



Westgate Child Center

**Parent and Family Handbook
2022-2023**

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Center Director's Welcome

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Westgate Child Center! Westgate was established in 1973 and has provided almost 50 years of invaluable educational service to the community. The Center is a non-profit, preschool and daycare center for children 2 ½ to 12 years of age. Licensed by Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Center offers a preschool curriculum of learning through play, as well as extended care for school age children.

Our Center is committed to providing a high-quality education through carefully planned activities and thematic units of study. Our program strives to nurture each child's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs in a stimulating, yet warm and caring environment.

The Center maintains an excellent child-teacher ratio with educators who are qualified, trained, and professional. Our low child-teacher ratio enables our teachers to focus on the needs and talents of each child.

This handbook provides all the information you should need to ensure your child has a successful and positive experience at Westgate. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of our staff if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to welcoming your child.

Sincerely,

The Westgate Child Center Team

Westgate's Programs

Sunshine Room - Full Day Preschool

Lightning Bolts - Half-Day Preschool

(Children ages 2 ½ – 4 years old)

The children are introduced to the alphabet, math concepts, colors, beginning phonic skills, nature, technology and the world at large. Activities are planned around themes designed to develop their imagination, reasoning skills, and self-confidence. Children develop social skills, including practical life skills, cooperation, respect, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. Exposure to art, music, computers, craft, and imaginative expression are all important aspects of our preschool program. Creative movement as well as small and large motor development activities are incorporated in the classroom and in outdoor play. Breakfast, lunch, and a snack are served in both half day and full day programs.

The Sunshine Room naptime is between 1-3:00pm. For the Lightning Bolts, naptime is typically between 1-2:30pm. The Lightning Bolts follow the Fairfax County Public School calendar year. Spaces in the summer program are not automatically available to students in the Lightning Bolts room, unless space is available in the Sunshine Room program.

Rainbow Room - Pre-Kindergarten

(Children ages 4 – 5 years old)

Children work to master skills in the following areas to be as ready as possible for Kindergarten: basic phonic skills, math concepts, social skills, and problem solving skills. Children will also have exposure to art, music, technology, crafts and artistic expression. Classrooms are divided into centers for children to participate in as they desire. Outside time is also scheduled twice a day for physical exercise and gross motor skills. Naptime is scheduled typically between 1-3:00pm and children are served breakfast, lunch, and snack.

Little Leaguers - Before and After School Program

(Children ages 5 – 12 years old)

The before and after school program is offered to children attending neighboring public schools. This program is designed to interest and challenge the school aged child in a fun, club-like environment. Westgate Vans and/or Fairfax County buses will transport the children from the Center after breakfast and take them to their public school. At the end of the school day children are returned to Westgate. Upon their return from school, they have a snack and can participate in whatever club activities they choose, including a homework group. Club activities center on arts and crafts, group sports, games, cooking, and field trips. Homework group has a dedicated teacher that takes the older children (2nd grade and above) into a separate room to

work on daily homework assignments. Children in this program are served breakfast in the morning and a snack in the afternoon. When Fairfax County Public Schools are closed, the Little Leaguers class is a full day program and includes lunch.

Summer Programs

(Children ages 2 ½ – 12 years)

In addition to our standard school year program, Westgate Child Center provides an exciting, full day summer program for both preschool ages and school aged children, up to 12 years.

Westgate's summer program is divided by age-groups and designed to provide children with a fun, relaxing, and safe summer, filled with age-appropriate activities, field trips and entertainment.

Separate enrollment and registration are required from our school year programs; however, currently enrolled students receive enrollment prioritization. Registration packets will be provided to all current students prior to the start of the summer program.

Enrichment Activities

Throughout the school year, Westgate contracts with outside providers to offer optional activities for students, at an additional charge. These activities may include dance, karate, soccer, etc. and generally occur during the school day. More information will be provided to parents at the beginning of the school year, or prior to the start of any new programs, for any parents that are interested in signing up their child.

