

West Ferris Student/Parent Handbook

2025-2026



The Near North District School Board is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for its employees. The Occupational Health and Safety Act requires the Board to provide a workplace free from harassment and violence. Visitors entering this property are expected to refrain from using profanity, verbal and physical abuse, and any form of threatening behaviour.

Table of Contents

Contacts and Resources.....3

 Administration.....3

 Websites.....3

 Parent Guide.....3

Daily School Timings.....4

Student Attendance.....4

 Over 185

 Intermediate Lunch Time Policy.....5

Visitors to WFSS5

Allergies and Medical Documentation5

 Food Allergies.....5

 No Scents Makes Good Sense6

 Medications6

 Accidents or Injuries6

Student Expectations.....6

 Teacher Absences6

 In Classroom.....7

 Hallways and Cafeteria7

 Outside and in the Gym.....7

 Dress Code7

 Motorized Vehicles and Bicycles8

 School Trips, Excursions, Sports/Clubs, Assemblies and Events8

 Use of Mobile Devices.....8

 Consumption/Possession of Intoxicants, Controlled Substances, and Weapons.....9

 Bullying9

Learning Materials and School Property10

 Lockers10

Academics11

 Homework/Assignments.....11

 Summative Evaluations for Secondary Students11

 Plagiarism/Artificial Intelligence11

Emergencies and Drills11

 Fire Drills.....11

 Lockdown Drills.....11

 Hold and Secure12

West Ferris Code of Conduct12

Contacts and Resources

Administration

Gillian Kajganich, Principal gillian.kajganich@nearnorthschools.ca

Scott Barons, Vice-Principal scott.barons@nearnorthschools.ca

Stephanie Harrison, Vice-Principal stephanie.harrison@nearnorthschools.ca

Websites

School

<https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/west-ferris/>

<https://www.facebook.com/p/West-Ferris-Updates-100064873592334/>

<https://www.instagram.com/westferristrojans/?hl=en>

Edsby

<https://nndsb.edsby.com/p/BasePublic/94198385>

- Contact the school to activate your Parent Account

Board

<https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/>

<https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/board/administrative-guidelines/>

Ministry

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/education-ontario>

Parent Guide

For a quick guide with standard information and resources, please see the [West Ferris Parent Guide](#).

Daily School Timings

With the exception of extra curriculars that may begin sooner, our doors are open to welcome students beginning at 8:30am. Our morning bell rings at 8:50am.

8:50—9:20 Period 1

9:20—9:50 Period 2

9:50—10:20 Period 3

10:20—10:50 Period 4

10:50—11:30 Nutrition 1

11:30—12:00 Period 5

12:00—12:30 Period 6

12:30—1:00 Period 7

1:00—1:30 Period 8

1:30—2:10 Nutrition 2

2:10—2:40 Period 9

2:40—3:10 Period 10

Secondary

8:50—10:05 Period 1

10:05—10:15 Break

10:15—11:30 Period 2

11:30—12:30 Lunch

12:30—1:45 Period 3

1:45—1:55 Break

1:55—3:10 Period 4

- Intermediates (7 and 8 students) are on a 5-day cycle.
- Periods are 30 minutes each for Intermediate students.
- Periods are 75 minutes for Secondary students.

Our dismissal bell rings at 3:10pm.

Student Attendance

Regular attendance is the most important factor in achieving academic success. To support safety and student achievement, routines are in place to ensure proper reporting of student attendance and to assist students in maintaining regular attendance. Parent/guardian/caregiver are to advise the school student absence by means of phone call, Edsby, email, or a signed and dated note.

Whether the student is going to be away for the whole day, half a day, or any portion throughout a day, we ask caregivers to provide this information to our attendance office to ensure the attendance is recorded accurately and so that the student can be excused in a timely manner when necessary.

When a student is to be excused part way through the day, the information will be entered into Edsby and a demit slip will be written for the student to provide to their teacher. If the student is aware that they will be leaving throughout the day, it is their responsibility to retrieve their demit slip from the attendance office prior to going to class. If the dismissal is last minute, our office staff will be happy to assist in contacting the student to ensure they are aware.

In compliance with the Safe Schools Act, parents will be contacted in the absence of a student if we have not received information about said absence.

