



WHISPERING PINES
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SCHOOL

School Handbook

September 2019

HISTORY AND OBJECTIVES

History and Location

Whispering Pines Seventh-day Adventist School (herein referred to as “WPS”) is a pre- Kindergarten-to-8th-grade school located on thirteen acres at 211 Jericho Turnpike, in Old Westbury, New York.

WPS was established at its current location in 1971 to provide a Seventh-day Adventist Christian education to children and youth of all backgrounds from Nassau and Suffolk counties, as well as from the surrounding areas.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of WPS are based upon the principles of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The school aims to promote the mental and physical development of each child, while fostering patterns of behavior worthy of our Leader, Jesus Christ.

As a Seventh-day Adventist Christian school, it is the purpose of WPS to teach

1. acceptance of the supremacy God, and of the Holy Bible as guidance for our lives
2. commitment to the Church
3. the value of healthy interpersonal relationships
4. responsible citizenship
5. healthful, balanced living
6. a lifelong commitment to intellectual growth
7. effective communication skills
8. a rich base of life skills
9. aesthetic appreciation
10. competence for career and service

The instructional staff is composed of qualified individuals whose lifestyles have demonstrated full support of the principles of Seventh-day Adventist education.

Cooperation of Home and School

“In the formation of character, no other influences count as much as the influence of the home. The teacher’s work should supplement that of parents, but it is not to take its place. In all that concerns the wellbeing of the child, it should be the effort of parents and teacher to cooperate.” *Education*, page 283.

The faculty and staff of WPS strive to conduct all school activities, both in and outside the classroom, in accordance with the standards taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is our desire that the home and the schoolwork together to maintain these standards.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Qualifications for Admission

WPS admits students of any race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, or religious persuasion that are willing to live in harmony with the principles and objectives of the school. It is understood that each student accepted to WPS will agree to live by all its regulations and will perform with excellence all duties assigned in connection with the school. Every effort will be made to help the student understand the necessity of such rules to the development of Christian character.

Application may be made by contacting the principal or office manager at:

Whispering Pines Seventh-day Adventist School
211 Jericho Turnpike
Old Westbury NY 11568

Telephone: 516-997-5177
Email: contact@whisperingpinesschool.org

Completed application documents should be submitted to the office manager. All admissions are subject to approval by the principal and the WPS Board of Trustees.

Minimum School Age

Students applying to enter Pre-Kindergarten shall have reached the age of four (4) years by December 31st of the current calendar year. On occasion, students younger than four years of age may be admitted, but only at the discretion of the principal and Pre- Kindergarten teachers.

Students applying to enter Kindergarten shall have reached the age of five (5) years by December 31st of the current calendar year.

Students applying to enter Grade 1 shall have reached the age of six (6) years by December 31st of the current calendar year.

Incoming Students

Students who transfer to WPS from another school are required to furnish the following documents:

- (1) academic transcript
- (2) most recent report card, showing the last grade completed
- (3) if transferring from a school that charges tuition, a statement from that school's business office that the student's account balance has been closed at zero

If the transfer occurs after October 31st, the student may also be asked to supply two letters of recommendation (neither of which may be written by a relative).

WPS reserves the right to screen new students via entrance exam and/or family interview. Exam results are used to help determine the student's appropriate academic placement. Parents/guardians and children may also be asked to undergo a family entrance interview. One purpose of this interview is to review the student's academic history up to the time of his/her application to WPS. In addition, the interview helps to ensure that family and child(ren) are fully apprised of the school's requirements and expectations.

Upon admission, parents/guardians of all students will be asked to sign the *School Fees Payment Agreement*, in which they agree to pay all school fees in a timely manner.

Additionally, parents/guardians and students will be asked to sign the *Student Code of Conduct*, obliging them to uphold all standards of conduct established by the school.

Physical and Dental Examinations

WPS's health requirements are aligned with those of New York State and the Westbury Union Free School District, which read as follows:

New York State law requires each student enrolled in public school to have a health examination conducted by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner upon entrance into school at any grade level and for each student entering pre-kindergarten or kindergarten, and in the 2nd, 4th, 7th, and 10th grades. Physical should not have been given more than twelve (12) months prior to the commencement of the school year. Each physical must state the student's Body Mass Index (BMI) and Weight Status Category.