Parents, Teachers, and Staff

Parents/Family Involvement

Family involvement is encouraged and welcome. Preschool teachers prepare lesson plans to keep parents informed of school activities, and to provide insight into what occurs during your child's day. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year as well as at the request of the parent, teacher, or Center Director.

When possible, families are welcome to join field trips, share a hobby or life skill, and participate in holiday events. If interested, please see the Center Director for available opportunities.

Teachers and Staff

Westgate is staffed with experienced and highly qualified teachers and staff. Our average teacher tenure is approximately 15 years. Our staff are actively involved with ongoing training

and workshops to stay abreast of the latest early childhood tools and techniques. We are proud of our low teacher turnover and of our low child-teacher ratio.

In every classroom there is a lead teacher and several assistant teachers. The front office staff includes the Center Director and the Deputy Director who oversees the activities of the whole school. For a list of our current teachers and staff please see Westgate's staff webpage [here](#).

Board of Directors

As a nonprofit organization, the Westgate Child Center is overseen by a Board of Directors, made up of parents and non-parent representatives. The volunteer Board of Directors act as stewards of the school's financial health and future.

We are always looking for individuals who have an interest and passion in joining our team to ensure Westgate is providing the best in early childhood education. If you are interested in learning more and interested in applying, please reach out to Ms. Mirtha

(MClaros@westgatechildcenter.com). You may also reach out directly to the Board of Directors at: westgatechildcenterboard@gmail.com.

Administrative Information

Hours of Operation

The Center is open from 7:00am to 6:30pm. All parents are expected to pick up their child by the close of the center. See "Arrival and Dismissal" for more information.

Admission and Registration

Westgate Child Center is non-sectarian, non-profit, private, independent, and nondiscriminatory. We believe in equal education, attention, and care for all children without regard to race, color, religion, or ethnic origin.

Westgate is available for tours of the center and parents are encouraged to meet the teachers and staff prior to enrollment.

To enroll your child, the following items must be completed and signed (as applicable):

- [Enrollment/Registration Package](#) (including signed contract, a one-time non-refundable registration fee (\$75/child or \$100/family), and an enrollment deposit* (equal to ½ month's tuition)).
- [Virginia School Entrance Form](#)
- [CACFP Enrollment Form](#)
- [Medical Consent Form](#) (required for medication that must be administered by MAT staff)
- [Authorization Form for Sunscreen and Insect Repellent](#)
- [Authorization for Brightwheel Auto Pay](#)

- [Transportation Code of Conduct and Consent Form](#)
- Signed parent handbook acknowledgement (last page of this document).

*If 30 days written notice of withdrawal from Westgate is provided to the Center Director (as further discussed below) then the enrollment deposit will be credited towards the student's last month tuition. If withdrawal does not meet the 30 day notice requirement, the enrollment deposit will not be applied to the last month's tuition nor refunded. No exceptions.

Tuition

Tuition payment is made on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Please remember monthly tuition is due to Westgate on the 1st of each month. If a family elects to pay bi-monthly tuition it is due on the 1st and 15th .

There are two ways to make a payment:

1. Through a linked checking account on your Brightwheel account via:
 - a. The autopay method (under the “Payments” tab ☰ “Payment Settings” tab) which automatically withdraw the full due amount on the due date OR
 - b. The “Make a Payment” option (under the “Payments” tab ☰ “Accounts” tab) which requires users to manual complete the payment process;
 OR
2. Via check to “Westgate Child Center” with the student’s name in the memo line.
 - a. There is a lock box in the foyer outside of the office door for tuition payments.

Tuition is viewed as monthly installments. If your child is present at our school for more than two weeks of the month you will be expected to pay for the full month.

For payments made more than 10 calendar days late, a \$15 charge is added to the student’s account. Any child whose care is not paid for within the first week the payment is due, is subject to dismissal from the center. There is a \$25 charge for returned checks. Tuition is not refundable at any time, for any reason.

