

# WISCA

## Watson Institute Social Center for Academic Achievement

### Student Handbook 2022-2023



Changes to the Student Handbook have been highlighted.

Note: COVID 19 is still with us, but some policies have changed. Changes to the COVID policies that are temporary and part of our response to the COVID 19 Pandemic will appear in **bold red print**.

**Specific COVID 19 Policies for In Person Learning:**

- **Masks – Masks are usually not required but will be recommended when Allegheny County is in the high transmission category. Masks will also be required following return from positive COVID until 10<sup>th</sup> day following the positive test.**
- **Students who have tested positive for COVID will remain home for a period of 5 days (10 days if the student does not reliably wear a mask). Please inform teachers and nurses of any positive COVID incidents.**
- **No cloth backpacks please. Send any materials your child needs to bring in clear plastic bags such as Ziploc or clear vinyl backpacks or totes.**

## Welcome!

The Administration and Staff of The Watson Institute WISCA Program extend a welcome to each family and student. We seek your support throughout the school year. Please read this handbook carefully. It provides important information relative to the policies and procedures of The Watson Institute Education Center WISCA program. If you have any questions concerning this handbook, please call the office at either site for clarification.

The Watson Institute Education Center/WISCA Sewickley

301 Camp Meeting Road

Sewickley, PA 15143

Phone: 412-741-1800

Fax: 412-741-2454

The Watson Institute Education Center/WISCA Bridgeville

230 Hickory Grade Road

Bridgeville, PA 15017

Phone: 412-914-8800

Fax: 412-914-2059

The Watson Institute WISCA Program Sharpsburg

200 Linden Ave.

Sharpsburg, PA 15215

Phone: 412-781-1708

Fax: 412 781-1561

School Hours (all locations): 8:40 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.

## Frequently Called Numbers

### WISCA Sewickley

Main Office	412-749-6400
Main Office Fax	412-741-2454
Program Director: Marcia Laus	412 781-1708
Program Coordinator: Jennifer Do	412-749-6444
Lead Nurse: Susan Rosko	412-749-2808
Nurse's Fax	412-749-6499

### WISCA Bridgeville

Main Office	412-914-8800
Main Office Fax	412-914-2059
Program Director: Marcia Laus	412-781-1708
Lead Nurse: Susan Rosko	412-914-8811
Nurse's Fax	412-221-4353

### WISCA Sharpsburg

Main Office	412-781-1708
Main Office Fax	412 781-1561
Program Director: Marcia Laus	412-781-1708
Program Coordinator: Jennifer Do	412-749-6444
Lead Nurse: Jennifer Miller	412 781-1708
Nurse's Fax	412 781-2739

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## Overview

### School Hours – 8:40am-2:40pm

Please feel free to call at any time with questions. Teachers are most available for phone calls between 8:00 and 8:30 AM and between 3 and 4:00 PM. Teachers might not answer the phone during the school day so that instruction is not interrupted. Please leave a voicemail and your call will be returned as soon as possible. If there is an urgent message, ask for Marcia Laus or Jennifer Do and the message will be relayed to the classroom immediately.

### WISCA POLICIES:

#### Attendance, drop off/Pick Up

##### Attendance:

Your child's regular and on-time attendance is crucial to his/her success. Please let us know ahead of time if your child has a doctor's appointment or other reason that your child will not be attending school. If your child is not attending, **call WISCA in the morning** to let us know that he/she will not be attending. **Also call the transportation provider** to cancel the bus/van for your child. **Don't forget to inform transportation** if you pick your child up early or any other change in regular schedule. Please send in a signed excuse following an absence. This information is reported to the school district quarterly or when the total days missed reaches 10. If there is not a signed excuse, it is reported as an unexcused absence.

