



WESTERN  ACADEMY

Parent Handbook

Western Academy Parent Handbook

Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. Academics
- III. Other Programs for Students
- IV. Guidelines for Students
- V. Faculty
- VI. Facilities

I. Introduction

The faculty and staff of Western Academy work with parents to assist in the intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual education of the boys and young men entrusted to them. They provide quality academic, athletic and cultural programs for boys in grades three through eight, as well as opportunities for parents to get involved with the life of Western Academy.

Western Academy offers a liberal arts education that focuses on the development of intellectual and moral virtues, helping to foster the practice of concentrated study and a sincere interest in the abundant goodness of the world. Its curriculum is strongly grounded in the classic texts of western civilization. The all-male faculty strives to present a good Christian example of someone struggling to do the ordinary things of life extraordinarily well for the love of God and in the service of others. All student programs take place in the context of a personal approach to education where cheerfulness goes hand-in-hand with hard work and a striving to develop good habits and virtues.

This Parent Handbook is intended to serve as an overview of Western Academy, its philosophy and programs. It is not exhaustive by any means, but will accomplish its purpose if it introduces some of what Western Academy has to offer.

Western Academy opened in 2010, starting as a middle and lower school on Butlercrest Street in west Houston, aiming to prepare boys for success in high school while inculcating in them a deep Christian formation and an adventurous approach to life's challenges and their personal growth.

II. Academics

Study and Homework

Study is the first priority of students. This activity occurs at school, in the classroom, and at home. Time spent each school night on homework should be about 30-45 minutes for lower school students and up to 1 hour and 45 minutes for middle school students. A regular time (earlier in the afternoon rather than later) and a regular place for homework, study and review help develop the habits of mind necessary to succeed academically.

Students who are absent from school are expected to make up the work they missed as soon as they reasonably can. Participation in athletics or other activities does not excuse a student from academic responsibilities.

Classes

Classes are where the spirit of study intensifies. It is the responsibility of a student to be materially, physically, and mentally prepared for study and class work. Students are expected to bring pens, pencils, notebooks, textbooks, and any other required materials to class. Students need regular amounts of sleep as well as a healthy breakfast and lunch in order to be able to concentrate. Punctuality and outward appearance in dress and posture are signs of a student's attitude and willingness to work.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued quarterly to parents. Progress reports are sent home midway between reporting periods.

The Grading Scale

A+	97—100
A	93—96
A-	90—92
B+	87—89
B	83—86
B-	80—82
C+	77—79
C	73—76
C-	70—72
D+	67—69
D	63—66
D-	60—62
F	Below 60
I	Incomplete

Low Academic Performance

Western Academy provides students with a sufficiently demanding, but not overbearing curriculum. We expect students to work hard and perform well academically. Students who consistently receive poor grades will be notified of their low academic performance and given time to improve. A meeting may be held with parents to work out some concrete areas in which a student needs to grow. If a student fails to improve after certain interventionary steps have been taken, he may be required to complete makeup work during the summer in order to move on to the subsequent grade level. Habitual low academic performance can also be a cause for a student to be removed from the school. Please see Academic Probation below.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is critical to Western Academy's mission. By academic dishonesty, students commit an injustice against others, damage morale, and harm themselves by replacing honest effort with fraud.

An offense against academic honesty may lead to a failing grade and parental notification. A second offense may result in lack of credit, immediate parental conference, failure for the marking period in which the offense is committed, and suspension.

Academic Probation

A student will be placed on academic probation if he is habitually delinquent with homework or receives a D+ or below in two or more subjects on his quarterly report card. A student's academic probation will be re-evaluated after the subsequent quarterly report card.

Academic Probation may consist of any or all of the following:

- Ineligibility to play sports or to participate in clubs or other extra-curricular activities
- Tutoring before and/or after school
- Making up or redoing all outstanding or inadequate work in the subjects for which the student earned a D+ or below

A student on academic probation may be suspended or expelled if he:

- Continues to be habitually delinquent with homework
- Receives a D+ or below in two or more classes on his subsequent report card
- Fails in any way to abide by any other terms of his academic probation

III. Other Programs for Students

Advisory

Advisory is an essential ingredient in the mission of Western Academy. It ensures that each boy is understood, advised, and encouraged on a personal level. Since the school's opening, advisory has been taking place with informal, one-on-one conversations between faculty members and students throughout the school day.