Withdrawal and Termination

If you choose to withdraw your child out of our school, Westgate requires 30 days written notice to the Center Director and tuition must be paid through the final end date (the full 30 day notice period). If timely written notice of withdrawal is provided to the Center Director, then the enrollment deposit will be credited towards the student's last month tuition. If the withdrawal notice does not meet the 30 day written notice requirement, the enrollment deposit will not be applied to the last month's tuition nor refunded. No exceptions.

The Center reserves the right at any time to terminate the enrollment of a child if in the Center’s opinion; it is in the best interests of the child or other children in the Center. If the Center terminates a child’s enrollment, the enrollment deposit will be refunded.

Arrival and Dismissal

Children can be picked up by parents and designated people only. Authorization is required in writing (provided on the registration form) for the child to be released to anyone other than the child's parent(s) or emergency contact(s). The staff reserves the right to check identification. If your child will be picked up by someone other than a parent, please let the teachers know during drop off or prior to pickup, if possible.

In order to keep your children safe, parents are requested to:

- Park their cars in the parking lot or designated parking areas.
 - Please note that parking in the circle by the main doors is not permitted between the hours of 9:30- 3:00.
 - Parents parked in designated no parking zones or illegally parked in handicapped spaces may be ticketed or towed at their own expense.
- Sign in/sign out children upon arrival and departure in their designated classroom.
 - *(See Communications section on how to check-in/Check-out your child using our Brightwheel app).*
- Accompany their children in and out of the building.

The Center closes promptly at 6:30 pm. We require that children, accompanied by an adult, vacate the Center no later than 6:30 pm. As noted below, a late fee is applicable for children picked up after closing time. If parents and the emergency contacts are unavailable for more than one hour after closing, the local police or Child Protective Services will be contacted. If late pick-ups are habitual, the child's enrollment may be terminated.

When anyone picks up their child late, they are required to complete a Late Pick-up Fee Form that verifies the late charge. Late fees will be added to the student's next month's tuition. **Cash payments are no longer accepted.**

Late Pick-Up Fees for Classes Ending at 6:30 (Sunshine, Rainbow and Little Leaguer Rooms) and [Late Pick-Up Fee Form](#)

- 6:31pm - 6:35pm = \$5.00
- 6:36pm - 6:45pm = \$15.00

After 6:45pm, there will be an additional charge of \$3.00 per minute:

6:46...\$18.00	6:51...\$33.00	6:56...\$48.00
6:47...\$21.00	6:52...\$36.00	6:57...\$51.00

6:48...\$24.0 0	6:53...\$39.0 0	6:58...\$54.0 0
6:49...\$27.0 0	6:54...\$42.0 0	6:59...\$57.0 0
6:50...\$30.0 0	6:55...\$45.0 0	7:00...\$60.0 0

Late Pick-Up Fees for the Lightning Bolts Room and [Late Pick-UP Fee Form](#)

- 3:01pm - 3:05pm = \$5.00
- 3:06pm - 3:15pm = \$15.00

After 3:15pm, there will be an additional charge of \$3.00 per minute:

3:16...\$18.0 0	3:21...\$33.0 0	3:26...\$48.0 0
3:17...\$21.0 0	3:22...\$36.0 0	3:27...\$51.0 0
3:18...\$24.0 0	3:23...\$39.0 0	3:28...\$54.0 0
3:19...\$27.0 0	3:24...\$42.0 0	3:29...\$57.0 0
3:20...\$30.0 0	3:25...\$45.0 0	3:30...\$60.0 0

Personal Belongings/Clothing

Children are welcome to bring backpacks to school, however, please do not keep food in your child's cubby or their backpacks. Please furnish a labeled bag with an entire change of clothing (including socks) for your child, to be kept at school for emergencies. **All clothing and other personal belongings (water bottles, hats, etc.) must be labeled with the child's name.**

While at school, children are asked to wear comfortable clothing. They should also have outerwear that is suited to the weather to allow for outdoor play. All children are expected to wear closed-toed shoes to school in order to play on the playground. For safety reasons, clogs, sandals, open-toe and slick-soled shoes may not be worn.