**Remote Learning: Remote learning may occur due to multiple cases of COVID in one classroom or building or when there are multiple positive employee cases so that we cannot safely staff the program. Students will be marked present during remote learning when they communicate as requested with staff and/or log in to TEAMS for classroom meetings/activities and/or complete work in PEAK. Please encourage your child to attend these instructional activities regularly.**

##### Dropping off or picking up students:

Please let us know when your child will not be arriving to school on the bus or if you are planning to pick your child up from school. To avoid the bus lane traffic and for the safety of all of our students, **you must park in the parking lot at all locations.**

##### Parking:

**WISCA Sharpsburg parking is directly across the street from the staff parking lot. Please accompany your child to the main entrance door and ring the doorbell. A staff member will come to the door.** It is easiest to turn up 12<sup>th</sup> Street and make a left onto Penn St. due to the one-way streets in Sharpsburg. During school hours, do not park in the lot right next to the school. Due to the bus traffic in this lot, cars are often blocked in for up to ½ hour at a time. For your safety and the safety of all children, **DO NOT** attempt to back up or squeeze around

busses. The Sharpsburg Police have asked that no passenger cars from the school park along Sharpsburg streets when dropping off or picking up students. **Do not** park in front of our neighbors' houses to wait for your child.

WISCA Bridgeville and WISCA Sewickley:

We request that parents pull into numbered parking spaces and then call into the office. A staff person will then come to the vehicle and transition the students into the building. This procedure would also occur at the end of the day for transition home.

## Computer Use and Electronics

### Cell Phones and Electronic devices:

We strongly suggest that cell phones and any electronic devices including but not limited to laptops, tablets, mp3 players, handheld games or any recording/video devices, Smart Watches, Bluetooth head phones, etc. be left at home. If a student brings an electronic device to school, **it will be turned in to staff upon arrival, placed in an individual mailbox slot in a locked closet at all times. The student will not have access to their devices during the day and the device will not be returned until students are leaving the building for dismissal.** If a student does not give up their device, they will be transitioned to a waiting area. Any alternate arrangements must be approved by classroom staff and program director and is subject to student following school expectations.

Some transition aged students (18-21) have different expectations regarding electronics; these individual students will be provided the expectations to follow in their classrooms.

### Computers:

Each classroom has computers for the students. The computers are property of the Watson Institute. Students must sign a Computer Use Agreement that includes the following items: Computers are property of the Watson Institute; therefore, the following rules apply:

- My activity is constantly monitored through the use of Impero.
  - Attempts to access unapproved websites are logged – repeatedly attempting to access unapproved websites will result in a computer violation.
  - I will not attempt to disable or “get around” Impero blocks or monitoring.
  
- Only related schoolwork items may be saved on WISCA computers. Random “purges” of non-academic materials will take place outside of school hours.
  - If I would like to save creative projects, I must talk to my classroom staff FIRST to get permission. This should then be sent home via Teams or email to be accessed from my home devices and should not remain on school computers for more than a few days.



- I may not install or uninstall ANY programs or software on WISCA computers. I may not plug in personal devices, flash drives, or technology accessories to WISCA computers.
- I may not tamper with or change the code on my programs, home screen, desktop, or browsers, regardless of whether it causes permanent damage (this includes “inspect element” to change the text on webpages).
- During academic time, I am only on Peak or other curriculum sites.
- I will physically respect WISCA property and not damage or destroy WISCA technology – aggressive behavior toward technology or intentional damage will result in a more severe consequence.
- If I will not transition to the classroom schedule or if I will not get off the computer when asked, within 2 prompts, restrictions will take place.
- All of my classwork must be completed at my expected pace.
- I use clean, non-offensive, and school-appropriate language while on the WISCA computers, including in Microsoft Teams messaging.
- I am only permitted to print in black and white. I can print no more than one non-curriculum black and white image per day and with staff permission.

The computer policy is strictly enforced at WISCA. We ask that families review this policy with their child and teaching teams will review this policy with their students. If the computer policy is violated, an infraction system is in place.

