworld/Newcomer events, books for the Media Center, and professional development. The \$40 parent membership fee plus any additional donation you wish to contribute make these programs possible. With your parent membership, you will also receive one school directory. We encourage you to join the PTSA, get involved and support the many PTSA programs offered at Whitman.

[Click Here](#) for more information.

### **Portables (Relocatable Classrooms)**

The relocatable classrooms are primarily used as classrooms in schools where the student enrollment exceeds school building capacity, to provide adequate teaching stations, and to accommodate the school programs. Because the student enrollment fluctuates and the programs change each year, the relocatable classrooms are moved from school to school during the summer breaks to accommodate the space needs. Relocatable



classrooms are one of the ways to address the space needs until a permanent solution is put in place.

### **Portable Electronic Devices Policy**

Portable electronic devices (e.g. cell phones, Kindles, iPads, smart-watches, etc.) usage is a privilege at WWHS. Students are able to use their portable electronic devices before and after school, and during their own scheduled lunch period. To minimize distractions in the classroom, students are expected to be responsible and respectful of this policy and silence their phones (not on vibrate) and keep them out of sight at all other times.

#### Portable Electronic Device Guidelines during Lunch (Periods 5 & 6)

- Students may use their portable electronic devices during their lunch period in designated areas.
- Do not text or call your friends/peers who are in class.
- Do not use your portable electronic devices outside of first floor classrooms during instructional time.

*Designated first floor areas* for portable electronic device usage include the cafeteria, court yard, main entrance, front hallway, side hallway near the staff lounge, and outside of the school building.

Students *may not* use portable electronic devices in the physical education hallways or lockers at any time. This area includes the following: locker and team rooms, boys' and girls' restrooms, large and small gym, and the Physical Education hallway area.

#### **Consequences** for violating the cell phone policy:

- A student's portable electronic device may be confiscated by a staff member if they violate the above guidelines.
- Repeated violations of these guidelines will result in a reconsideration of this privilege and possible suspension.

**First Offense:** Teacher returns portable electronic device at the end of the period

**Second Offense:** The portable electronic device is taken and given to security (teachers will notify parents/guardians by the end of the day). Security will keep the device until the end of the following school day\*

**Third Offense:** Same as the second, however a parent/guardian must pick up the portable electronic device from security.

\*Except on the last day before a weekend or break, where the device is returned at the end of the day.

NOTE: If a student's portable electronic device is lost, or if it is stolen, the school takes no responsibility for reimbursing the student for the item.

## Student's Rights and Responsibilities

To get the most up-to-date version: [Click Here](#)

## School Calendar

This is updated on a regular basis: Please [Click Here](#) for more information.

## School Philosophy and Goals

Tomorrow's society needs all the caring, intellectually grounded members we together can produce. Establishing that essential foundation requires the active involvement of every member of the Walt Whitman academic community: the administration, the parents, the staff, and the students.

Walt Whitman High School accepts the challenges and commitments inherent in this shared responsibility. Specifically, the administration, the parents and the staff seek to develop the knowledge, skills and values of our students to enable them to succeed as constructive members of the diverse American society and to respond to the needs of the wider world.

High standards of instruction will prepare each student for demands of the academic and working worlds as well as the delights of the social and creative worlds. The Walt Whitman High School experience will promote rigorous critical, creative and independent thinking -- an intellectual gift that will last a lifetime.

We are also committed to ensuring an atmosphere of mutual caring and respect, the fundamentals of a successful community. We affirm that all teaching and learning must draw from the lessons of the past as we guide students to meet future challenges.

In accordance with this philosophy, we have set the following goals for the school:

- to teach students to think logically and creatively, write and speak clearly, and be at home in the world of the physical and social sciences, mathematics, history, languages, art, music and sports.
- to help students recognize and nurture their own capabilities, talents, and interests, and to appreciate those of their fellow students;
- to expect honorable behavior, good judgement, respect and concern for others, and accountability for one's own actions;
- to encourage all students to develop extracurricular interests beneficial to themselves and their society;
- to guide students on the path to success in higher education and the working world;
- to ensure that students with special needs have abundant opportunities to achieve and succeed.
- to foster the intellectual and professional growth of the Walt Whitman faculty and staff, and to make this school a rewarding place to work; and
- to give every member of the Walt Whitman High School community -- students, parents, faculty and staff -- the opportunity to contribute to the work and success of that community.

