

# Woods Charter School Handbook

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(Revised 1/16/2013)

# Woods Charter School Handbook

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## Introduction

### Governing Laws

Woods Charter School is subject to the provisions of the North Carolina Charter School Act (Chapter 115C of the General Statutes) and the applicable policies and procedures of the State Board of Education. The provisions of this Handbook are intended to agree in both letter and spirit with applicable rules and regulations. In addition, the Handbook also reflects procedures designed by the administration and faculty to implement policies established by the Woods Charter School Board.

### Vision

We envision a world where every young person wholeheartedly engages in an extraordinary educational journey that leads to a life of leadership and service.

### Mission

Woods Charter School empowers students to achieve their full potential. We develop young citizens equipped with a solid academic foundation, a passion for learning, and exemplary character.

### The Woods Way

- We value the pursuit of **academic excellence** that develops knowledge of classical liberal arts and modern science.
- We value our **collaborative community**, which is an essential catalyst for academic growth, physical and emotional well being, and artistic expression.
- We value our **passionate and caring faculty**, who are fully committed to actively engaging with colleagues, parents, and students to ensure success for every student.
- We value **parental volunteerism and support**, which is critical to achieving our mission.
- We value **strong relationships** characterized by mutual respect and trust.
- We value **compassion and inclusivity** that create an environment where students are enriched by their differences and diversity is celebrated.
- We value an awareness of and engagement with the world that compels students to active lives of **service**.

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## WOODS EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Woods Charter School strives to build a community where long-term relationships between students, teachers and parents enhance the learning process. We create an environment where each student is known well by his or her teachers and peers and is encouraged and challenged as an individual. Within our small, safe and friendly learning community, we expect standards of conduct appropriate for a serious academic environment where honesty, civility and mutual respect are the rule, not the exception. Beyond academics, we strive to promote emotional and physical health, develop stellar character, and instill the highest interpersonal values.

The Woods educational philosophy intends to promote a strong sense of personal responsibility in each student that will help prepare him or her for high school graduation, for college and university education, and for life. As our students progress from Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, we strive to enable each student to maximize his or her own potential through an academic program which becomes gradually more rigorous and in which each student is supported and challenged as an individual.

Woods Charter School utilizes a unique blend of principles built on the three programs of academic study that make up the Woods curriculum: the new NC Standard Course of Study (Grades K-12), The Core Knowledge Program (Grades K-8) and the Advanced Placement Program (Grades 9-12). In the elementary grades (K-4), the focus is on instilling self-esteem, teaching appropriate social skills and building a core knowledge of fundamental facts and concepts across all subjects of the curriculum.

In the middle school (5-8), our students learn to utilize that knowledge by mastering the core communication and analytical skills of reading, writing and basic math. The emphasis across the board is on mastering the fundamental knowledge and skills shared by educated individuals in our society – thereby providing a common basis for understanding and communication, as well as a foundation for developing the unique abilities and ideas of the individual student.

The high school grades (9-12) build upon knowledge and skills learned in the elementary and middle schools. The student's focus shifts to practicing advanced analytical thinking and effective communication in all subjects of the curriculum. Students are inspired to explore the relevance and connectivity of the material they have learned, and encouraged to pursue independent inquiries and projects. Our high school curriculum is intended to prepare our students to be critical thinkers, to succeed in advanced academic study, to be responsible citizens, and to pursue life-long learning.

- ❖ We believe **students** learn best when they:
  - Are in small classes
  - Feel safe in a nurturing environment;
  - Are known well and respected by their teachers and peers;
  - Are challenged by high expectations;
  - Receive assignments and homework that are challenging, relevant, and in an appropriate amount for the age of the student; and,
  - Are encouraged to pursue a healthy range of activities outside the classroom.

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- ❖ We believe **teachers** teach best when they:
  - Are empowered and trusted;
  - Are respected and supported throughout the school community;
  - Have the opportunity to influence the curriculum;
  - Know and respect their students;
  - Communicate and partner with parents; and,
  - Are free to explore different teaching methodologies.
  
- ❖ We believe **parents** support the education and development of students best when they:
  - Share the school's mission to promote emotional and physical health, develop stellar character and instill the highest interpersonal values;
  - Support the pursuit of academic excellence and ensure that their student arrives at school each day fit and ready to learn.
  - Communicate regularly and respectfully with their student and their student's teachers;
  - Seek to resolve any school problems by working respectfully with teachers and administrators with the goal of maintaining the school's appropriate authority with students; and
  - Have the opportunity to participate in school activities, influence school policies, and be active partners in the Woods community.

We believe that Woods Charter School is enhanced by the diversity of its students, teachers and parents and that our community is strengthened by embracing and encouraging each individual within our community.

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## Section One: General Information, Policies & Procedures

### Daily Schedules

Normal school hours for middle and high school divisions will be 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Elementary division hours are 8:30 a.m. until 2:50 p.m. Any Woods Charter School student may be on campus as early as 8:00 a.m. and as late as 3:30 p.m. Students may be on campus prior to 8:00 a.m. or after 3:30 p.m. only when they are participating in a school-sanctioned activity such as clubs, yearbook, music lessons, sports teams, Science Olympiad or the YMCA After School Program. Any student remaining on campus after 3:30 who is not participating in a school-sanctioned activity may be placed in an after school program and the student's parent may be charged an appropriate fee for this service. (Note: Throughout this document the word "parent" refers to "parent or legal guardian.") Campus hours and approved activities are subject to change at the discretion of the Principal.

#### Daily Schedule – Elementary Division – Grades K-4

8:20 a.m.	First Warning Bell
8:25 a.m.	Second Warning Bell
8:30 a.m.	School day begins
2:50 p.m.	Afternoon Dismissal begins

Elementary class times, recess times, and lunch times will be determined by Elementary administration in consultation with the Principal.

#### Daily Schedule – Middle and High School Divisions – Grades 5-12

8:20 a.m.	First Warning Bell
8:25 a.m.	Second Warning Bell
8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Advisory (Homeroom)
8:47 a.m. – 9:36 a.m.	Period 1
9:40 a.m. – 10:29 a.m.	Period 2
10:29 a.m. – 10:39 a.m.	Break
10:39 a.m. – 11:28 a.m.	Period 3
11:32 a.m. – 12:21 p.m.	Period 4 (Middle School lunch)
12:25 p.m. – 1:14 p.m.	Period 5 (High School lunch)
1:18 p.m. – 2:07 p.m.	Period 6
2:11 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Period 7
3:00 p.m.	Afternoon Dismissal

Students are expected to be sitting in their homeroom when the 8:30 a.m. bell rings. Any student not seated in class, or arriving at school after the 8:30 a.m. bell, must go to the office, sign the tardy list, and obtain an Admit Slip. The four-minute break between classes is intended to accommodate restroom, water fountain and other needs. Students need to use this time effectively, be on time to class and minimize time out of class. The ten-minute break between Period 2 and Period 3 is intended to also allow students and teachers to accomplish additional tasks such as holding short conferences, eating a snack, making trips to lockers or to the office, etc.