Homeroom teachers have a special advisory role in their homeroom classes. A homeroom teacher takes note of each boy's strengths, as well as areas in which he may improve. He supports and encourages his homeroom students to strive for virtue and right conduct, dealing with each boy on a personal level. Lower school students meet one-on-one with their homeroom teachers quarterly.

In addition to the daily guidance of their homeroom teachers, middle school students meet monthly with a selected advisor who serves as his mentor at the school. This advisor takes a special interest in the student's overall growth as a man, and helps him set clear and effective goals for self improvement. There exists between the student and advisor a relationship of confidence and trust, where the student knows he will be understood and helped in any area of his life.

Advisors are indicated on each student's report card. In order to ensure that advisory at Western is successful, parents must be involved in their son's growth and understanding of himself. All parents are encouraged to be in touch with their son's advisor on a consistent basis.

The Houses of Western Academy

Western Academy is divided (students, faculty, and staff) into four houses. The house names are taken from the four elements of the school's coat of arms, each with a motto connected to the ideals that complete a Western Academy man: (1) The House of the Raven—wisdom; (2) The House of the Shell—daring; (3) The House of the Water—contemplation; and, (4) The House of the Green—hope. Siblings and first cousins are typically sorted into the same house.

The Houses of Western serve many important purposes:

- They communicate and encourage the embodiment of the school's ideals;
- They strengthen the enthusiasm and spirit for Western Academy and give the community a strong sense of belonging to a tradition and family;
- The house competitions are "rallying points" throughout the year marked by festival days that include holy Mass, competitions, a worthy meal, and spirited games;
- The houses encourage leadership and a sense of pride at Western Academy.

Extracurricular Activities and Sports

A number of clubs and activities are available at Western Academy. They are geared toward the realization of the school's objectives and are considered part of school life. Although extracurricular activities play a vital role in the school, no club or sport activities are scheduled during class hours except for special occasions.

Sports Teams

Western Academy will field teams (provided sufficient participation) in the following sports for grades 6, 7, and 8:

Fall:

- Football
- Cross Country

Winter:

- Basketball
- Soccer
- Wrestling

Spring:

- Baseball
- Rugby
- Track

Tryouts may be held at the beginning of each season to determine the team's roster. Students will be notified of the dates and times of these events.

Field Trips

Field trips provide a valuable educational purpose as they offer a targeted learning experience outside the classroom. These planned, occasional outings complement the curriculum while offering a break from the normal class schedule. Field trips present an opportunity for the bonds of friendship to strengthen through conversation and the shared experience of enjoying an adventurous excursion to a site of interest.

Transportation Policy

Students may be transported to and from campus for field trips, sports practices and games in school vans or in parent driven carpools. Parental permission is required for all school related transportation. Drivers of school vehicles will be employees or volunteers of Western Academy, and they must be licensed and insured drivers. Drivers are not permitted to use their phone while transporting students to or from a school activity.

IV. Guidelines for Students

Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance is expected of all students at Western Academy.

The School Day

Western Academy's classes begin at 8:20 a.m.; Monday through Thursday dismissal is at 3:20 p.m.; Friday dismissal is at 2:20 p.m.; on Half Days dismissal is at 12:10 p.m. Study Hall and approved areas on campus will be open to students from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Thursday. Students who regularly need to be picked up after 4:30 p.m. must make an arrangement with the school for extended care and a fee may be required. All students must be picked up by 5:00 p.m.

Absence

In case of absence from school for illness or some other serious reason, a parent or guardian must notify their son's homeroom teacher and any teacher whose class their son will miss. Upon the student's return to school, any relevant doctor's notes may be given to the front desk. Students who are absent from school are expected to make up the work they missed as soon as they reasonably can. Participation in athletics or other school-sponsored activities does not excuse a student from academic responsibilities.

Tardiness

The school day begins at 8:20 a.m. A student who comes to school after 8:20 a.m. must come to the front office to notify the front desk staff and receive a tardy slip. The student must then hand the tardy slip to his teacher to be admitted into class.

Extended Absence

If parents wish to take a student out of school for several days for personal reasons, please notify the homeroom teacher and the respective head of school.