Children in the preschool programs are required to bring in a crib sheet and blanket for naptime. Linens will be sent home on Fridays to be washed and returned on Mondays.

Candy, gum, toy weapons, and money are not allowed at school.

Classroom teachers have discretion to require any potential dangerous item to be kept in the student's backpack or sent back home.

Food Service and Nutrition

The Center provides a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snacks at designated times. Our food service is provided by School House Grill. Our menu conforms to all USDA nutrition guidelines. Each month, menus are posted in the school entrance for parents to review. In addition, menus are available in the front office each month to take home. The Center permits food to be brought in from home only under certain circumstances:

- Special diet for religious or medical reasons (doctor's note required);
- Food or beverages for special celebrations (like a birthday); or
- Picnic lunch from home for a field trip or when catering is not available.
 - For example, school-age students are required to bring lunch on days when Fairfax County Public Schools have an unscheduled closure (i.e. snow days).

The Center will provide a safe place for the food to be stored at the appropriate temperatures.

Westgate is a PEANUT-FREE facility. Due to possible allergic reactions, food brought from home will not be shared with other students. Only food brought in for celebrations (*i.e.* birthdays or for other classroom parties) will be shared with the class and; therefore, must be store-bought and peanut-free.

Discipline

The safety of the children is the foremost concern of the school. Classroom rules are designed with this in mind, and positive discipline will be used. Children are told what they can do, rather than what they cannot do. Children's emotions are validated, but behavior will be redirected to acceptable means of expression. If needed, a child will be directed to a short period of "thinking time" to regain his/her composure before re-entering play with others. If the child is having difficulty adjusting to the guidelines, the staff will inform the parent(s) and if necessary, request a meeting with the parent(s) to discuss the situation and resolve the problem together. If the behavior of concern cannot be resolved, we reserve the right to suspend or dismiss the child.

Center Liability

The Center may not be held liable for unofficial activities that may involve staff, parents, and children outside of Westgate's normal operations. This includes staff hired as babysitters, as well as parents/staff transporting children to and from the school.

Communications

Communication Methods

Communications with parents will mainly occur through the Center's website (www.westgatechildcenter.com), the Brightwheel app, and phone message updates. Accordingly, parents should provide the most up-to-date contact information for Center communications. This includes home, work, and cell phone numbers, as well as an e-mail address that can be checked regularly throughout the day.

Staff and administrators will also use bulletin boards or post announcements outside the student's classroom. There may also be times when you may receive information via your child's cubby. Therefore, parents are encouraged to check the Center surroundings regularly.

Brightwheel App

Westgate Child Center (The Center) uses the Brightwheel application/website for student check-in/out, communication between the school, teachers, and parents, and for tuition payments. You should have received an email from Brightwheel regarding setting up the application for your child(ren). If you have not received an email inviting you to set up your Brightwheel account, please email the Center Director.

Easy steps to set up your account:

1. Create a free Brightwheel account. When you receive an invitation via email or text, please create a free parent account using either the [web address](#) or mobile app (available where most apps are available). Make sure to use the same email address or cell phone number that the invitation was sent to. [Here is a quick video overview.](#)
2. Confirm your child's profile. You will see your child's profile after you create an account - you can confirm information such as birthday, allergies, and additional contacts. If you do not see your child's profile, please contact us with the email address or phone number you used to sign up. You will not see updates within Brightwheel until we start to use it regularly.
3. Set your account preferences. You can adjust your notification preferences within your profile settings on the app.
4. Add your payment information. Brightwheel offers secure, automated online payments that saves time for us and provides you with advanced tools and reporting. Please add your payment information. Here is an online [Payments Setup Guide](#) with more info.