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## Attendance

It is the responsibility of students to attend school every day.

The following rules relate to absences:

A. Excused Absences. Woods Charter School carefully follows North Carolina school law with regard to attendance and absences. The Principal or his designee (Division Directors) may excuse a student's absence for the following reasons if adequate evidence of the excuse is provided to the school:

- Illness or injury: When the absence results from illness or injury, which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
- Quarantine: When the student's isolation is ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health.
- Death in the immediate family: When the absence results from the death of a member of the immediate family of the student. The immediate family of a student includes, but is not limited to, grandparents, parents and siblings.
- Medical or Dental appointments: When absence is due to a student's medical or dental appointment. A written excuse from the physician's office must be presented upon the student's return to school.
- Court or Administrative Proceedings: When the student is party to, or is under subpoena as a witness, in the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal.
- Religious Observances: When a student, or the student's parents or custodians, adhere to a religion in which the tenets require or suggest the observance of a religious event, the parents must seek prior approval from the Division Director or Principal for such absence. The approval of such absences is within the discretion of the Division Director or Principal. Approval should be granted unless the religious observance or the cumulative effect of religious observances is of such duration as to interfere with the education of the student.
- Educational Opportunity: When the student misses school due to a valid educational opportunity and obtains the Director's or Principal's prior written approval. (Note: Family educational opportunity trips are generally not excused absences if taken during the first twenty (20) days of school or before/after scheduled school holidays.)

B. Notification and Excuse Notes. When a student is going to miss all or part of the school day, a parent is required to contact the advisor or homeroom teacher as soon as possible and not later than 8:30 a.m. on the date of absence. To be counted "Present," a student must be at school for a minimum of three (3) hours. For elementary students, the elementary homeroom teacher should be contacted. For middle and high school, the student's advisor should be contacted, copying the division director, by email to advise that the student will be out and request missed work. In

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addition, a written and signed (by the parent) note of explanation from the parent is required upon the student's return and should be given to the teacher/advisor. For an absence to be lawfully excused per North Carolina School Law, it must contain a valid excuse (see list above). In addition, hard copy excuses need to be provided to the school within three (3) days of the student's absence. An absence may NOT be excused if a note is not provided to the advisor within three (3) days following the student's return to school. The advisor will submit the note to school administration. Notes should be given to the advisor, NOT the receptionist or office personnel.

C. After the first twenty (20) days of school, family or educational trips may be deemed excused absences for students in good academic standing at the discretion of the Division Director or Principal under the following conditions:

- the Division Director receives one week's advance written notice;
- the absence does not extend a scheduled school holiday; and
- the Division Director, in consultation with the Principal, determines that the reason for the trip is legitimate under North Carolina School Law and determines that the student is in good academic standing.

D. In all cases of absence, students are expected to complete all missed work in a timely manner.

E. An unexcused or illegal absence is an absence based on any reason other than those specified in Section A above pursuant to North Carolina School Law. Such an absence cannot be excused even upon presentation of a written explanation of the reason for the absence. Failure to provide a written explanation (see section B above) may also result in an unexcused absence. Ordinarily, if students and parents agree that an absence is warranted, even if it is unexcused, there is no additional school penalty, e.g. detention. There are disciplinary penalties for students who choose to "skip school."

F. A student who misses any portion of a school day, except for reasons set forth as excused absences, will ordinarily not be allowed to participate that day in any school-sponsored activity.

G. A student with more than ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year may have grading consequences, including failing the year. A student with more than twenty (20) absences of any kind, including whole-day absences, tardy absences, and early dismissal absences (excused and unexcused combined) may result in a lower grade, including a failing grade, at the teacher's discretion. If a student receives a failing grade because of absences, the parents of the student are entitled to appeal that decision to the Principal, who shall have final discretion to pass or fail the student.

H. North Carolina Law requires that young people between the ages of 7 and 16 years attend school. Woods Charter School will diligently adhere to the North Carolina Compulsory School Attendance Law, including N.C.G.S. 115C-378. Under this law, the Principal will write letters to parents of

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students with three (3), six (6) and ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year, reminding them of the obligation to attend school. As required by law, a copy of the ten-unexcused-absence letter will also be sent to the Office of the District Attorney for referral and follow up.

**Tardiness Policy.** It is the responsibility of students to be on time for school and classes. The following rules relate to tardiness:

A. Students who arrive after 8:30 a.m., or return from lunch after the late bell rings, are required to report directly to the office. Lateness may be excused for reasons of illness, medical/dental appointment, emergencies, car problems en route to school, or school bus delay. Routine traffic delay, lost items, oversleeping, missed ride, etc. are not valid reasons for tardiness.

B. Classroom teachers will track students who are tardy to individual classes. Three (3) tardies under this section will be considered excessive, and will be reported to the division director and result in a lunch detention.

C. Three (3) unexcused tardies will result in one hour of detention. Tardy students will receive one additional hour of detention after the sixth (6th) and one additional hour of detention after the ninth (9th). Parents will be notified when detention is given. A twelfth (12th) unexcused tardy will result in a meeting with the student, parents, division director and/or principal to discuss the situation and agree on a suitable course of action. In addition, excessive unexcused tardies will result in 11th and 12th graders losing off-campus privileges for a period of up to one (1) month.

D. Students who are out of class with permission, but unnecessarily delay returning to class, will be considered tardy.

E. Tardiness in excess of twenty (20) minutes will constitute an unexcused absence for the class.

## Early Dismissal

For students in Grades K-10, a note signed by a parent stating the time and reason why the student needs to leave early must be presented to the school office on the day of the early departure. Prior to leaving the school building, the departing student's parent must sign the student out at the front office.

For students in Grades 11-12, the student must present a note signed by a parent to the school office at the time of signing out. The school may contact the parent to communicate that the student is being released early from school.

Students in Grade 10 or below must be accompanied off the school premises by a parent. If the student returns to school during the same day, he/she must present a written excuse to the office, sign back in, and receive an Admit Slip.

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## Makeup Work

Students are entitled to make up work from excused absences in order to avoid reductions in their grades. Students are responsible for securing and arranging to make up work directly with their teachers. Make-up work shall be assigned at the discretion and convenience of the teacher and may be specific material missed by the student or may be reinforcement or enrichment assignments.