Each student is also required to provide proof of immunization against poliomyelitis, mumps, measles, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, Hemophilus influenzae Type B, hepatitis B, and varicella, in accordance with the provisions of Public Health Law Section 2164. Westbury School Board Policy requires all new entrants to the Westbury Union Free School District to have a Mantoux test and reading. Mantoux test cannot be more than one year old.

All students enrolling in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, or first grade must present a Dental Health Certificate. The Dental Health Certificate must contain a report of a comprehensive dental examination performed on the child.

Examination forms are supplied by the school at the time of registration. Parents/guardians should return the completed forms to the school before the first day of classes.

SCHOOL BEHAVIOR REGULATIONS

Rules of Department

Please recognize that membership in WPS requires full compliance with all school rules and regulations published or announced. Further, students must pledge to complete all assignments to the best of their ability, to be faithful and prompt in attendance, and to commit to developing spiritual and social maturity. In addition, each student must affirm the dignity of his/her teachers and colleagues by exhibiting fairness and respect in all interactions. Bullying, intimidation, rudeness, hateful or lewd speech – whether online or in person -- is not tolerated.

USE OF ILLICIT SUBSTANCES: In accordance with our faith, WPS requires total abstinence from tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs, and other harmful substances, both in and out of school. In addition, the abuse of prescription drugs is strictly prohibited.

COMPUTER USE: Access to school computers and Internet services is a privilege which requires full cooperation of each student, parent or guardian, and staff member.

Improper use of computer resources (e.g., viewing or downloading inappropriate material, engaging in hateful or disrespectful speech, etc.) constitutes grounds for discipline.

CARE OF NON-CONSUMABLE TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER SUPPLIES:

Students are required to take care of textbooks and other materials borrowed from the school. Items borrowed from the school (textbooks, iPads, calculators, rulers, maps, protractors, etc.) should be returned in usable and presentable condition. Students should not write in, or otherwise deface, any book owned by the school, and should take pains to ensure that property borrowed from the school is not lost or damaged. Students will be charged the full cost of replacing any school item that is lost or returned in unusable condition.

USE OF CELL PHONE AND OTHER ELECTRONICS: Students may not place or receive phone calls via cell phone during school hours. All cell phones must be set in the “OFF” mode before classes begin and may only be turned on again once classes have ended for the day. In addition, no recreational electronic device (for example, iPod, mp3 player, electronic game, tablet, etc.) should be brought to school. If a student is found using any of the above-listed, or similar, items during school hours, the device will be confiscated and held by the principal until personally claimed by a parent or guardian.

Failure to comply with these, or other, guidelines may result in suspension or expulsion.

School Policy on Sexual Harassment

WPS is committed to providing a school environment free from sexual harassment of students and staff. Incidents of harassment should be reported in accordance with the procedures listed herein so that school authorities may take appropriate action.

Students who sexually harass others are subject to discipline that may include expulsion.

- Students and personnel who have experienced sexual harassment should report the incident to the school authorities as soon as possible. If the incident occurred between students, the student may report it to any classroom teacher or to the principal.
- If a student is sexually harassed by an adult, the student should report the incident directly to the principal or to another responsible adult. Immediate action should be taken according to the guidelines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (<http://www.adventist.org/information/official-statements/guidelines/article/go/0/sexual-harassment/>).
- **Fighting threatening or bullying another student and or through social media are strictly prohibited.**

Dress Code

WPS requires that all students wear the school uniform each day. Specific questions regarding the uniform policy and appropriate school attire may be addressed to the principal.

For non-gym days, the uniform consists of:

- GIRLS: uniform skirt or jumper, blue dress shirt, necktie, uniform sweater or blazer, navy socks, black shoes.
- BOYS: uniform slacks, blue dress shirt, necktie, uniform sweater or blazer, navy socks, black shoes.

For gym days, the uniform consists of:

- GIRLS & BOYS: uniform T-shirt, sweatpants, white socks, sneakers (gray, white, black, or uniform blue only for sneakers. (Pastels, neon, or other colors are not acceptable). Students not wearing the correct gym uniform will not be able to participate in physical education classes for that day and will lose points for nonparticipation.

Jewelry – e.g., rings, earrings, bracelets, chains, nose rings, necklaces, and ankle bracelets, nail polish or fake nails may not be worn to school. Students will be asked to remove such items, and the items will be held by the principal until claimed by a parent or guardian. Body piercings and tattoos are prohibited.