Students are expected to make all reasonable efforts to arrive to each class in a punctual manner. Persistent lates and absences will be addressed by teachers and may involve administration and the attendance counselor.

Over 18

If a student is over 18, they have the privilege to sign themselves out when necessary. Absences are still expected to be resolved and admits will be requested for those that remain unexplained. Students can call or visit the attendance office to use their sign out privileges and are expected to use is thoughtfully as to not miss too much class time. Students that have this privilege are also expected to communicate with their teachers about missed time to ensure they do not fall behind.

Intermediate Lunch Time Policy

School Staff and Administrators are legally responsible for student safety during the entire school day, and adequate supervision must be in place to ensure safety and security in foreseeable circumstances.

Grade 7-8 students are not permitted to leave school property during the lunch break. Arrival check programs are a mechanism that parents and schools can use to account for any pupil's unexplained failure to arrive at school. Therefore, parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for communicating planned pupil absences or lateness to the school on a timely basis.

Students who are required by parent/guardian/caregiver to leave school during the lunch break must have permission from a parent/guardian/caregiver. Permission may be provided on a case-by-case basis, or for the entire school year. Students are responsible for signing out when they are leaving school property, and ensuring they sign back in upon return.

Visitors to WFSS

Visitors must sign in at the main office (Parents/Guardians/Caregivers, Community Partners, Agencies, etc) are expected to report to the main office prior to attending any other area of the school with the exception of sporting events where the gym is open to spectators. Students visiting from other schools must seek permission from the principal/vice principal prior to attending our campus unless attending extra curriculars. Failure to do so will result in a no trespass warning and contacting the administration of their current school.

When picking up students, we ask that you NOT drive a personal vehicle through the bus loading zone. Parking is available in our parking lots, not in the shop areas of the school. Smoking/vaping in a personal vehicle on school grounds is not permitted.

Allergies and Medical Documentation

Food Allergies

There are students in our school with **severe life-threatening** food allergies. Anaphylaxis is a medical condition that causes severe reactions to specific foods and can result in death within minutes. Some common foods which may trigger anaphylactic reactions are:

- peanut (peanut butter, peanut oil), tree nuts (hazelnuts, walnuts, pecans, almonds, cashews), sesame seed (sesame seed oil), cow's milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, wheat, soy, and bananas (avocados, kiwis, chestnuts for children with latex allergies).

Non-Food sources which may cause an anaphylactic reaction include:

- play dough, scented crayons and cosmetics, stuffed toys, insect venom (bee stings), rubber latex, vigorous exercise, some plants (poinsettias), cold, some medications, and red and blue dye products.

It is our goal to ensure that we have as safe an environment as possible when a student's life is at risk - we are asking for your help and understanding by not sending/bringing certain foods and/or other items to school.

Students are discouraged from bringing the following foods to school due to life threatening conditions:

- Nut and nut products; Milk and milk products.

(please note that this will be updated as families identify life-threatening allergies)

No Scents Makes Good Sense

The Near North District School Board strives for a scent-free environment in all NNDSB facilities. Scented products can aggravate health problems for some people, especially those with asthma, allergies, and other medical conditions. Please avoid the use of perfume, scented hair spray, cologne, and other scented products. Please note, this includes the use of any style of "vaping" product or apparatus.

Medications

If your child requires prescription or non-prescription medication during school hours, please notify a secretary in the main office to provide the required authorization and medical forms. You will be asked to provide a doctor's signature in some instances, detailing when the medication should be given to the child. We require that any medication, whether prescription or not, be stored at the office with the exception of rescue medications such as inhalers or EpiPens in some cases with the proper documentation.

Please label the medication clearly with your child's name and instructions for use. For the protection of all staff and students, school personnel will confiscate unauthorized medication found in the possession of a student. Additionally, if you administer prescription medication to your child on a regular basis. It would be helpful for staff to be informed.

If your child has a prevalent medical condition that the school should be aware of, you will be asked to complete a Plan of Care form to ensure the necessary staff are aware of the condition and any details that accompany it.

Accidents or Injuries

All injuries are to be reported to a teacher or the office immediately. Staff will assess the injury and respond with the appropriate first aid care. Parents/guardians/caregivers will be notified in the case that the student or first aid staff feel the need to do so. The appropriate accident reports and documentation will be completed to support student care and recovery after an injury occurs.