See a video tutorial [HERE!](#)

Daily Check-in/Check-out using Brightwheel

On your first day at school, please use the tablets near the classroom door to check your child in for the day. Enter your child's PIN, select your child's name, sign, and tap "confirm". When you pick up your child, please sign them out the same way. This allows us to ensure that the students are accounted for throughout the day.

Daily Communication via Brightwheel

Brightwheel also allows our teachers to send updates regarding classroom activities throughout each day and allows our Center Director to send school-wide updates and messages. Parents can adjust their email and notification preferences within the application. Please set up your Brightwheel account as soon as possible as it will allow you to get school-wide messages, send messages to the school or teachers, and receive messages from the teachers.

Medication and Sick Policy

All students are required to have updated immunization and health forms on file as required by state law. Parents must notify us in writing if their child has allergies of any kind by completing the School Entrance Health form (required at registration). If updates are needed, the form is available [here](#).

Staff members are trained in first aid and CPR and can tend to everyday bumps and bruises. If a child has an accident or incident during the day, the appropriate form will be given to the parent for signature. For more serious accidents/incidents, we will attempt to notify parents by telephone and/or through the Brightwheel app. In the event of a serious emergency, the school will secure immediate medical attention as described above. As noted above, every effort will be made to contact parents and/or emergency contacts. .

Westgate staff are taking the following procedures to keep your child safe:

1. When entering the classroom, the child will be asked to wash their hands.
2. The children will be made to wash their hands after each activity, before and after meals, returning from the playground, when they sneeze or blow their noses, and after using the restroom.
3. Food preparation: Our kitchen staff as well as our teachers have been through the health department food handlers' class and will be using the safety measures that they have learned in this class to ensure that the food is prepared and served in a safe manner . No child will be serving their own food or food to others.

The Center actively follows the guidance from the Fairfax County Health Department and will update the sick policies accordingly if there are any updates or changes in the guidance provided. In any event of health policy updates, the Center will communicate with parents via the Brightwheel app in a timely manner.

Sick Policy

To provide a safe and healthy environment for all of our children, we ask that you keep children at home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more;
- Vomiting within the previous 24-hour period;
- Diarrhea within the previous 24-hour period (including recurring episodes of diarrhea at school);
- A heavy nasal discharge indicative of infection;
- A constant cough or sore throat;
- Fussy, cranky behavior and generally not themselves;
- Redness and irritation of the eyes;
- A skin rash;
- Head lice; or
- Symptoms of any communicable disease.

Children may not return to the Center until they have been symptom-free/fever free for 24 hours.

Per Virginia's Licensing Requirements, Parents/Guardians MUST inform the Center within 24 hours if any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable diseases.

Teachers trained in health screening will perform a quick health assessment of each child upon arrival every day. We reserve the right to send home any student who shows signs of illness at school.

Sickness During the School Day

Westgate reserves the right to send home any student who shows signs of illness at school. Any student who becomes ill at school will be made comfortable until his/her parents can be notified and the student is picked up from school. If a child develops a fever of 100 degrees, vomits, has diarrhea, or develops redness of the eye with crusty discharge, parents will be called to pick-up their child **within one hour**.

The child may be moved to the Center Director's office until pick-up. The child needs to be symptom free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to Westgate. In the case of 'pink eye', the child can return with a doctor's note stating that the child is not contagious. Other contagious diseases may also require a doctor's note stating the same. Per licensing regulations, parents must notify Westgate if any member of the immediate household develops any reportable contagious disease, so that other families may be notified of the possibility of contagion. Please be courteous to the Westgate staff and the other Westgate families and ensure this requirement is met.

COVID Policy

Westgate has, and continues, to follow the [Fairfax County Health Department \(FCHD\) Guidance](#). The below policy was developed with FCHD guidance.