## Emergency Closing, School Cancellation, Inclement Weather

During extremely bad weather or other special circumstances, it may become necessary to cancel school or close school early. Woods Charter School shall make an independent determination about school closings or delays. In making such decisions WCS may consider, but shall not be bound by, decisions of surrounding school districts (Alamance, Caswell, Chapel Hill, Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Orange, Randolph and Wake). When the decision is made to close school, parents will be notified through the following venues:

- Woods emergency contact system
- WRAL-TV/Fox 50/Channel 5
- Woods Charter School website

In every case, we assume that parents will make their own, independent decisions about safe travel during such times. When WCS is open, if it is unsafe for families to travel from their homes to school, they should notify the school to let administrators know that they've deemed road travel from their homes unsafe.

Parents and students must make necessary arrangements in case the school closes early. Plans must include person(s) who will be picking up the student at school. Students may not leave school with another student without written permission of the parent. After school care may not be available when school closes early.

## School Property

Students are expected to respect school property at all times. Damage to school property may result in a fee for damages and/or replacement. Malicious damage may also lead to disciplinary consequences.

## Parent Volunteering

Parents at Woods Charter School are requested to contribute at least twenty (20) hours per family per school year in volunteer time to the school. This is crucial for the school's success. The contribution of many Woods volunteers far exceeds this amount of time. Charter schools like Woods must pay for their own buildings, upkeep on the buildings, transportation, and other expenses for which traditional public schools are given additional public funds. Woods fills this funding gap through donations of time and money. Woods Charter School can attain its greatest success when all members of our community work together for the benefit of our school and our students.

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## Visitors to Campus/Students Leaving Campus

All visitors to the school, including parents, must enter and leave by the main front doors, sign in at the office upon arrival and receive a visitor's badge. Visitor's badge must be worn at all times during the visit. Parents should not visit classrooms during the school day unless specific arrangements for observation or volunteerism are planned and approved in advance. The Principal may, at his sole discretion, deny access to any school space by any visitor. Under no circumstances may visitors distract from academic work in progress or a teacher's planning time.

Woods is a closed campus. Unless specifically permitted by a teacher, Division Director, or the Principal, students may not leave school, nor have non-parent/ visitors at school during school hours, including lunch. With written permission from a parent, 11th and 12th grade students in good academic standing may be permitted to leave campus during lunch.

Woods welcomes pre-arranged visits by alumni. Pre-arrangements may be made with any school administrator. Former students who have not graduated from Woods may visit with prior approval of the appropriate Division Director or the Principal. Lunch time visits work best. Under no circumstances may visitors distract from academic work in progress.

Students are not permitted to venture off into any of the wooded areas on campus which surround the school at any time unless they are given specific permission by a faculty member and are under the supervision of a faculty member or school-approved adult supervisor. Exceptions to this rule may only be granted by the Principal or his designee. Students are reminded that they should never trespass onto neighboring properties.

## Fair Share Donations

Woods Charter School is committed to providing access to all of its programs to all students, regardless of ability to pay. At the same time, we let families know the amount of their "fair share" of certain expenses (e.g. bus transportation to and from school). Families are encouraged to contribute their "fair share" in order for Woods to continue to offer a top-quality program with appropriate materials and equipment. Questions and comments about "fair share" notifications should be directed to the Director of Special Services or the Principal. Please note that charter schools are currently allowed to charge fees comparable to those charged by local public school systems.

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## Section Two: Student Conduct Policies & Procedures

Learning occurs best when teachers and students are well prepared for classes and a spirit of educational cooperation arises.

### Code of Academic Conduct

The Code of Academic Conduct requires that students:

- Attend all classes daily, unless excused by the Division Director or Principal.
- Arrive on time to all classes with necessary materials, as required by the teacher.
- Follow teachers' directions during classes, including field trips and outside of classes on the school grounds.
- Complete all work assigned by teachers.
- Maintain the Woods homework diary, as required for the grade level.

The faculty and administration of Woods will strive to provide appropriate support and direction to any student who needs assistance meeting educational goals, including meeting the requirements of the Code of Academic Conduct. Woods Charter School strives to bring out the best in every student, including students who are having difficulties, while deterring any student from undermining the education of other students through actions which violate the Code of Academic Conduct.

### Dress Code

Woods Charter School strives to create an environment which allows our students to concentrate on academic and character education of the highest quality. While individuality is encouraged, the clothing and physical appearance of an individual must not disrupt or distract from the educational atmosphere of the school. Clothing and accessories should reflect the dignity and seriousness of our educational environment.

Woods Charter School has determined that within the context of our K-12 school, the following clothing is non-compliant:

- Clothing that exposes bare midribs or that contains sheer, skin-tone, or see-through materials (including fishnet);
- Clothing that exposes underwear;
- Halter tops, strapless tops, and spaghetti straps;
- Extremely tight, revealing, and/or low-cut clothing;

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- Loose-fitting, revealing, and/or baggy clothing
- Sunglasses, hats, and hoods inside the school building. (This prohibition shall not apply to any individual student when the article is necessary for medical or religious reasons.)
- Articles that include language or images which are profane, sexually suggestive, drug- or tobacco-oriented, and/or suggest or support violence
- Articles that demean any race, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, physical disability, or intellectual ability

Woods Charter School has determined that within the context of our K-12 school, the following clothing is in compliance:

- Tank top straps which are three fingers wide (the wearer's fingers) at the top of the shoulder
- Shorts, skirts and dresses which are mid-thigh length or longer
- Sunglasses & hats outside the school building

Athletic shoes are required for physical education classes and may be either worn to school or worn only for P.E. class. For purposes of this section, the Elementary Walking Program shall be considered a P.E. class. In some cases, the dress code for PE classes and after-school sports may not comply with the standards above at the discretion of PE teachers and coaches.

## Technology at School

Students are expected to read, understand, and sign the Woods Acceptable Use Form, created by the technology team, before using technology on the Woods campus. Questions about the Acceptable Use Form should be directed to the IT Director.

Bringing expensive items to school is discouraged. The School cannot be responsible for loss or theft of personal items. Personal items should never be left unattended outside of lockers. Locker combinations should not be shared with fellow students. Although almost all of our students are trustworthy and responsible, theft does occasionally occur at Woods.

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iPods, MP3 players and other personal electronic devices may be used at lunch, on the bus and with specific faculty approval on other occasions. Ear buds or other head phones may not be worn during classes or class changes. Use of these devices during class changes in school is prohibited. Personal music devices in our school should not contain music with lyrics which are profane or violent. Cell phones, pagers and text message devices may not be used during school hours. Teachers, Division Directors and the Principal have discretion to implement additional limitations on electronic devices. If any such device is used at an inappropriate time, or in an inappropriate way, it will be confiscated until a member of the Woods faculty or staff has reviewed this policy with the student's parent.

Students are expected to scrupulously adhere to all testing policies related to personal electronic devices and standardized tests (EOC, EOG, AP, SAT, PSAT, etc.). Students must assume that electronic devices are prohibited during standardized testing sessions unless specific permission is given to use them.