WISCA also has an MP3 player policy in place. Following is the policy for a student to use their own MP3 player:

- Student and parent must sign the MP3 Player Agreement
- Student must remove headphones when requested by teacher
- Student must maintain focus on school work while listening
- MP3 cannot have a feature that allows for taking pictures
- MP3 cannot have any game features
- MP3 player cannot at any time be plugged into the WISCA computers
- Music cannot be shared with other students

There is a very limited number of WISCA owned MP3 players. The policy for the use of the WISCA MP3 Players is as follows:

- Student must sign the MP3 Agreement and provide WISCA with a list of requested music (no more than 10 songs).
- Parent must sign a permission form and approve the requested music.
- WISCA Education Director must approve the requested music.
- Student must remove headphones when requested by teacher
- Student must maintain focus on school work while listening
- MP3 player cannot at any time be plugged into the WISCA computers
- Music cannot be shared with other students

- MP3 player must remain at WISCA and additional music cannot be added without permission of parent and WISCA Education Director.

## Academics

### Curriculum:

WISCA uses the Fuel Education Curriculum ([www.getfueled.com](http://www.getfueled.com)). Students with online classes can access their curriculum from home at any time by going to <https://peak.getfueled.com> . Teaching teams will supply families with information regarding how to access your child's progress and curriculum online. WISCA strongly encourages families to access this content to follow your child's progress.

### Supplemental Curriculum:

Based on academic need, some students are enrolled in offline curriculum for some or all of their classes.

### Primary Elementary Curriculum:

Students in grades 1-3 will be using offline curriculum for their Language Arts (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Journeys Series) and Math (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Go Math).

### Graduation Credits:

High School students (grades 9 and up) will follow their school district's plan for graduation. This is usually available on the district website. School districts set the number of credits needed for their students to graduate. **If a student does not earn the required credits at the end of the school year, they do not move into the next grade.** One semester course is worth ½ (.5) credit. Two semester courses are worth 1 full credit. Students earn credits from classes from the Fuel Education curriculum and supplemental curricula as planned by the classroom teacher.

Some additional WISCA activities can also earn High School credit:

**Physical Education** twice per week. Students earn ¼ (.25) credit for the entire school year. Each student is assigned to a Physical Education period for exercise and physical activities at least twice a week. Students are responsible for logging their physical activities.

**Social Skills Group (Peace Club)** twice per week (with ongoing assignments). Students earn 1 credit for the entire school year.

**Community Based Vocational Exploration (CBVE)** once per week. Students earn ½ (.5) credit for the entire school year.

9<sup>th</sup> grade: 0 – 6 credits

10<sup>th</sup> grade: 7 – 12 credits

11<sup>th</sup> grade: 12 – 18 credits

12<sup>th</sup> grade: 18 or more credits (total number needed to graduate will be based on the home school district graduation requirements)

Each year there may be opportunities for students to take additional classes for credit as the schedule permits. Additional classes may include:

**Peer Mentoring** twice per week. Students earn .5 credit for an entire school year.

**Transition/Early Reach** twice per week for 1 semester. Students earn .25 credit for an entire school year.

**Music** once per week. Students earn .25 credit for an entire school year.

**Art** once per week. Students earn .25 credit for an entire school year.

### Progress Reports:

IEP Progress reports, grade reports, and attendance will be sent home and to school districts quarterly.

Please review your child's report card to assess their credits acquired and required by the school district.

## Community Experiences

### Community:

Students are frequently scheduled to walk in the community. These walks are for physical education and for community-based instruction. Individual sensory needs and behavior are taken into consideration when planning these walks and some students may not walk every day. If a student chooses not to accompany the group on a walk, another assignment will be given to him/her.

Have Jenny review and revise

## 2020-2021 WISCA Sharpsburg Nurse's Office Information for COVID-19:

\*Please note that CDC protocols related to COVID-19 are evolving, and this guidance may be updated accordingly. \*

The WISCA nurse will err on the side of caution with all nursing assessments. If your child has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 upon nursing assessment, a parent/guardian will be required to pick up the child from school to be assessed by a medical doctor.