Early Dismissal

If it is necessary to leave campus during the school day, a note indicating the reason, dated and signed by a parent or guardian, must be presented before the beginning of school to the main office. The front office will notify the homeroom teacher concerning the early dismissal. It is a good idea to email the homeroom teacher indicating this as well. At the time of early pickup, parents must come to the front office to sign the student out.

Any work covered during the missed class is the responsibility of the student. Frequent absence and habitual tardiness are detrimental to a student and his studies. A parental conference may be requested if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.

Returning Mid-Day

Students returning to school after appointments must come to the front office to receive a return slip from front desk staff. The student must then hand the return slip to his teacher to be readmitted into class.

Personal Appearance

Being well groomed and properly dressed is a sign of respect for oneself and others. It is also a means to encourage the seriousness of one's work and develop an eye toward adulthood. The dress code and its enforcement improve the overall tone of the school.

School Uniforms

Uniforms will be supplied by *Lands' End* and by Western Academy's online store, *Western Outfitters*.

3rd – 5th Grade:

- **Shirt:** Lands' End polo with WA logo (cobalt blue, honey gold, or evergreen)
- **Shorts or Pants:** Lands' End khaki cargo shorts, cargo pants, or chino pants
- **Belt**
- **Socks:** solid white, brown, black, navy blue, or grey only
- **Shoes:** white, brown, black, navy blue, or grey only
- **PE uniform:** PE shirt only* (3rd-4th), PE shirt & shorts* (5th)
- **WA Outerwear options:** Western Academy Hoodie* (brown or green), Land's End rain jacket with WA logo (navy blue), Land's End quarter zip or full-zip fleece with WA logo (classic navy or evergreen), Land's End boys performance fine gauge v-neck sweater with WA logo (classic navy or evergreen)

Outerwear Note: WA allows heavy jackets for the cold weather but all other lighter outerwear must be WA outerwear.

**Only available in the Western Outfitters store.*

6th & 7th Grade:

- **Shirt:** Lands' End short or long sleeve oxford shirt with WA logo (French blue, bright chamois, or blue)
- **Shorts or Pants:** Lands' End khaki chino shorts or pants
- **Belt**
- **Socks:** solid white, brown, black, navy blue, or grey only
- **Shoes:** white, brown, black, navy blue, or grey only
- **PE uniform:** PE shirt & shorts*
- **WA Outerwear options:** Western Academy Hoodie* (brown or green), Land's End rain jacket with WA logo (navy blue), Land's End quarter zip or full-zip fleece with WA logo (classic navy or evergreen), Land's End boys performance fine gauge v-neck sweater with WA logo (classic navy or evergreen)

Outerwear Note: WA allows heavy jackets for the cold weather but all other lighter outerwear must be WA outerwear.

**Only available in the Western Outfitters store.*

8th Grade:

- **Shirt:** Lands' End short or long sleeve oxford shirt with WA logo (French blue, bright chamois, or blue)
- **Pants Only:** Lands' End khaki chino pants
- **Blazer or Sportcoat, & Dress Shoes:** must be worn during all school masses and graduation
- **Tie or bowtie**
- **Belt**
- **Socks:** solid white, brown, black, navy blue, or grey only
- **Shoes:** white, brown, black, navy blue, or grey only
- **PE uniform:** PE shirt & shorts*
- **Outerwear:** Western Academy Hoodie* (brown or green), Land's End rain jacket with WA logo (navy blue), Land's End quarter zip or full-zip fleece with WA logo (classic navy or evergreen), Land's End boys performance fine gauge v-neck sweater with WA logo (classic navy or evergreen)

Outerwear Note: WA allows heavy jackets for the cold weather but all other lighter outerwear must be WA outerwear.

**Only available in the Western Outfitters store.*

The complete school uniform must be worn at all times during school hours with the following exceptions: PE uniform must be worn during physical education period; field trips, provided that the faculty guide or the Headmaster has specified another appropriate manner of dress. Except for the Western Academy “Hoodie” (which can be purchased in the front office), outer garments are to be worn only outside in cold weather.

If a student has a legitimate reason to be out of proper dress, he must have a signed and currently dated note from a parent.

Medication Protocol and Student Illness

Parents of students who require occasional over-the-counter medication are to inform the front office and provide clearly labeled medications. This information should be reported in the medical release. Without documentation, a phone call will be needed to confirm parental consent before Western Academy administers any medication. If a student is contagious (cough, fever, etc.) he should be kept at home until the illness has passed.