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## Elementary School, Child Development, and Discipline

A small, supportive K-12 school like Woods Charter School provides a unique opportunity for young people to develop good and consistent habits regarding behavior, work and character. Woods Charter School places special emphasis on this development in the elementary division and strives to nurture and promote the whole child as the student moves through developmental milestones during the elementary years.

To develop consistent behavior habits, Woods Charter School strives to ...

- provide positive reinforcement at every opportunity;
- create opportunities for young people to demonstrate positive behavior;
- develop and articulate appropriate elementary behavior expectations at each grade level; and
- foster a relationship with parents to support parenting decisions in line with Woods Charter School's policies;

To develop consistent work habits, Woods Charter School strives to ...

- set high expectations per grade level as to quality of work; and
- value effort and process, as well as end product.

To develop positive character, Woods Charter School strives to ...

- create a mutually respectful environment in every classroom;
- create opportunities for young people to show gratitude and appreciation;
- provide positive reinforcement for cooperative learning;
- build and reinforce conflict resolutions skills; and
- provide opportunities for leadership.

Although the goal of these policies is to alleviate the need for punitive discipline in the Elementary School, Woods Charter School is committed to providing a safe and appropriate educational environment for all students at all times. Elementary teachers, the Elementary Division Director and the Principal have discretion to apply disciplinary measures, as outlined below, when deemed appropriate to further that goal.

## Reasonable Force

The following provisions are governed by G.S. 115C-390.3 (as adopted in 2011).

- (a) School officials may physically restrain a student in accordance with G.S. 115C391.1.

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(b) School personnel may use reasonable force to control behavior or to remove a person from the scene in those situations when necessary for any of the following reasons:

- To correct students.
- To quell a disturbance threatening injury to others.
- To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person, or within the control, of a student.
- For self defense.
- For the protection of persons or property.
- To maintain order on educational property, in the classroom, or at a School-related activity on or off educational property.

(c) Notwithstanding any other law, School employees shall not be civilly liable for using reasonable force in conformity with the law.

## Disciplinary Code of Conduct

Woods Charter School functions as a partnership between students, school staff and parents. Students are expected to understand and comply with appropriate codes of conduct. In general, students are given greater responsibility and held to higher standards of accountability as they mature and rise through the grades in our school community. School staff, including teachers and administrators, are expected to model, teach and enforce appropriate codes of conduct. Parents are expected to work with students and school staff to promote understanding and compliance with appropriate codes of conduct and respect for school staff. All members of the Woods community should treat each other with respect and work together to create a safe environment that is conducive to learning and healthy development. School property and personal property must be respected. State and federal laws must be followed. Our Disciplinary Code of Conduct applies on school grounds at all times and at other locations during school-sponsored events.

Woods Charter School strives to avoid disciplinary problems by modeling and teaching appropriate behavior, by counseling students as they mature, and by offering challenging, inclusive, and engaging classroom activities. Teachers and staff will use their best judgment to handle each situation in the best interests of the student and the school as a whole. In the interest of consistency and predictability, Woods Charter School has established a framework of three categories of disciplinary code violations, as described below. Infractions and potential consequences listed are examples, and do not include all possible situations. For repeated violations, consequences will become increasingly stringent.

### A. CATEGORY I DISCIPLINARY CODE VIOLATIONS:

CATEGORY I violations are the least severe violations, including, but not limited to:

- Failure to comply with faculty or administration directives.

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- Using electronic devices (iPods, MP3's, pagers, cell phones, and other personal electronic devices) in violation of school policy, as outlined elsewhere in this document.
- Sharing of music or electronic files.
- School dress code violations. (\*see further details below)
- Public displays of affection beyond "a quick hug or a handshake."

Potential consequences of Category I violations include:

- Verbal warning from faculty at the time of the infraction and counseling to change the behavior.
- Confiscation of the electronic device. The device will only be returned to a parent along with a reminder of the school policy regarding electronic devices.
- Consultation with the Director, Principal and parents as necessary after repeated violations.

\*DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS invoke additional consequences as listed below:

Students who violate the dress code a first or second time will be given the opportunity to change into appropriate clothing. If the student cannot supply appropriate personal clothing, an outer garment will be loaned to the student for the duration of the school day. The garment must be worn fully tied/buttoned/zippered at all times until it is returned to the administration when the student leaves school.

In addition to taking the steps outlined above, any student found in violation of the dress code for the third time will be referred to his/her director. The director will schedule a parent conference to discuss the persistent problem, and discuss and agree to a solution. A third offense under this code may be considered a Category II violation.

## B. CATEGORY II DISCIPLINARY CODE VIOLATIONS:

The following are considered conduct violations which, while they do not cause direct physical harm to others, constitute a threat to the personal or educational rights of others, or a disruption of the educational process.

Examples of Category II violations include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate physical contact.
- Disruption of the classroom.
- Insubordination, including repeated Category I violations.
- Use of threatening language in a joking or off-hand manner.

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- Failure to follow school bus rules and procedures.
- Defacement of school property or the personal property of another student or member of our community.
- Emotional abuse of others, including teasing and bullying, whether verbally, in writing, or through a cell phone, computer, music or other electronic device.
- Use or distribution of profane or violent language or images, whether verbally, in print, or through a cell phone, computer, music, or other electronic device.
- Sexual, racial, or religious harassment, whether verbally, in print, or through a cell phone, computer, music, or other electronic device.
- Plagiarism or cheating.
- Truancy or skipping class.

Consequences of Category II violations include:

- Immediate referral to Division Director (or Principal).
- Notification of parents.
- Possible lunch detention or after-school detention.
- Possible short-term suspension from school consistent with Board policy, at the discretion of the Principal or Assistant Principal. Truancy will not result in a suspension of more than two days. Before the student is allowed to return to school, the Principal or Assistant Principal may require a Re-entry Meeting with the student and parents to review expectations of behavior.
- Possible long-term suspension in those situations when the Principal determines that aggravating circumstances have occurred.

## C. CATEGORY III DISCIPLINARY CODE VIOLATIONS:

CATEGORY III VIOLATIONS are the most severe and are of a nature so serious as to violate state or federal laws and/or cause danger or harm to individuals or to school or personal property.

Category III violations include, but are not limited to:

- Physical or sexual assault.
- Communication of serious threats.

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- Possession of a weapon, including any knife, any firearm, or any air or CO2 powered weapons, such as BB and paintball guns. This includes carrying such weapons in a vehicle parked on campus.
- Performance of any act leading to the endangerment of others, including tampering with any safety device on school property.
- Theft or willful destruction of property belonging to the school, a fellow student, or other member of our community. (Note: In addition to repair or replacement, consequences will generally include a five-day suspension.)
- Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products.
- Egregious violations of school bus rules and procedures which distract the bus driver and/or compromise school bus safety.