- **If your child tests positive (regardless of vaccination status)** your child must isolate at home for at least 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours, they may return to school on day 6, and must wear a mask through day 10. If your child will not wear a mask at school, they must remain home until day 10, and may return to school on day 11.
- **Test to stay for classrooms that have a positive case:** If a child tests positive, we require rapid testing on-site **only for symptomatic children** in the classroom who were exposed to the child who tested positive. Rapid testing will be done at the school using an un-expired test brought from home, a test performed that day signed by a doctor, or a test provided by the school (for an additional \$15 fee, per test), and testing will be performed each day for 5 consecutive days, or as long as the child is showing symptoms. If tests are negative, children are allowed to remain at school. **All children** in the classroom will be required to wear a mask for the following 10 days after the positive case. **To participate in the test to stay program, parents must sign a form found in the front office.**
- If a child tests positive at school, we will remove the child from the classroom immediately, and ask you to pick up your child within an hour.
- If a sibling tests positive, your child will be required to utilize the “test to stay” program regardless of their symptoms. For each of the following 5 days after the sibling tests positive, your child will be tested at school using a rapid test. If the test is negative, the child is allowed to remain at school.
- **If FCHD determines the school is experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19** that has been difficult to control or is unusual in size or scope, FCHD may recommend traditional quarantine and isolation standards be applied until the situation is stabilized or we may be required to close the school for a short period of time. The Center will follow whatever instructions are provided by FCHD.
- These policies are not differentiated by vaccination status of the child. We encourage all children and their families to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. All staff at the school are fully vaccinated and boosted.

Head Lice Policy

Anyone, child or adult, can get head lice. It has nothing to do with cleanliness and does not reflect poorly on anyone. Head lice are passed from person to person by direct contact or by sharing objects like combs, towels, and headphones.

Look for tiny white eggs (nits) on hair shafts on the scalp, especially at the nape of the neck or behind the ears. Head lice themselves are small grayish-tan insects without wings. If you do find lice, don't panic, just follow the steps below:

- Check every member of the family/classroom.
- Use effective head lice treatment. NIX is a cream rinse available without prescription. You may also ask the doctor for a stronger prescription.
- Remove all nits by combing the hair with the special nit-removing comb.
- Wash clothes, bed linens, and towels, etc., using HOT water, then dry on a HOT cycle for at least 20 MINUTES.
- Items that cannot be machine-washed must be dry cleaned or stored at room temperature in a TIGHTLY SEALED PLASTIC BAG for at least TWO WEEKS.
- Soak combs, brushes, etc. in very hot water for at least 10 MINUTES.
- Vacuum carpets, upholstered furniture, car seats etc. to make sure the rest of the house/classroom is louse-free. Carpet sprays are also available in addition to vacuuming.

If you discover a child with lice or nits at the Center, let the Center Director know then call the parent to pick up the child. Inform the parents of the above procedures, letting them know that the child must complete a shampoo treatment, have the nits combed out. Child will need to be reexamined by the Center Director prior to readmission into the classroom. The Center Director will post a notice informing parents in that classroom or any other potentially affected classroom.

All soft toys, pillows, etc, will be bagged for two weeks, cots and classrooms sprayed with lice and disinfectant spray, carpets and furniture vacuumed.

Medication

Only Westgate Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) approved staff may administer medication. Accordingly, the following rules apply in order for Westgate Child Center MAT staff member to administer medications to children.

- A medication release form signed by the parent/guardian must accompany the medication. The form must specify the dosage to be administered, the time to be administered, and the length of time that the child is expected to be on the medication.
- Written authorization from the parent or guardian is also required in order for us to apply topical products, such as insect repellent or sunscreen (form can be found [here](#))
- **Medication must be in the original container and prescription medication clearly labeled with the full pharmacy label.**

- **Medication must also include the insert with all potential side effects and contraindications.**
- **Medication must be clearly labeled with the child’s first and last name, the name of the medication, and the directions for use.**
- Prescription medication shall be used only for the child named on the label.
- Medication is not allowed in cubbies or book bags.
- The school cannot administer medicines or perform procedures requiring specific skills or prior medical training.