Please do **NOT** send your son to school if he has or has had:

1. Fever over 100 F within the last 24 hours (must be fever free without medication).
2. Vomiting and/or diarrhea within the 12 hours before the start of the school day.
3. Continuous coughing not relieved with cough medicine.
4. Strep throat. They may return 24 hours after starting antibiotics as long as they are fever free.

State law requires that all students have current immunization records. These records need to be turned in to the main office to complete enrollment for the school year. If parents request and

receive a state exemption from immunization, they must supply the official affidavit in place of the records before the school year begins.

Special note on lice: Parents whose sons have contracted lice should immediately contact the Head of School. Infected students are expected to eradicate all lice before returning to school. Meanwhile, Western Academy will notify all appropriate families via e-mail to prevent the spread of lice.

School Supplies

All new students are required to purchase the complete customized WA School Supplies Package for their first academic year. The package includes the required items your son will need for class. To purchase these packages, go to Western Academy's online store *Western Outfitters* and complete the School Supply Packages Order Form. The supplies are delivered to your son's homeroom and will be ready for him on the first day of school.

All returning students have the option of purchasing a new WA School Supplies Package or a WA Essential Supplies Package. These orders must be placed by the middle of June. To purchase these packages, go to Western Academy's online store *Western Outfitters* and complete the School Supply Packages Order Form. The supplies are delivered to your son's homeroom and will be ready for him on the first day of school.

Personal Property

All personal belongings of a student are his own responsibility. It is advisable for students to label personal property with their names. Names should be included on backpacks, jackets, clothing, books, calculators and other items. Prudence dictates against bringing large amounts of money or valuables to school.

Some personal belongings should not be brought to school. Cell phones, tablets, electronic reading devices, smart watches, music players, handheld game players and other types of personal belongings not appropriate in a school atmosphere are not permitted on campus, neither before, during, nor after the school day or on any school-sponsored trip.

Cell Phones

Teachers and administrators have noticed significant distractions as a result of text messaging, videos, images, and cell phone games. For the purpose of student focus, and the general social health of both the student and the school as a whole, it is required that students who have cell phones leave them at home. Any necessary communication between the student and his parent should be made via Western Academy's main line or the appropriate classroom extension.

Students who are found to have cell phones on campus will surrender the phone. The phone will only be returned to one of his parents after a conversation with the Head of School.

Campus Businesses

Students are not allowed to buy or sell food or other merchandise to other students on campus, neither before, during, nor after the school day, or on any school sponsored trip or official school carpool.

Textbooks

Textbooks are the property of Western Academy and must be treated with respect. Students will be expected to pay for or replace lost or carelessly damaged materials.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found is located in the cabinets of the covered patio of the red brick building. Periodically any unmarked or unclaimed items are organized for sale back to the community, or otherwise given to charity.

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

All students must be picked up in the front of the school. Students may not be picked up further down the driveway, at the gate, or on Butlercrest Street. To help ensure the safety of our students, please follow the direction procedures at drop-off and pick-up. Pedestrians always have the right-of-way. In addition, parents are asked to do the following:

- drive slowly,
- drop off and pick up students at the circle only,
- advance in the right lane as the car in front of you moves forward,
- do not leave cars unattended in the driveway,
- do not use cell phones during pick-up and drop-off times,
- park in a designated space if necessary.

Communication Procedures

Parents who need to contact their sons at school should call the front office and leave a message with the front desk. The message will be sent to your son via his homeroom teacher. If parents need to contact a teacher, they may seek him out in conversation after school or e-mail him directly. Informing teachers of your son's absence is best done by submitting an e-mail to the homeroom teacher, as well as any teacher whose class your son will miss.

School Closing due to Inclement Weather

Western Academy follows Houston Independent Schools District for closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals. A communication will be sent to parents and posted on the school website if there is any change to the regular school schedule. Parents must judge the weather conditions of their own areas and use their discretion in following these guidelines.

Student Records

Student records are confidential. Requests for transcripts and student records should be by written request of a parent or guardian. A current balance is required for the release of student records.