### What are the signs of COVID-19?

- Fever >100.4F (38C)
- Cough (new onset or worsening of chronic cough)
- Wheezing
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Rigors
- Difficulty breathing
- Muscle aches
- Chest pain
- Runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sore throat
- Abdominal pain
- Olfactory and taste disorder(s)
- Diarrhea
- Headache

Children can become severely ill with COVID 19 and they are capable of transmitting the virus among themselves and to family members or school staff. School nurses will consult with primary care providers, local, and state health departments if they observe individuals with symptoms or circumstances that seem to match those related to COVID-19 exposure.

Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic the nurses will advise students, families, and staff to:

- Stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes, then dispose of the tissue. When a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow.

- Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds. Washing hands often under clean, warm, soapy, running water can help prevent the spread of germs. If you cannot wash your hands, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60-95% alcohol.

## Questions and Answers:

Q: What will the nurse's office visit look like this fall?

A: One student is allowed in this area at a time for safety. The student cafeteria which is right next to the nurse's office will serve as an isolation room for students/staff with any signs/symptoms of COVID-19. The cafeteria/kitchen will not be used for lunches this school year.

Q: What PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) will the nurses use when assessing my child?

A: When the nurses assess a child with COVID-19 related symptoms they will wear: a surgical mask, an N95 mask, a face shield, a hair covering, gloves, and an isolation gown. All PPE will be properly disposed of between uses.

Q: How many students are permitted in the nurse's office at once?

A: One student is permitted in the nurse's office at a time for privacy, cleanliness, and safety.

Q: How and when will the nurse's office be cleaned?

A: The nurse's office will be cleaned on a continuing basis following CDC guidelines. It will be sanitized between each student visit and deep cleaned daily.

Q: How will my child be sent home from school in the event that they are ill?

A: In the event that your child is ill and needs to be picked up from school, it is the parent's responsibility to have transportation or arrangements in place for your child. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, we are unable to send the student home on the bus, or put the child on public transit with any signs/symptoms of COVID-19 for the safety of others. Please think ahead about how you will be able to pick up your child in the event of them needing to be sent home prior to sending your child to school.

**Q: Where will I pick my child up from school when they are sick?**

**A: When you pick your sick child up from school, please park at the side entrance on Linden Ave. and call 412 781-1708 and alert staff that you are here to pick up a child who is ill. The nurse will be notified that a parent is here for student pick up and the child will exit through the side door.**

**Q: If my child is sent home with COVID-19 symptoms OR tests positive for COVID-19, when can they return to school?**

**A: If the individual has symptoms, they should stay home until:**

**1. At least 3 days have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms)**

**2. AND either:**

**a. If the student wears a mask reliably, he/she can return five days following the positive test - OR**

**b. if the student is unable to wear a mask reliably, he/she can return 10 days following the positive test**

**Q: How will medication passes in the nurse's office take place?**

**A: In the event that your child is prescribed medications or tube feedings while in school, all medication and tube feedings will be administered the same as before while the nurse is wearing PPE.**

## Meals, Personal Belongings

### Lockers:

Each student will be assigned a locker for personal belongings. Combination or key locks provided by the student must be approved by the program coordinator. The teacher **must** have a copy of the combination or an extra key if a lock is used. WISCA staff will have the authority to enter the locker and go through any materials in the locker **at any time**.

### Lunches and snacks – Sharpsburg:

All Sharpsburg students pack lunches – there is **no food service** at WISCA Sharpsburg. Students should bring a lunch, breakfast, and/or snack from home. **Food will be kept in lockers.** If there are items in your child's lunch that need to be kept cool, please include a freezer pack in the lunch box/bag. If your child likes to snack during the day, we ask that you send in snacks for your child. If your child has difficulty regulating themselves when they are hungry, teaching teams will alert parents if a snack may be helpful. Food should be sent in daily and anything that is not eaten will be sent home the same day. Please send in food that your child can manage as independently as possible. Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves after lunch. **Please include any needed silverware or dishes** with your child's lunch. It is suggested that students bring a water bottle marked with his/her name.