Consequences of Category III violations include:

- Immediate removal from the classroom or bus and referral to the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Notification of parents/s.
- Short-term suspension of up to ten (10) days, at the discretion of the Principal or Assistant Principal, and consistent with Board policy. (Note: Infractions involving illegal drugs will generally result in a ten-day suspension which may be lessened through participation in an approved drug counseling program.)
- Possible referral to law enforcement officials.
- Possible long-term suspension or expulsion, consistent with Board policy and state law, particularly in cases of premeditated physical or sexual assault, possession of a weapon on school grounds (including within vehicles parked on school grounds), or sale of illegal drugs.

PARENTS/S WILL BE NOTIFIED OF ALL CATEGORY II AND III VIOLATIONS AND MAY BE NOTIFIED OF CATEGORY I VIOLATIONS. Woods Charter School strives to promote appropriate behavior through cooperation and consultation between the school, the student and the parents/s. Consequences for misconduct are cumulative and each violation does not stand alone, but rather is considered in light of the nature and number of other violations. Woods Charter School is committed to providing a safe and appropriate educational environment for all students at all times.

Right to Hearing. Before the Principal imposes a long-term suspension, the student must be provided an opportunity for a hearing consistent with the procedures required by Board policy and G.S. 115C390.8.

Expungement of Records. Each student's official record shall also include notice of any suspensions for a period of more than ten (10) days or of any expulsion. The notice of suspension or expulsion shall be

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expunged from the record if the student graduates from high school or is not expelled or suspended again during the two-year period commencing on the date of the student's return to School after the expulsion or suspension.

Consideration is always given, and exceptions may be made, in imposing consequences on students in Grade 6 or below, as well as students with identified special needs, developmental delay, and behavioral IEPs.

## D. Off Campus Behavior

A student may also be disciplined for any personal conduct occurring outside of School property or after School hours, when the student's conduct otherwise violates WCS student conduct guidelines and the student's conduct has or is reasonably likely to have a direct and immediate impact on the orderly and efficient operation of the School or the safety of individuals in the School environment.

## Transportation and School Bus Rules

### DRIVING ON THE WOODS CAMPUS

In order to create a safe and efficient flow of traffic through our parking areas and in front of the school building, everyone who drives on the Woods campus is expected to adhere strictly to the following expectations. Faculty and volunteer safety monitors will be present during morning drop off and afternoon pickup. Drivers and passengers should obey directions from the safety monitors at all times.

The Woods campus includes a very compressed system of parking areas (front-of-school inner lot near the building, front-of-school outer lot near Woodland Grove Lane, side parking near elementary/middle school wing, side parking near soccer field, school bus parking) and travel lanes (blue lane for drop off and pick up, red lane for pass-through/fire lane). The following expectations apply at all times to assure safe and efficient flow of traffic.

1. All drivers are expected to drive defensively at all times on campus. Drivers should never talk on mobile phones while their vehicle is in motion on campus.
2. Drivers should STOP at all STOP signs. All pedestrians are expected to use the crosswalk in front of the building to cross the red and blue lanes.
3. Traffic flow through the parking lots in front of the building are one way at all times. Follow the arrows. There are, technically, two travel lanes through each parking lot. Although we rarely use all four lanes, they are available to alleviate standing traffic on Woodland Grove Lane and Andrews Store Road when necessary.
4. Never leave a vehicle parked and running without a legal driver in the driver's seat
5. Rules for the Blue (Drop Off/Pick Up) Lane

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- a. Drop off/Pick up efficiently without opening any doors on the driver's side of the vehicle. If it will take more than 45 seconds to drop off/pick up, then park in the parking lot and have students use the cross walk. Do not cause delay in the drop off/pick up lanes.
  - b. A driver should NEVER get out of the car when waiting in the blue lane.
  - c. A driver should ALWAYS move as far forward in the blue lane as possible. Specifically, don't stop right in front of the main entrance when there is space ahead of you to move forward (especially on rainy days).
  - d. A driver should ALWAYS proceed with caution at the crosswalk. When a safety monitor is present, ALWAYS obey the safety monitor's directions.
  - e. Passengers should enter and exit vehicles from the curb side ONLY and NEVER from the driver's side of the vehicle.
  - f. NEVER leave your vehicle parked in the blue lane AT ANY TIME.
  - g. ALWAYS proceed cautiously when moving from the blue lane to the red lane. If at all possible, do not move from the blue lane to the red lane.
  - h. The blue lane is exclusively reserved for pickup of elementary students between 2:45 pm and 3:00 pm. Those picking up middle or high school students who arrive prior to 3:00 should wait in the blue lane of the inner front-of-school parking lot.
6. Rules for the Red (Pass-Through/Fire) Lane
- a. A driver should ALWAYS stop before the cross walk and then proceed with caution. When a safety monitor is present, ALWAYS obey the safety monitor's directions.
  - b. NEVER leave your vehicle parked in the red lane AT ANY TIME.
  - c. NEVER pickup or drop-off anyone from your vehicle when it is in the red lane.
  - d. NEVER move from the red lane to the blue lane. If you need to drop off or pick up students, use the blue lane ONLY !

## STUDENT DRIVERS

A student may seek early dismissal to attend Driver Education off-campus by presenting a written request (signed by their parent/) to the office at least five (5) working days prior to the start date. The request may be granted if:

- The student is in good academic standing, defined as maintaining a "B" average, or higher, in the class to be missed; and
- The student has a record of good conduct and citizenship.

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The High School Director has discretion in determining if a student meets these qualifications and in determining an appropriate early dismissal time. The student bears the responsibility for consulting with the classroom teachers and completing all work missed in a timely manner.

A student driver must adhere to the following policies:

- Student drivers must obey all traffic laws and noise ordinances, including not speeding or making excessive noise by spinning wheels or playing loud music.
- If the driver is under the age of 18, all state laws addressing the number of underage students allowed per driver must be followed.
- Student drivers are not allowed to sit in their vehicles during the school day. Written permission from the Office must be obtained to enter their vehicles during the day to retrieve forgotten items.
- Student drivers must notify the administration immediately if they are involved in an accident on school grounds. This includes any minor damage to another vehicle.
- Student drivers will park in the designated areas assigned to students (near the soccer field).
- Parking spaces are limited and will be assigned on a need basis. Any student driver violating these policies may lose his privilege to drive to school.
- Students and their parents are specifically reminded to be vigilant regarding the contents of their vehicles when they are on school property. NC law prohibits and deals harshly with weapons and illegal substances in vehicles on school property.
- Passengers in vehicles should adhere to seat belt laws at all times on school property.
- Careless or reckless driving may result in suspension of campus driving privileges.