Policy Regarding Harassment or Abuse

Western Academy is committed to preserving an environment free of sexual harassment or abuse. Sexual harassment or abuse consists of unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature (visual, physical, or verbal) that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Complaints or concerns regarding violations of this policy should be reported to the Headmaster (or another member of the Administrative Council) and will be promptly investigated by the Administrative Council. Retaliation against anyone lodging a complaint will not be tolerated. Violators of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Discipline

The Western Academy faculty strives to work with parents so that punishments assigned to students redress and correct the wrong and help the boys to improve. The faculty and staff do not practice corporal punishment.

Bullying

The Western Academy faculty strives to inculcate in the boys a capacity and love for the life of virtue. They are expected to treat everyone with the respect that is due to every person. Violations of that respect, particularly those that exhibit a habitual and/or targeted character, will not be tolerated. A faculty member should be notified right away of any perceived infraction.

Suspension/Expulsion

Major disciplinary issues are a direct matter of concern of the Administrative Council. Depending on the severity of the incident, a student may serve an in-school suspension, an out-of-school suspension, or be expelled. Western Academy reserves the right to exercise good judgment in suspending or expelling a student. The Administrative Council votes to expel students from Western Academy.

V. Faculty

A Vocation of Service

In their vocation to teach and lead boys, the faculty members of Western Academy strive to work closely with parents. Each teacher aspires to be a good mentor to the boys in the classroom, on the sports field, as an advisor, on field trips and through extracurricular activities. In all these environments the teacher serves by supporting the mission of the school: to assist parents in the intellectual, moral, physical and spiritual education of their sons.

Communication and Contacts

Parents are encouraged to contact any faculty member with questions or concerns. All teachers can be reached by calling the main number or by email. Email addresses of teachers consist of their first name followed by a period and their last name @westernacademy.net. For example, John Smith would be john.smith@westernacademy.net. Teachers are available until 4:00 p.m. on most days and can be available after hours as necessary. Students are encouraged to meet with teachers after school if they have questions or need extra help. Please consult the Western Academy website (www.westernacademy.net) for a list of faculty responsibilities.

VI. Facilities

All members of the Western Academy community — students, faculty, and parents — can and should take pride in our beautiful campus and facilities. The school buildings, the classrooms, the furniture, and the surrounding properties should be treated with respect. Students who deface or damage any of the above will be subject to severe disciplinary measures.

Visitors

All visitors must check in at the main office upon arrival.

Emergencies

Western Academy faculty and staff are certified in CPR and First Aid. The school cooperates with local fire and police departments to ensure the safety of the students.

Classrooms

Students must respect all materials in a classroom as the classroom represents the place on campus most associated with an elevated tone of study. Students should only occupy classrooms when a teacher or proctor is present.

Off-Limits Areas

The following areas are off-limits to students: all administrative offices, the faculty rooms, the foyer outside the chapel, the athletic field (without faculty accompaniment), workshop areas, behind the Beorn Hall stage, storage areas, and the faculty lunchroom and kitchen.

The Chapel

The Chapel is a place of worship. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle throughout the school year. Students should act with reverence in the Chapel and should avoid distracting behavior in the areas outside the Chapel when in use.

Mass is celebrated every day at 10:05 a.m. Students, parents, and faculty are welcome to attend. Please check the *Western Word*, School Calendar, or WA social media for any changes to the Mass schedule.

Regular chapel periods take place for each homeroom class every three weeks. During these periods the school chaplain gives a brief talk on some point relevant to the development of spiritual life and the growth in human virtues. The school chaplain is also available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation at posted times or by appointment.

The Prelature of Opus Dei

Opus Dei is a personal prelate of the Catholic Church. Its purpose is to foster among men and women of every walk of life a profound awareness of the universal call to holiness and apostolate, pursued freely and with a sense of responsibility, in their ordinary work and place in society.

Founded in 1928 by Saint Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, Opus Dei received its definitive juridical approval by the Holy See in 1982. It began in the United States in 1949 in Chicago and now serves in over twenty-five cities in the United States and in over sixty countries worldwide. The spiritual direction of Western Academy is entrusted to Opus Dei; all other aspects of the school are the responsibilities of the Board of Directors or the Administrative Council.

Other supplemental character education programs for students and working men to develop the personal qualities that enable them to integrate faith, study, work and friendship, are offered by Westcott Study Center. The spiritual and doctrinal aspects of the activities at the Westcott Study Center are also entrusted to the Opus Dei Prelature.

Version 8-10-2018