### Lunch Program - Sewickley and Bridgeville locations only

Your child may purchase a lunch at school within the Sewickley or Bridgeville location at this time, or bring a lunch to school. If your child wishes to buy a drink to accompany the packed lunch, white or chocolate milk and juice are available at Sewickley and Bridgeville.

A menu for the month's lunches is sent home at the beginning of each month. The menu will show a main entree and an alternate entree for each day. You or your child should select one entree for each day you purchase a lunch. If your child does not have preferences marked on his/her menu, and a lunch is not sent in from home, the main entree will automatically be selected. The selection of meals for children on specific diets, such as chopped or special foods and drinks, will be made by the teacher, therapists, and you. Students who need a modified diet, (pureed, chopped, gluten free); will have one choice each day if they choose to buy their lunch. The food item, which is marked with an asterisk on the menu, is the only choice for that day for students on modified diets. **A form must be signed by a doctor to receive a modified diet. Please call the school office to request this for your child.**

### The Watson Institute Lunch Account Policy at Sewickley and Bridgeville:

Free/reduced lunch applications are available beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> of the new school year. Parents may request a hard copy if needed. All parents are encouraged to apply online via [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com) which can be accessed by computer or smartphone app.

Students on the 30-day grace period who are not Directly Certified for the new school year will be sent a letter stating that an application will need to be completed. Applications can be completed at any time



throughout the school year. Approval for benefits will not erase the balance owed and cannot be backdated. Parents will still be responsible for any monies owed from before the date that their student became free or reduced. The benefit will start on the date that the application is received. Student benefits from the previous school year will carry over for 30 school days into the new school year. No student will be denied a meal regardless of their account balance.

When a student owes for 5 school lunches, the following will occur.

- A note stating the balance owed will be sent home in the student's backpack.
- An email from the office staff will be sent to the parents/guardians stating the balance owed.
- If a payment has not been received within 2 days, the social worker will call the family to discuss payment options, and also to discuss the process to apply for free/reduced lunches.
  - The student's social worker, school Program Director and Kitchen manager will also be notified of student balances.

Parents are able to pay online via the lunch website [www.ezparentcenter.com](http://www.ezparentcenter.com). They are encouraged to keep money in student account so it does not go into the negatives. Weekly notices will be emailed from EZ School Apps to parents regarding balances. Please be sure to sign up on the website to receive the notices.

#### PLEASE NOTE:

**All WISCA locations are now nut free!!** Many of the students at Watson schools are severely allergic to peanuts and other nuts. There is a potential for serious consequences for these students if they are exposed to or have contact with such products. It is for this reason that we have implemented a policy asking everyone to avoid bringing nuts or nut products (peanut butter, almond milk, etc.) into the school. We realize that many of our students enjoy items with peanut butter/nuts, etc., but the overall safety of all students is our priority. We appreciate your cooperation and support regarding this policy.

#### Lunch Program Nondiscrimination Statement:

Nondiscrimination statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. "in accordance with Federal Law and U.S. department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866)632-9992(Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339; or (800)845-6136(Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

## Additional Information

### School Supplies:

Students will be provided with a binder, pocket folders, paper, pens and pencils.

**Backpacks - Please continue to use the clear vinyl backpacks this school year. It is WISCA policy for staff to check all backpacks daily and this will not be able to be done safely with Covid still an issue. Please use only clear plastic bags (clear plastic backpacks or large Ziploc bags) for storing things your child is bringing from home.**

### Toys from home:

Personal toys, belongings, and other items should remain at home. Students are responsible for their own items. Some students do find some security in bringing special items to school. These toys/items will be kept in the teacher's locked cabinet or in the child's locker. This will help the students remain on task and be successful in completing their academic work. Special permission may be given for special sensory items to be kept in a student's individual work area. Absolutely no pets are allowed in the school building due to allergy and other safety issues.