Sunblock/Bug Spray

If you would like us to apply sunblock or bug spray before outdoor time, parents must complete the form giving us permission to administer the sunblock and/or bug spray, which is located [here](#). Children are not allowed to apply their own sunblock or bug spray therefore; sunscreen will be kept in the classroom. Please clearly label non-expired sunblock and bug spray with your child’s name. Sprayable sunblock is preferred for ease of administration.

Emergency Situations Policy

School Closings

1. Holidays

The Center follows the US Federal Government Schedule for federal holidays and closings, with a possible adjustment in December. The Center is also closed the Friday after Thanksgiving. Information on the Federal Government’s status is available at the following site: <http://www.opm.gov/status/>

2. Teacher Workdays

Westgate has 2 teacher workdays each school year. Parents will be notified of the scheduled closures at the start of each school year.

3. Inclement Weather Policy

The Center follows the US Federal Government Inclement Weather Policy in general, but reserves the right to close the school if conditions are determined to be too dangerous for the children or staff. The Center will send out school closing notification via email using the Brightwheel app to include up-to-date information on school closings.

The following guidelines will apply:

1. When Federal agencies are closed due to weather or emergencies, WESTGATE WILL BE CLOSED. Westgate reserves the right to remain open if the Federal Government closes for a non-emergency situation (i.e., day of mourning).

2. When Federal agencies are open under a delayed arrival policy, or open under an unscheduled leave policy, WESTGATE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO OPEN AND CLOSE ON TIME. However, the Center Director, at her/his discretion, may elect to open the Center late, close early, or not open the Center at all, if conditions are deemed too hazardous to permit a minimum number of staff to travel safely to the Center.
3. When Federal agencies announce early dismissal, WESTGATE WILL CLOSE ONE HOUR LATER. But staff will remain until all children have departed and parents will not be charged late fees unless they arrive after 6:30 (regular fees will apply). Parents will be sent an email advising of the early closure, and they will be urged to pick-up as soon as possible or to make alternate arrangements for pick-up.

In general, the opening/closing status of Fairfax County schools does not affect Westgate's hours of operation. On days when schools open late/close early, buses will operate to and from Westgate on a different time schedule depending on when the school district opens and closes.

Westgate will make every effort to open and close on time, but closures, late openings, and early closings are subject to the discretion of the Center Director.

Injuries

Immediate and proper attention will be given to an injured child. All Staff are familiar with:

- The contents of the First Aid Kits;
- Location of emergency exits and fire extinguishers; and
- The Center emergency plans, including the posted evacuation plan in the event of a fire and the shelter-in-place plan in the event of an emergency that requires remaining in the facility. Binders are located in all classrooms as well as posted on walls.

In case of any serious medical emergency:

- The child will not be moved and all other children will be kept away.
- Staff will call 911- from the nearest phone and give necessary information - location, nature of accident or incident and give a call back phone number.
- The child's parents and/or emergency contacts will be immediately contacted.
- If the injured child must be taken to the hospital, the child will be transported to Fairfax Hospital:

Fairfax Hospital
3300 Gallows Rd.
Falls Church, VA
Tel: (703) 698-1110

- The staff will have the child's emergency folder ready to go with the child.
- If a parent or emergency contact is not available, the Center Director or Deputy Director or other Westgate staff member will ride with the child in the ambulance.
- The Center Director or Deputy Director or other Westgate staff will remain with the child until the parent or other emergency contact arrives and will provide all necessary support until needed.

In case of minor injury:

- The staff will make sure the child gets immediate and proper First Aid attention.
- Inform parents and fill out the injury report form. Parents will be notified immediately of any head injury sustained by a child.
- The Staff will also notify the parent at the end of the day when they come to pick up their child and ask the parent to sign the injury report form noting that they have been informed of the injury.