## SCHOOL BUS RULES AND PROCEDURES

The School Bus Rider Rules are rigorously enforced, and school administration does not hesitate to remove students from the bus if deemed necessary for the safety and welfare of the bus riders, their driver and the other drivers with whom the bus shares the road. Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right, and that privilege will be suspended for the reasons set forth below. PLEASE NOTE: These Rules are in addition to the Disciplinary Code of Conduct set forth elsewhere in this handbook. All violations of these Rules will be considered a minimum of Category II or Category III Infractions, and in addition to removal from the bus, potential consequences include suspension or expulsion from school. Failure to follow the instructions or directives of the School Bus Driver is a serious violation of these rules, and will result in an automatic suspension from the bus for a period of time to be determined by the Transportation Director in consultation with the Principal.

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Make sure the bus is completely stopped, the red lights are flashing, the STOP sign is deployed, and the door is open before approaching to enter the bus. We know you're enthusiastic to get to school, but make sure you always walk toward the bus instead of running.

Once you're on the bus, you're on the bus! Double check to be sure you have everything you need BEFORE you get on the bus, because you cannot return to school or your parent's car to retrieve forgotten things.

Keep your hands, feet and belongings to yourself! Nothing, including book bags, legs, musical instruments, etc. can be in the bus aisle while the bus is in transit.

Don't get up from your seat until the bus is completely stopped, and the door to the bus is open. Make sure to step at least three large steps away from the bus before heading toward your car, and always walk at least 10 feet in front of the bus if you need to cross. Walking behind the bus is unacceptable — make sure you always walk WAY around the front

Silence is golden! Don't talk at all when the bus is backing up or crossing railroad tracks. These are tricky situations and the driver needs to be as focused as possible.

No gum chewing, food or drink is allowed on the bus. If you break this rule, you're responsible for cleaning up anything found on your seat. It would be easier to just wait until you get home!

Respect the environment around you. Don't damage or vandalize the seat you're sitting in, or you'll be held responsible for it.

Don't be silly! Don't throw things around in the bus, out the windows, or stick any part of your body outside through any of the windows. Not only is it dangerous because it distracts your driver and could end up harming you and your peers, it can also harm those in the cars around you.

Respect those around you (including your driver). No loud voices, arguments, cursing, verbal harassment, touching, teasing or other disruptive behavior is permitted on the bus. Treat others like you want to be treated at all times. **BULLYING, HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION ARE ABSOLUTELY PROHIBITED ON THE BUS, AND WILL RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE REMOVAL FROM THE BUS OF THE PERPETRATOR** for a period up to the remainder of the school year.

The bus driver must devote all attention to the road, so please don't talk to them while the bus is in motion unless there is an immediate, serious problem that must be brought to their attention. If you absolutely need to talk to her/him, make sure you raise your hand first. Report any other safety or discipline issues to the driver upon your arrival at the destination.

Music is cool—as long as it's not distracting. Music may be listened to on headphones, which are permitted only if the music cannot be heard by other students and otherwise does not create a distraction or disturbance. Always keep it clean: Music must be age-appropriate and not contain references to matters that would be offensive or disturbing to other students.

Play games, but play safely. Games are permitted only so long as they do not result in arguments or other conflict. Should conflict occur, the games will be prohibited.

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You must sit in your assigned section, which is by grade level (division). Elementary sits in the first rows, MS in the middle rows, and HS in the back rows. You are not allowed to sit with students outside of your division (unless it's a sibling), and once you are seated on the bus you MAY NOT change seats – stay in your seat until you arrive at your destination.

The driver may assign you a seat out of your section if s/he believes it is necessary to preserve harmony on the bus; if a seat is assigned for disciplinary reasons, you must sit in it until the driver and transportation director agree that you have offered reasonable assurances that you will not misbehave again.

Buckle up for safety! Always wear a seatbelt, and don't use them for anything other than what they are meant for. Seatbelts are not toys. They're made to make sure you are safe.

## Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy & Procedures

### Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy

Woods Charter School is committed to providing an environment that is conducive to learning, free from improper and illegal discrimination and harassment, particularly that which is based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected classification.

Furthermore, WCS is committed to promoting the worth and dignity of all individuals, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, or disability. The faculty and staff will establish and maintain an atmosphere in which students can develop attitudes and skills for effective, cooperative living, including the following:

- Respect for individuals as noted above;
- Respect for cultural differences;
- Respect for economic, political, and social rights of others;
- Respect for the rights of others to seek and maintain their own identities.

Any student who believes she/he is the victim of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination should immediately inform a teacher or advisor whom they trust. Students may also directly inform their division director or the Principal.

Discrimination involves intentionally treating anyone in an unequal or disparate manner because of that person's inherent or natural personal characteristics when such treatment causes the victim to suffer adverse educational, employment, or other school-related consequences.

Harassment is any unwelcome offensive verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to significantly affect the conditions of one's employment or a student's learning. Harassment includes, but is not limited to the following: abusive jokes, insults, slurs, name-calling, threats, bullying or intimidation, unwelcome sexual advances, or the exchange of benefits for performance of sexual or other favors.

Bullying includes behaviors or communications, explicit and implicit, by one person or group toward another person or group that intimidate, threaten, or otherwise reasonably place the recipient(s) in fear of harm of person, property, or reputation. Bullying can occur in person, through traditional forms of communication, and electronically via such means as e-mail, text messaging and similar venues.

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Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are prohibited at the School and during school-related activities between students, employees, school agents, volunteers, visitors and any other person associated with or under the control of the School.

Procedures established by the School for reporting suspected discrimination, harassment or bullying shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct.

WCS prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. This policy, however, shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints.

The principal is authorized and expected to establish training and administrative procedures to help eliminate discrimination, harassment, and bullying and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all individuals.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Of the various types of harassment, sexual harassment is worthy of special considerations beyond those applicable under the School's general Harassment Policy. No employee or student shall engage in sexual harassment against any other student, employee, or another person in the school community.

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or sexually suggestive comments when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for student or employment decisions affecting such individual.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following: deliberate, unwelcome touching; suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises or threats; pressure for sexual activity; continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used toward, or in the presence of, an individual or to describe an individual; or the display of sexually suggestive objects, signals, or pictures.

A hostile environment exists if the conduct of a sexual nature is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or creates a hostile or abusive educational or work environment.

Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees or romantic or sexual relationships between school employees and students are always prohibited in all circumstances. School employees are prohibited from engaging in romantic or other inappropriate relationships with students and are required to report such relationships or reasonable suspicions thereof, to the Principal or other appropriate supervisory official. Procedures established by the School for reporting suspected sexual harassment shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct.