## Shelter and Lockdown

### Shelter

Shelter is a term used to notify students and staff that a medical emergency or possible threat exists in or around the school/county. It implements a higher level of safety and security for students, staff and visitors. All students and staff members are to be accounted for and under supervision. The incident commander (principal) or his designee will notify staff and students via the PA system when a Shelter is in effect. Students in the hallway should return to their classroom or go into a secure location. Teachers will take attendance to account for all students. Discrepancies will be reported to an administrator/designee at the command post after it is deemed safe to do so. Instruction continues inside the building with staff supervising students during controlled class changes. Movement within the building may be restricted depending on the nature of the emergency or potential threat. Students will not be permitted to leave the classroom unless necessary. Staff and students should respond to the fire alarms by evacuating the building. If necessary, blinds and curtains should be closed. If staff and students are notified of a Shelter before school, during the change of classes, or during lunch, they should immediately report to their next class. Included in the Shelter PA announcement will be specific instructions as to which class period students and staff should report.

### Lockdown

Lockdown is a term used to notify students and staff that an imminent danger does exist in or around the school/county. It implements a high level of safety and security for staff, students and visitors by implementing an immediate lockdown. The incident commander (principal) or his designee will notify staff and students via the PA system when a Lockdown is in effect. The incident commander has the authority to share specific information relating to the crisis with staff and students in the Lockdown announcement. Students in the hallways or bathrooms should immediately return to their classroom or go into in a secure location. Staff will make every effort to ensure that students and visitors are in a secure location. Teachers will take attendance and make a list of all persons in their room. Discrepancies will be reported to an administrator/designee at the command post, after deemed safe to do so. No one will leave the classroom. The door(s) will be locked and lights turned out. The door window(s) are to be covered and blinds closed. Students are to move away from windows and doors. Students should sit quietly on the floor. The room should then appear unoccupied. No one is allowed into the room. Students should try to remain calm and quiet.....it is essential not to talk. Await further instructions via PA announcements concerning visits to the bathroom and nurse or to get food/water. Students and staff should ignore activated fire alarms and ringing of bells.

### Staff

Whitman has a large and talented staff, many of whom have been a part of the school for many years. Whitman has had only three Principals in its 36 years. Currently, Dr. Alan Goodwin is the Principal of Walt Whitman High School. Dr. Jerome Marco had been the Principal since 1975, taking over from the school's first Principal, Dr. Daryl Shaw.

To contact staff via email or phone please: [Click Here](#)

### **Whitman in Brief**

Walt Whitman High School opened in the fall of 1962 with 1,418 students. The school was built on 17 levels, with a center courtyard and a geodesic dome for its gymnasium and auditorium. A Ford Foundation grant underwrote the design and construction of the dome.

In 1981, a 1,200-seat auditorium was added to the school. In the fall of 1992, Whitman moved into a new building. Only the auditorium was retained from the old school and incorporated in the new design.

Six elementary schools and Thomas W. Pyle Middle School are part of the Walt Whitman High School Cluster of Schools. The elementary schools are Bannockburn, Bethesda, Bradley Hills, Burning Tree, Carderock Springs, and Wood Acres.

Whitman is an exceedingly cosmopolitan school, with students from more than fifty-five countries. Seventy-seven percent of the students are white; four percent are African-American; six percent are Hispanic; and thirteen percent are Asian.

Students at Whitman are overwhelmingly college-bound. Ninety-five percent go on to college. Generally, approximately eighty-six percent attend four-year colleges and nine percent attend two-year colleges. More than seventy percent attend college out of state.

Whitman's school colors are black, white, and Columbia blue. The mascot is the Viking. The Whitman High School Website is <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/whitmanhs/>