No extreme hairstyles are permitted. Clothing must be clean, tidy, and in good repair always.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

School Hours

Regular school hours for students are:

- Monday – Thursday: 7:45 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.
- Friday: 7:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Minimum Attendance Standard

Students are expected to be in attendance for each day of the regular school year, which consists of approximately 180 school days for grades Pre-K through 8th. Additional instructional sessions may be scheduled during the school year at the discretion of the principal and/or school board.

WPS, in accordance with the policy of the New York State Department of Education, has set a minimum standard of 92% attendance for promotion to the next grade level. Parents/guardians will be notified of the child's absence from school via the Jupiter ed system. Any student whose attendance falls below the 92% minimum standard will be in danger of retention.

Please consult the current academic calendar to learn what days school will be in session.

Lawful Absence, Tardiness, and Early Dismissal

Absence and tardiness excused within the WPS Attendance Policy are as follows:

- a) The student sustains illness or injury that physically prevents him/her from being able to attend school
- b) The local health officer or the State Board of Health orders the isolation of the student for reasons other than non-inoculation
- c) The student is absent due to the death of a family member
- d) The student has an *emergency* medical or dental appointment, or such an appointment approved in advance by the principal

e) The student is a party to, or is under subpoena as, a witness in the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal

f) The student obtains *prior approval* to take advantage of a valid *educational* opportunity, such as travel

g) The student is visiting a parent/legal guardian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting

If requested, supporting documentation for any absence/tardiness must be submitted to the school.

If absent or tardy, the student must present a written excuse to each of his/her teachers. Subject area teachers will sign the note, document the excuse, and return the note to the student. Once all teachers have signed the student's note, the student must return the note to the Main Office.

As soon as possible, parents/guardians should contact the principal in case of extended student absence due to illness or the death of a family member. The principal will notify all relevant subject area teachers and will help to coordinate a plan for the completion of missed schoolwork.

Please note that the responsibility for obtaining missed assignments rests with the student or, in the case of very young children, the parent or guardian. Please contact the teacher directly, or check the Parent Portal of the Jupiter ed system or the subject teacher's homepage (see www.whisperingpineschool.org).

Unlawful Absence, Tardiness, and Early Dismissal

a) Inexcusable absence or tardiness includes all reasons not covered above.

b) Appropriate immunization is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, and it is strongly encouraged that each child receives the required immunizations *before* the school year begins. Exclusion from classes due to lack of immunization does not constitute excusable absence. The absence of any student barred for lack of proper immunization will not be excused.

c) Any unexcused absence *with or without* the knowledge or approval of the parent/guardian is considered truancy.

To be counted present, a student must be in attendance at least 75% of the school day.

A note from home is required upon the student's return to school following an absence. An absence is listed as unexcused until the note is received. Notes must be received within two days of a student's return to school.

A doctor's note will be required for multiple health-related absences or for a history of absences.

Students who lack the number of days needed for promotion, or who have missed classes for reasons not considered excusable, may be required to attend summer school or other compensatory instructional sessions, if available (arranged at the discretion of the administration).

In the case of a student with insufficient attendance – whether for excusable or inexcusable reasons -- the number of compensatory instructional sessions needed will be *at least* the number of days the child lacks to be eligible for promotion. The duration of each compensatory instructional session may be no less than two-and-a-half (2.5) hours.

Family vacations should be planned to coincide with vacation days and weeks of the annual school calendar. Teachers are not obligated to make prior arrangements for assignments, projects, and other instructional activities involving work that has not yet been presented. Student absence for vacation will be considered unexcused. Teachers will not be expected to extend their normal workday to provide remediation or to administer tests for students who have been on vacation. Teachers will not be required to repeat lessons that were given during the period that the student was on vacation.

Students who have missed classes for this reason may be required to arrange for absence compensation (*see above*).

Early Release from Classes

Early release of a student from classes results in a loss of valuable instructional time. Whenever possible, medical appointments and other important business should be scheduled outside of the school day.

However, should it be necessary for a student to leave school early, arrangements should be made as far in advance as possible. If leaving a telephone message, please give a contact number so that we may call to verify your request, if necessary. *Please note that students must be in attendance for at least 75% of the school day in order to be counted present for that day.*

Whenever possible, the time of early dismissal should correspond to the changing of periods (see your child's schedule), and students should be told in advance that they are to report to the Main Office at that time. This helps to minimize interruption of instruction for all students.