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## Procedures For Handling Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

1. Any student who believes s/he is the victim of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination should immediately inform a trusted teacher or advisor. Students may also directly inform their division director or the Principal. Students are also encouraged to inform their parents.
2. Any adult (faculty, parent volunteer, visitor, et al) who believes s/he is the victim of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination should immediately inform a member of the core administrative team (Principal, division director, EC director, Personnel Director, Volunteerism Director, Guidance Counselor).
3. When anyone reports harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination to a school employee, that employee shall notify the Principal, Assistant Principal, or Personnel Director as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
4. If the Principal is involved in the allegation, then the Assistant Principal or Personnel Director will immediately inform the School Board Chair who will chair the investigation, working in concert with the School Board. In all other cases, the Principal will be immediately informed and will chair the investigation or appoint a designee to chair the investigation.
5. The Investigation Chair will conduct an investigation of the matter. The Chair may convene a group, including some or all of the following: the student's advisor, other teachers or administrators, the school counselor, the personnel director, and the School Resource Officer, as appropriate. Interviews will be conducted as appropriate. The Investigation Chair will balance confidentiality and the need to gather facts at all times during the investigation.
6. The Investigation Chair will communicate, as appropriate, with the student's parents. A confidential report will be prepared and filed. Based upon the outcome of the investigation, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

## Section Three: Academics and Co-curricular Policies & Procedures

### Grading Policy

Woods Charter School strives to have clear expectations for students. The school year at Woods Charter School is divided into three trimesters. In Middle School and High School, each subject teacher must, after approval by the Division Director, post the following information to the school website. Postings for the Elementary School are encouraged, but not required.

- Class expectations
- Grading policy
- Homework policy
- Course outline (by trimester)

A. Elementary Grading: To provide a supportive and encouraging learning environment for the youngest students at WCS, the Elementary Division has adopted the following systems for assessing a student's academic development. Depending on the substance of the course work, a student will receive an indication of progress based on the B/D/M scale or the C/S/N scale, which are defined as follows:

The B/D/M Scale:

Beginning – this describes the level expected when a new concept is introduced.

Developing – the student sometimes completes the concept correctly.

Mastering – the student is able to complete correctly 80% of the time.

The C/S/N Scale:

Commendable – consistently is above teacher expectations.

Satisfactory – meets teacher expectations.

Needs improvement – below teacher expectations.

In addition, to recognize the level of effort expended by elementary students, a scale of 1 – 5 is utilized as follows:

5 – Excellent

4 – Very good

3 – Satisfactory

2 – Weak

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1 – Needs improvement

B. Middle and High School Grading: The Middle and High Schools have adopted a traditional grading scheme based on letter grades of A, B, C, D and F. The correspondence between percent scored and letter grades are as follows:

A+ = 97 – 100% A = 93 – 96% A- = 90 – 92%

B+ = 87 – 89% B = 83 – 86% B- = 80 – 82%

C+ = 77 – 79% C = 73 – 76% C- = 70 – 72%

D+ = 67 – 69% D = 63 – 66% D- = 60 - 62%

F = 59 or lower

Some middle school classes use the following system:

The Com/S/N Scale:

Commendable – consistently is above teacher expectations.

Satisfactory – meets teacher expectations.

Needs improvement – below teacher expectations.

For purposes of achieving honor roll distinction, grades of Com or S must be achieved in these classes.

In addition, to recognize the level of effort expended by students, a scale of 1 – 5 is utilized as follows:

5 – Excellent

4 – Very good

3 – Satisfactory

2 – Weak

1 – Needs improvement

All courses taken by students must fit within the requirements or electives in the NC Standard Course of Study and the NCWISE coding system for transcripts. Honors courses will be graded on a 5.0 scale. AP courses on a 6.0 scale. For the 6.0 AP scale to be used, the student must, in fact, take the AP test. If the student chooses to not take the AP test, the scale reverts to honors-level 5.0.

Grading Disputes. Questions or concerns regarding grades must be addressed promptly with the teacher when grade reports are issued. Grades will become permanent four (4) weeks after the end of each

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grading period. Incompletes must be resolved as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the next marking period.

## **Class Schedule Changes**

There will be no schedule changes approved after the first twenty (20) days of school. Schedule changes must be in writing and should have a parent's approval in order for a student to drop or add a class.

## **Academic Probation, Promotion Policy and Failing Grades**

According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, a student "at risk" is a young person who, for whatever reason, may experience school failure, or other unwanted outcomes, unless interventions occur to reduce the risk factors.

For elementary students, teachers systematically assess students to ensure that each student is working at grade level. If concerned, teachers will follow these steps:

- Inform the parents.
- Describe interventions that are presently being used in class.
- Suggest interventions for parents to do at home.
- Assess progress.
- If significant progress is not made, the teacher will write a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) that lists interventions previously used, as well as new interventions.
- Teachers and parents continue to assess progress.
- If further action is needed, the teacher will consult with the Exceptional Children Department, to see if further intervention is needed.

A student is identified as "at risk" at the middle school or high school level, if the student fails two courses in one marking period, or one course over two marking periods, or is otherwise identified as at risk for retention based on teacher observations. Under such circumstances, the middle or high school student will become subject to "Academic Probation." A team consisting of the division director, parent/s, subject teachers and student will be assembled to design and implement academic support with clearly defined goals for the student. If, after one or more marking period, improvement has not been achieved, the situation will be reviewed by the Principal.

## **Elementary School Promotion**

Students in the elementary grades (K-4) will be promoted or retained on an individual basis based on a consideration of the following criteria: social readiness, level of parental support, making satisfactory progress in both language arts and math, and, as appropriate, achieving a III or better on the End of Grade Examinations (including retests). When a child is being considered for retention, the final decision

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is made, not only based on the above criteria, but also through the collaboration of teachers, administration and the EC department. The final determination of whether or not to retain a student rests with the Principal.

## **Middle School Promotion**

Before receiving a recommendation for promotion, students in middle school (grades 5 – 8) must pass four subjects, two of which must be language arts and math. Additionally, students in Grades 5 and 8 must score a Level III or above on their Math and Reading End of Grade Examinations (including retests) and all End of Course exams in order to be promoted. The final determination of whether or not to retain a student rests with the Principal.

Students are expected to earn at least a B in middle school Integrated Mathematics I/Algebra I, French I, and/or Spanish I in order to move into high school geometry, French II, and/or Spanish II respectively.

## **High School Promotion**

To be promoted from grade 9 to grade 10, a student must have earned at least five (5) units of credit, including English 1 and Integrated Mathematics I/Algebra 1.

To be promoted from grade 10 to grade 11, a student must have earned at least eleven (11) units of credit, including English II and Integrated Mathematics II/Geometry.

To be promoted from grade 11 to grade 12, a student must have earned at least seventeen (17) units of credit, including English III and Integrated Mathematics III/Algebra II.

Students who fail a class may stay on the same academic track if they complete and pass an equivalent summer school course. Official transcripts must be obtained by the school to verify the passing grade and to be entered into the NCWISE recording system. It is solely the parents' responsibility to secure summer school for their child. However, recommendations for accredited online course providers and information on how to contact local public high school districts that offer summer classes can be obtained from the High School administration. Students who fail courses at Woods may be required to enroll in summer courses at Woods if such courses are being offered. Summer school courses will normally involve online course work along with a faculty coach and strict attendance requirements. Consult the High School Director or Guidance Counselor for additional details.