Student Expectations

Teacher Absences

If the regular classroom teacher is absent, students are still expected to attend class as scheduled.

Grades 7 to 10 will have a teacher assigned to a class in all cases and students will be expected to follow the direction of the substitute teacher.

Whenever possible, a teacher will be assigned to all grade 11 and 12 classes, unless directed by an administrator when a class may be released due to shortage of staff. In these cases, students will be redirected by signage on their classroom door to a sign in sheet in student services for attendance purposes and then may use the class time as a work period in the library or student success when possible.

In Classroom

Each teacher may implement unique classroom procedures at the beginning of the school year based on the school's policies and procedures. The expectation is that students respect and follow the direction of their teacher as well as:

- Respect yourself and others personal space and belongings.
- Receive teacher permission prior to leaving the learning area when necessary.
- Maintain positive attitude.
- Participate to the best of your ability.
- Ask for help when needed, help others when possible.
- Inform your teacher if you are unwell.

If a student is asked to leave a classroom, the expectation is that they report to the main office immediately.

Hallways and Cafeteria

- Always walk to avoid risk of trips, falls, and collisions
- Do not loiter in halls or washrooms.
- Wandering during scheduled class time is prohibited and staff may inquire about a student's reason for being away from their class. Students are expected to respond to staff question and direction with respect.
- Intermediate students are expected to be in their designated areas during nutrition break time.
- Maintain cleanliness of eating area and use proper receptacles for garbage and recycling.
- The use of curse words is not permitted at any time.

Outside and in the Gym

- Keep hands and feet to yourself. Play without physical contact (pushing, carrying, play-fighting)
- Avoid throwing of objects (sticks, stones, snow, ice, food, or other objects).
- Walk bikes, scooters, skateboards on sidewalk areas. Bikes and scooters remain outside the building, secured in assigned areas AT RISK OF THE STUDENT. Skateboards may be stored in student lockers and are not to be brought into classroom areas.
- Respect the boundaries identified by the staff on duty when outside or in the gym.
- Report accidents and injuries to the staff on duty immediately. Do not attempt to rescue, move, or give first aid to the injured person.

Dress Code

For the most up to date guidelines, please see <https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Student-Dress.pdf>

- The primary responsibility for student dress rests with the students themselves and their parents/guardians.

- Students have the right to make decisions about their attire, and they can wear what makes them comfortable and allows them to express themselves (e.g. clothing, hairstyle, makeup, jewelry, etc.).
- Students have the responsibility to respect the rights of others, and to help support a safe and shared environment that follows the student dress policy.
- Must be worn in such a way that clothing does not expose or make visible genitals, nipples or buttocks.
- Must be worn in such a way that undergarments (bras, underwear, nipple coverings, etc.) are not substituted as outer clothing.
- Must not include clothing or accessories that display, denote, suggest, or reference: images, logos or language that portray ethnic prejudice, racism, sexism, vulgarity, gang-related markings, obscenities, profanity, hate speech, alcohol, drugs or related paraphernalia, other illegal conduct or activities, and/or pornography.
- Must not compromise health and safety standards.

Motorized Vehicles and Bicycles

- Park a vehicle in the student designated parking spots in the back parking lot.
- Do not drive personal vehicle through the bus loading zone. Parking for students is provided as a privilege. Failure to drive personal vehicles in a safe manner will result in removal of parking privilege and police involvement.
- Do not park student vehicles near the shop areas of the school unless directed by a tech /shop teacher.
- Do not loiter around or in vehicle during the school day; smoking/vaping not permitted in private vehicles on school property.
- Follow the indicated fire and safety regulations and provincial traffic laws and norms; parking in a restricted area will result in ticketed/towed vehicles at the owner's expense. Driving on lawns, pathways, sidewalks, fields will result in a trespass order prohibiting you from driving onto school property.
- Lock bicycles in the racks/rails provided near the entrance of the school. Bicycles are not to be brought into the building. The school and board are not responsible for securing or for damage or loss to personal vehicles.

School Trips, Excursions, Sports/Clubs, Assemblies and Events

Curriculum related trips and intramural sports days occur throughout the school year. Students must regularly exhibit appropriate behaviour in school, including a good attendance record and academic effort, to be considered for school events.