Any person removing a student from school before the regular dismissal time must sign out the student in the Main Office. Please be prepared to present photo I.D. if requested by school personnel.

Alternate Pick-up/Dismissal Arrangements

The safety of our children is of paramount importance. In the event that there is a change in a student's standard pick-up arrangement -- e.g., the student will be picked up from school by someone other than usual, will leave school using an alternate mode of transportation (for example, will ride home with another child instead of taking the bus), or will remain at school instead of leaving at dismissal time -- we ask that you inform the school as far in advance as possible. *Written communication, in the form of a note sent with the child, is strongly preferred.* If this is not possible, please call the school *no later than 11:00am.*

As dismissal time is very busy, there is no guarantee that changes can be made at the last minute. For your child's safety, please ensure that any change of routine is communicated to the school *clearly* and *early*. Please leave a contact number so that we may call to verify your request, if needed.

Parents/guardians must inform the Main Office if someone other than the designated pick-up person will be picking up their child(ren) from school. *Again, should it not be possible to communicate the change in writing well in advance, please call the school before 11:00am to notify the Main Office of the changes.* Students will be released to none other than a legal guardian or other designated person, unless prior notification was given and/or verified. Anyone other than the designated pick-up person must be prepared to present photo ID, if requested. Students will not be released to other minors.

Tardiness

We believe there is a direct relationship between academic success and regular, punctual school attendance. Additionally, absence and tardiness are disruptive to the learning environment, and compromises the educational experience of *all* students. Attendance is ultimately the responsibility of the student and his/her parents or guardian. Please see that your child is present and on time to school each day.

Please note that:

- school begins at 7:45 a.m. Students may be dropped off at school as early as 7:30 a.m.
- students arriving between 8:00 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. must go directly to class but will be marked late if no valid note is presented.
- students arriving after 8:20 a.m. will be marked late if no valid note is presented.

Any child arriving late to school must present a note from a parent or guardian; however, parental notification does not necessarily constitute an acceptable excuse. Please see above, *Lawful Absence, Tardiness, and Early Dismissal*, to determine what constitutes excusable tardiness. Additionally, the principal or teacher in question may use his/her discretion in extenuating circumstances.

Three (3) unexcused tardies or five (5) excused tardies are equal to one (1) absence.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND SERVICES

School Calendar

Classes generally begin for all grades (Pre-K-8th) on the first weekday following Labor Day. By the first week of school, a calendar of holidays and major events for the upcoming year will be available for distribution and on the Web.

Registration

Registration for the upcoming school year officially begins on March 1st of the preceding school year. “Early-bird” registration discounts may be available for students registering for the upcoming school year between the dates of March 1 and June 15. Such discounts will be offered at the discretion of the WPS school board and treasury.

Transportation

Parents/guardians must apply directly to their local school district for bus transportation. The district will have information about submission deadlines and other restrictions.

Please note that most districts require families to apply for bus service no later than April 1st.

Meals

WPS has arranged with local catering services to provide breakfast and hot lunch five days per week, Monday through Thursday, at a nominal cost.

These meal programs are optional and are not included in the cost of tuition.

For further details, please contact the Main Office.

Students may bring lunch from home, although access to microwave ovens is limited.

We kindly request that those who provide their own lunches make every effort to adhere to Seventh-day Adventist dietary standards (i.e., refrain from bringing any pork or animal products). In accordance with general health principles, sugary, artificially- colored beverages and sodas are strongly discouraged.

Students may not chew gum inside the school building.

School Visits and Meetings with Staff

Individuals who wish to visit the school building or grounds must contact the office to arrange an appointment. Parents or guardians wishing to meet with the principal, or a teacher must contact the office in advance to schedule a mutually convenient time.

To contact the school, please call the Main Office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Fridays.

Telephone Calls to Students

Students may accept only phone calls of an *urgent* nature during school hours. Students otherwise will not be called from classes to receive phone calls. Students are not allowed to send or receive cell phone calls during school hours.

Messages may be left for students at any time during the day. In order to leave a message for a student while classes are in session, please call the Main Office at (516) 997-5177.