Fire drills and Emergency Response Procedures

Fire drills are held and documented on a monthly basis. When the Fire alarm is activated Westgate staff will:

- Calmly get the children to drop whatever they are doing and quietly get into a line and walk out the door, down the hallway to the farther end of the playground.
- Let the children know it is a 'fire drill' and assure them it is not a real fire.
- The lead teacher or the teacher in charge should take the class sign-in/out sheet in order to count each child in attendance. Emergency medicines (e.g., Epi-pens) and first aid kits are to be carried outside as well.
- Ensure there should be a teacher at the head of the line and one teacher at the end of the line, the last to leave after checking if all the children have left the room, and the rest in between.
- Gather all children at the designated area for a final head count and confirm that everyone is accounted for.
- Walk the children in a line back to the classroom and take a final head-count, when the alarm is off and everything is cleared.
- Talk to the children about their performance.

Westgate's Emergency Response Procedures include:

- Sounding of alarm: a whistle sound in order to proceed to the shelter-in- place.
- Shelter- in- Place (Location (every 3 months)): students and staff are secured in their classrooms, doors are locked, and windows are closed.

- Active Shooter Drills (every 3 months): children and staff should go into the classroom closets and bathrooms, as appropriate. In the event of an emergency window blinds should be lowered.
- Emergency Disaster Kit: Battery powered radio, flashlight, first aid kit and food and water supplies- available to last for at least 3 days.
- Tornado drills (every 3 months): children will be required to remain in their classrooms at their desks.
- Emergency communication plan: that includes contact information for all families currently served by Westgate (Reviewed every 6 months). All parents will be updated via the Brightwheel app.

During lock downs, parents are not permitted in or out of the building until the lockdown is lifted. Lockdowns will be communicated to parents via Brightwheel.

Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse

According to VA law (§ 63.2-1509), teachers and school employees are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The definition of child abuse and neglect is:

- Creating or inflicting, by a parent or responsible caretaker, of a non-accidental physical or mental injury upon a child less than 18 years of age or permitting the infliction of an injury.
- The creating by a parent or responsible caretaker, of a substantial risk of death, or disfigurement, or bodily or mental functions, of a child.
- Neglect or refusal by a parent or other person, responsible for the child's care.
- Abandonment of a child, by a parent or other person responsible for his/her care.
- The committing upon a child, of any sexual act in violation of law, or permitting the commission of such act.

When abuse or neglect is suspected, the reporter may remain anonymous. If the reporter does give a name, it will remain confidential unless otherwise ordered by the court. Persons making complaints and reports are, by law, immune from any civil liability if they act in good faith.

Suspected child abuse in Virginia, is reported by calling (800) 552-7096. For national child abuse information, call the Childhelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline (staffed 24 hours daily with professional crisis counselors): 1-800-4-A-CHILD or 1-800-2-A-CHILD (T.D.D).

Transportation Policy

Westgate provides transportation for school aged children during the school year, and occasionally for field trips during the summer session. Westgate has vans that transport children

to and from field trips and elementary schools. Westgate vans are in compliance with safety standards listed in Virginia licensing standards (8VAC20-780-580).

Before students are allowed to be transported using Westgate vans, they must sign the [Transportation Code of Conduct and Consent form](#). A separate transportation permission form will be needed for summer transportation.

Any child under age 8 who will be transported using Westgate vans is required to provide a booster seat that is in compliance with Virginia Law:
<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/child-passenger-safety/virginia-laws/>.

2022-2023 Parent Handbook

Parent Acknowledgement Form

Student Name (Please Print)

This Parent Handbook was created to promote an understanding of the policies and procedures at Westgate Child Center.

The information in this Parent Handbook applies to all activities occurring on school grounds, school buses, and during any school related activity. It is important that parents and students are familiar with these expectations.

Please remove this page, sign it, and return it to the Center Director. It will be added to your child's permanent file. Your signature means that you have received this Parent Handbook and agree to comply with the policies and procedures of Westgate Child Center.

I have read and understand the policies and procedures in the Westgate Child Center Parent Handbook. I agree to abide by them as will my child(ren).

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Date