All school excursions will comply with NNDSB Field Trip Policy - <https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/board/administrative-guidelines/>

Special events and assemblies are part of every student's experience. Students are expected to attend assemblies and special events and to behave in an acceptable manner.

Use of Mobile Devices

A personal mobile device is any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate or access the internet, such as a cellphone, tablet, laptop, or smartwatch.

The Ministry of Education has updated Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) 128: The Provincial Board of Conduct and School Board Code of Conduct. The big ideas related to the Code of Conduct remain the same: we want to ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity and that we promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the school community.

The updated PPM places new measures on student use of personal mobile devices while at school or attending school events. This is because of the negative impact cell phones and social media are having on children and youth. An overwhelming body of evidence has connected childhood screen time to profound negative effects including increased anxiety, damaged self-esteem and limited physical activity, not to mention the extreme distraction to learning. Effective September 1, 2024, the Ministry requires that students keep their phones turned off or set to silent during the instructional day. Within our Near North District School Board (NNDSB) Policy, we require that students keep their phones turned off or set to silent in their locker, if applicable, or in their backpack. Students are not to keep their phone in their pocket or other easily accessible areas. This will support better concentration in class by limiting distractions for all students.

Under the new PPM, WFSS students in Grades 7 and 8 who have their phone out during class time without teacher permission are to bring their device to the principal's office. WFSS students in Grades 9 and 12 who have their phone out during class time without teacher permission are to place their device in a designated spot in the classroom. It's important to note that school staff including teachers and administrators are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices. Therefore, we strongly recommend that parents consider whether they want to send their child to school with a personal mobile device. Parents who choose to send their child to school with a personal mobile device must understand the expectations for the device's use, as well as the consequences should the student fail to meet the expectations outlined.

Consumption/Possession of Intoxicants, Controlled Substances, and Weapons

Smoking/vaping on school property is illegal and may result in a fine. Incidents are referred to the Tobacco Enforcement Team at the NBPSDHU to investigate, educate, and issue fines at their discretion.

Students who are suspected to be under the influence during class or school activities may be removed from higher risk courses such as tech or Phys ed classes where there is an elevated risk of injury. Students will be reported to Administration if intoxication is observed or suspected.

In the interest of the overall school safety, a student's right to privacy may be overridden where school authorities have reasonable grounds to believe the student may be breaching regulations. Therefore, administration is permitted to conduct reasonable search of lockers and belongings under the Education Act and the Criminal Code of Canada (Supreme Court of Canada ruling R VS MR, November 1998).

Students under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs may be suspended, may be subject to police involvement and/ or referred to our Community Addictions Counsellor. Administrators will contact parent/guardian/caregiver in all cases of suspected or confirmed use or possession of intoxicants (alcohol, drugs) or prohibited items (weapons, stolen property).

The possession of weapons on school property is prohibited and will be met with seriousness. Members of the school community must not be in possession of a weapon including but not limited to firearms and will not use any object to threaten, intimidate or harm others.

Bullying

<https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Near-North-Bullying-Prevention-and-Intervention-Plan.pdf>

West Ferris School is committed to the establishment of safe, inclusive, and accepting school environments to maximize the learning potential of all students. There is conclusive research that shows that for students to reach their full potential, they must feel safe, included, and engaged in school. An inclusive school climate based on

caring and respectful relationships among students, teachers, school staff, parents, community partners and administrators are a fundamentally enabling condition for learning.

Committed leadership and ongoing collaboration at all levels (individual, classroom, school, parent, board, community) among everyone involved are key factors to the success of a whole school approach.

Parents and Students – West Ferris School is dedicated to ensuring a safe and caring environment. An administrator will investigate all reports of bullying. If you or your child has any concerns, contact us immediately.