Accidents and Illness

The parent, guardian, or other authorized person will be notified if a child is injured or considered not sufficiently well to remain in school. In this event, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian or other authorized person to arrange for the child to be taken from school. Such person must see the classroom teacher or principal to sign a release form.

If a child has received a physical injury requiring medical attention, the school will complete an incident report which must be signed and returned by the parent or guardian.

Any student with an infectious or contagious disease should remain at home until (s)he has been medically cleared to return to school. Please have documentation of such clearance available upon request.

Teachers are not permitted to administer over-the-counter medication of any kind to students, including aspirin or other painkillers, cough drops, or cold medicine. Any student who needs to take such medication should bring it with him/her to school, along with a note informing the teachers of such.

If your child requires the use of an inhaler, EpiPen®, or other assistive device, be certain to include all necessary information on his/her health forms. Additionally, take the time to communicate any special instructions to your child's teacher(s) -- verbally as well as in writing -- in order to ensure that your child receives the best care possible should the need arise.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school promptly of any change in emergency or home contact information.

Insurance

Each student is covered for accidents that occur during school hours or on school trips. Such insurance covers bodily injury only. It does not cover personal property loss. The school assumes no responsibility for school supplies, clothing, money, electronic devices, or other personal property left on school grounds or lost while on a school trip.

Emergency School Closing

Should a weather emergency make it necessary to close the school, this will be announced via the school website (www.whisperingpineschool.org). Please note that WPS's weather emergency school closing schedule generally follows that of the Westbury School District (<http://www.westburyschools.org>). If there is any question regarding emergency school closure, please call 516-997-5177.

SCHOOL FINANCE

Student Fees

APPLICATION: A non-refundable application fee is charged to each student enrolling in WPS for the first time and is due upon submission of the student's application forms. Returning students are not subject to the application fee.

REGISTRATION: A registration fee is charged to each student -- whether new or returning -- and is due at the time of registration. This fee covers the cost of the orientation packet, student handbook, textbooks, workbooks, practice and skill materials, standardized tests, technology, art, music, science labs, language labs, student insurance, and administrative fees.

The registration fee may be refunded in its entirety (100%) if the student withdraws within seven (7) days after the start of classes. If a student withdraws after this time, his/her registration fee will be refunded according to the following schedule:

Day 8 - September 31st: 50% refunded
October 1st - October 31st: 30% refunded
After October 31st: 0% refunded

Refunds may take up to two to three weeks to process.

For students who enter WPS after January 1st, a percentage (not to exceed 25%) of the registration fee may be waived, at the discretion of the administration.

TUITION: Tuition fees are charged monthly to each student's account via the FACTS tuition payment program (<http://factsmgt.com>). Incoming families must register for the FACTS program upon enrollment of their child(ren) in the school. Returning families are also required to renew their FACTS registration each year.

Tuition charges are applicable throughout the school year, and refunds will not be granted for vacation periods or absence from school. Student accounts will be considered delinquent fifteen (15) days after the payment is due. Should a student's account fall one month behind, the student may be removed from school until appropriate payment is made. Student report cards and other academic records will not be issued to students whose accounts are in arrears.

(a) Discount for early payment of tuition

The total cost of tuition may be paid monthly, by semester (5 months), or by academic year (10 months). Please check your FACTS agreement for payment due dates.

- A discount of 5% will be offered for full payment of the annual tuition (10 months) at the time of registration.
- A discount of 2% will be offered for full payment of one semester's tuition (5 months) at the time of registration.
- There is no discount for monthly tuition payment, except in the case of multiple enrollments (*see below*).

(b) Discount for families enrolling more than one child

Discounts for families enrolling two or more children at WPS are as below. (*Please note that the child paying the highest tuition rate shall be deemed the "first child."*)

- The first child will pay full tuition.
- The second child will receive a 3% discount on tuition.
- The third child, and each child, thereafter, will receive a 5% discount on tuition.

All accounts must be cleared by the date of the final FACTS payment of the year. The student will receive no final grades or transcript until the account is paid in full. No candidate for graduation (from kindergarten or 8th grade) will receive a diploma until the account is paid in full.

The policies and regulations of this Handbook are governed by the principles of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the departments of education of the Atlantic Union and Greater New York Conference, and the Whispering Pines School Board of Trustees.

Policies and regulations detailed herein are subject to change, pursuant to resolution of any of the above-named entities.