## Delays/Closings

### School Delay/Closing:

All families are enrolled in the E2Campus emergency call system. At this time, school delays and closings are announced through this system. Sometimes, WISCA will remain open when school districts have closed. It is at the parent's discretion and school district transportation on whether or not the child can be transported to school when WISCA remains open. We are hoping to be able to offer remote learning on days that school is closed so that the day does not need to be made up at the end of the school year. More information on this to come.

## Student Conduct

At WISCA, students are expected to follow classroom and school wide rules. Below are some situations that might require additional intervention from a student's team.

**Disagreements:** Students are expected to use coping skills in settling differences with others. WISCA staff are present to support students in these matters. However, should fighting, hitting, slapping, or any form of physical aggression to another person (staff or student) occur, the student and his parents will be called to discuss the incident and determine appropriate actions.

**Property Destruction:** Students can sometimes have a difficult time managing their emotions during a crisis. When these situations occur, we ask that students "repair" the situation. The student is given options as well as support to repair. Should a situation occur in which extensive damage has taken place, the student's family will be contacted.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is not tolerated. If a student uses a search engine and copies the information into an assignment, the student will be given an option to re-do the assignment or take a failing grade.

**Bullying/Harassment:** Every student has the right to an education in a safe environment without being verbally or physically harassed or bullied. Violations to this will be subject to a meeting and possibility of in-school suspension. Any student who believes he or she has been subject to harassment or bullying shall report all incidents to the program director, program coordinator or any staff member. If the complaint is not immediately resolved, the program coordinator will review the matter with all involved.

**School bus safety:** Transportation is an extension of the school environment. Appropriate school bus safety is expected. Should difficulties arise on the school bus, students can be placed on behavior agreements for improvement. This will be the first level of warning. If additional steps are needed, a meeting with the student's family will take place.

**Language:** Students are expected to use school appropriate language while at WISCA and in the community. Language expectations are established in each of our classrooms because staff and students find profanity and obscene language difficult to manage in their learning environment. Students will be reminded of language expectations in their classroom and their teaching teams will discuss with them privately if the situation escalates. Should further discussion ensue, student's parents will be contacted to develop a plan to address school appropriate language.

**While we work with our students on understanding COVID-19, there are some precautionary measures that we will have in place should the following occur:**

**If a student is intentionally coughing on another student or staff, threatening other students related to COVID, spitting on others or displaying other unsafe, unsanitary behaviors, he/she will be transitioned out of the classroom and will be given work to do in an alternative monitored location (cafeteria, clubhouse, library, etc.). Should a student exhibit continued challenging behaviors and staff are unable to follow CDC guidelines, the student's parent will be contacted.**

## Dress Code

While WISCA accommodates a wide variety of individual tastes, there are some guidelines for school appropriate dress:

1. Clothing with slogans or emblems is acceptable as long as they do not depict illegal substances or offensive or indecent writing or pictures.
2. Warm weather clothing is appropriate with the following exceptions: very short shorts or skirts (should be fingertip length), halter tops or tank tops with spaghetti straps, tops exposing the midriff or immodest display of undergarments.
3. Items of dress that disrupt the educational process and climate are inappropriate. Some examples include distracting hats, bandanas, costumes, etc. unless for an approved activity.
4. Footwear must be worn by all students. Flip flops and backless shoes are discouraged. Students will not be allowed to participate in gym classes without appropriate footwear. "Wheelie shoes" are not permitted.

## Social Media

While we want to encourage our students to build friendships with their classmates during and after school hours, we are concerned with the emotional language, misunderstandings and inappropriate topics that can be shared on social media sites. Students are not allowed to share personal contact information with other students while at WISCA without expressed permission from both students' parents. WISCA recommends tight restrictions and monitoring by parents of the students' use of social media and other internet sites.



Please sign and return ASAP

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### Student Handbook Form

I have read the WISCA student handbook and understand the guidelines.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_