Please see corresponding Administrative Guideline:

<https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/administrative-guideline-safe-schools-bullying-prevention-and-intervention-plan-effective/>

Learning Materials and School Property

Students may have the privilege of using school owned equipment and materials such as textbooks, library books, technology, etc. and as such as expected to:

- Be responsible for the care of school owned materials. Any item borrowed is to be returned in the same condition as when lent.
- Take good care of school owned learning materials and follow the Near North School Board Acceptable use policy.
- Use computers and technology for educational purposes only. Use of technology for social media, games, or viewing offensive content that promotes discrimination, vulgarity, racial or sexist materials may result in revoked privileges.
- Discard all garbage and/or recycling materials in the appropriate containers inside and/or outside the school.
- Not deface desks, walls, washrooms stalls, fixtures, furniture, computers, etc., and/or vandalize school property.
- Assume responsibility for personal items that are lost or stolen. Leave your valuables at home.

Students will be responsible for the care of school materials. All school materials will be returned by the students in the same condition as given. If school materials are damaged or lost, the student is responsible for replacing the items.

Lockers

Students are reminded that the lockers are the property of the school and administration may conduct a search of the locker if they have reason to believe there are prohibited items contained inside. Students are asked to adhere to the following:

- Keep the assigned locker in good condition. Students must buy a lock from the school at the cost of \$12.50 (payable using School Cash Online - no cash or cheques will be accepted).
- Clean out the locker at the end of semester one, and at the end of the year the locker will be left clean, or the contents will be discarded.
- Leave locks locked on OPEN locker at the end of the school year.
- Keep the assigned locker and not share lockers. Damage to the locker may be subject to repair costs paid by the student.

- Always keep backpack or school bag in locker (classrooms, walkways, halls, doorways, stairwells must not be cluttered with packs/bags - these items are a possible trip hazard). Students with laptops may carry their laptop in an appropriate bag.

Academics

Homework/Assignments

Students are expected to complete all work assigned to them, on time, to the best of their ability. If unable to complete an assignment due to special circumstances, it is the student's responsibility to meet with the teacher in advance to negotiate an alternative plan. Students are expected to manage multiple assigned tasks across their classes and should ask for help if they are unclear on instructions. Help is available to organize and prioritize the workload. Student Success assistance is a readily available resource for all grades.

Summative Evaluations for Secondary Students

All secondary students will be required to complete a final evaluation at the end of each semester on the days scheduled.

Any student who is ill and unable to complete a course culminating task is required to bring a doctor's note to the office.

If a student does not attempt the final evaluation, which may consist of one or more activities, a zero will be assigned and the student may be in danger of losing the credit. The student must meet with the Teacher, Student Success/Guidance/Admin Team to create a progress plan (Adjust schedule for next semester, Credit Rescue, Credit Recovery, Summer School, Night School).

Plagiarism/Artificial Intelligence

Any student who has copied another person's work or has used AI generated work can expect to receive a mark of "0" on the essay, report, exam, etc. The same penalty of zero will apply for copying exact wording from research material found in books, articles, magazines, the Internet, etc. without giving credit to the original author.

On the first offence, the student is counselled by the teacher and encouraged to do a make-up assignment, which will count for two-thirds of the earned mark. For any subsequent offence, the mark remains at zero.

Emergencies and Drills

Fire Drills

The signal for a fire drill is a loud continuous beep. Students are to walk, quietly in single file, to the exit indicated on the poster in each of their classrooms. Students will file outside with their teachers and remain in a quiet group as they await the taking of attendance by the teacher. In the event of a sustained emergency and school closure is warranted, students will be taken to an alternate shelter – one of the following: Silver Birches or Sunset Park.

Lockdown Drills

A lock-down drill will be held at least twice a year. Any students or staff in the hallway will go to the nearest classroom. Classroom doors and windows will be closed. Students will remain quietly in the classroom while attendance is taken. There will be an announcement by the principal letting staff and students know that the drill is over. Parents will always be notified in advance of practice Lockdown Drills. Lockdowns are used in serious

emergency situations where there is a threat inside the school, on or very near school property. Lights are turned off, window coverings are closed, mobile device use is restricted, and all people inside the building should remain quiet.

Hold and Secure

Hold & Secure is a response to a threat and/or incident in the school, on or very near school property. Differing from lockdowns, school life continues as normal inside the school; however, as a precautionary measure, outer doors are locked, and no one enters or leaves the building. Note: As a result of Secure Access Systems that are installed at NNSB schools, outer doors are typically locked during the learning day.

West Ferris Code of Conduct

For more details about our school policies and codes of conduct, please refer to the [West Ferris Secondary School Student Code of Conduct](#).