## **Final Examinations**

In High School, mid-year exams are given before winter break and final exams are given at the end of the third trimester. Some high school NC Standard Course of Study courses have a required North Carolina End of Course (EOC) exam. In recent years, specific EOC exams have changed from year to year. EOC exams, when required, count as 15% of the final grade for the course.

All AP exams are external exams and do not figure into the grading that goes onto the student transcripts for their normal year-long courses. Students receive separate transcripts, or notices, for these exams and they can usually be indicated on their transcripts in a separate place, apart from their course grades.

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## Return of School Property

Parents must reimburse Woods for any property lost or damaged by their student, including damage done to the school's physical plant and including textbooks. Parents will be subject to the published list price of the book, plus 15% for the cost of shipping. Failure to reimburse the school may result in the withholding of the student's records until compensation has been received.

## Graduation Requirements

Since Woods is a college preparatory school, the only course of study offered are those courses that meet or exceed the minimum requirements for the UNC system. A high school student earns one (1) unit of credit for each class passed and twenty-two (22) units are required for graduation, as outlined below. Exceptions to these requirements may be allowed for unique circumstances, such as a 12th grade student who has not attended Woods for all four (4) high school years. The Principal will review and approve or disapprove requests for any such exceptions, in consultation with the High School Director.

Woods Charter School's Graduation Requirements are as follows:

- English I, II, III, IV – 4 credits
- Mathematics: Algebra I or Integrated Mathematics I, Geometry or Integrated Mathematics II, Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics III, and a higher level math course with Algebra II/ Integrated Mathematics III as prerequisite – 4 credits
- Science: A physical science course, Biology, Earth/Environmental Science – 3 credits
- Social Studies: Civics, US History, and World History – 3 or 4 credits (as mandated by the state of NC)
- Language: 3 years in the same language (normally taken in high school) – 3 credits
- Health and Physical Education – 1 credit
- Electives and Other Requirements – 4 credits
- A minimum of 50 hours of pre-approved community service.

For transfer students, Woods requires a minimum of three (3) credits to be earned while attending Woods.

As testing requirements change, Woods' policy will be amended to reflect changes that the state of North Carolina mandates for all public schools.

## High School Curriculum

Our mission statement and charter establish Woods as a college preparatory school. We offer no "vocational" courses. Challenging academic courses will be taught to all high school students. Several courses may be taken as Honors courses. Prior approval by the administration is necessary in order for

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students to take these courses. The parent and student sign a student-teacher contract when enrolling in an Honors or Advanced Placement class. No student is allowed to drop an Honors class after the first twenty (20) days of school. Honors classes carry a higher grade point and can increase a student's overall GPA.

## Transcripts

A graduating senior is entitled to have transcripts sent without cost to post high school educational institutions of his/her choice. A student who has graduated, transferred, withdrawn, or left school for any other reason, and has not previously received a transcript, shall be entitled to one transcript without cost. Additional transcripts will be provided upon request for a fee of \$3.00 each. No fee will be charged for a transcript which is required as part of a student application for scholarship or student loan.

## Co-curricular Eligibility Policy

This policy applies to any school-sponsored activity which occurs outside the regular school day (8:30 am – 3:00 pm) and requires a student to spend more than three(3) hours per week on the activity. Such **major co-curricular activities** include, but are not limited to, the following: afterschool sports, yearbook, newspaper, theatrical performances, etc. Please note that , in the case of NCHSAA sports, additional standards may apply. Student athletes are held to either the WCS standard or the NCHSAA standard, whichever is more demanding, in every instance.

### Section 1: Academic Eligibility Standards.

In accordance with the mission of Woods Charter School, all students are expected to meet the following academic standards in order to participate in major co-curricular activities.

#### Fall Trimester Activities

For the preceding school year, the student must have achieved a weighted GPA of at least 2.0. The student must not have received an F as a final grade in any course. (NCHSAA: During spring trimester the GPA must be at least 2.0 and the student must pass five (5) classes.)

#### Winter and Spring Trimester Activities

During the current school year, the student must have achieved a weighted GPA of at least 2.0. The student must not have received an F as a trimester grade in any course during the most recent trimester (fall trimester for winter sports/activities; winter trimester for spring sports/activities).

### Section 2: Attendance Eligibility Standards.

A student must have attended school 85% of the days in the trimester immediately preceding the start of the activity.

### Section 3: Behavior Eligibility Standards.

A student must not have been suspended or subject to multiple detentions during the trimester immediately preceding the start of the activity.

### Section 4: Maintaining Standards.

The student's standards for academic performance, attendance, and behavior, for the duration of the activity, must not fall below the levels listed above. If progress reports or teacher feedback suggest that

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performance is falling below acceptable levels, the situation will be promptly reviewed by the appropriate division director who will determine whether a student's performance is acceptable for continued involvement in the activity. (NCHSAA: The student must be enrolled in at least five (5) classes while playing sports.)

Students who do not meet eligibility requirements, at the discretion of the coach or advisor, may assist minimally in the activity, so long as that participation does not exceed three (3) hours per week and does not involve playing in games or competing in interscholastic events. Students who are not eligible to participate MAY NOT compete on behalf of Woods Charter School or represent the school in any way. (NCHSAA standards may not permit any involvement.)

### **Section 5: Waiver of Eligibility Requirements.**

If a student does not meet one or more of the requirements above and believes that there may be extenuating circumstances which might reasonably lead to a waiver of one or more requirements, they should petition the appropriate division director in writing, stating their circumstances and requesting the waiver. Petitions will be reviewed by the division director who may, at his discretion, convene a faculty advisory group to consider the petition. The division director will report the final decision to the student. A student who wishes to appeal this decision to the principal may do so, within one week of the division director's decision. (Be reminded that NCHSAA guidelines must be followed in every instance.)

## Section Four: Athletic Policies & Procedures

### The Sports Program

The purpose of the sports program at Woods Charter School is to allow our Middle School and High School student-athletes the opportunity to participate on school athletic teams to broaden their experience at Woods Charter School. Athletic participation is a privilege, not a right. With this right comes responsibilities: academic responsibilities, attendance responsibilities and behavioral responsibilities.

The Athletic Division of Woods Charter School is committed to serving students in a manner that promotes technical development, tactical understanding, and interpersonal skills in a character-based environment that focuses on growth of the student athlete while maintaining rigorous academic requirements and encouraging leadership opportunities. In addition to the academic expectations, the health and safety of student athletes is of paramount concern to the Athletic Division.

This Handbook section sets forth the expected standards for student athletes in these areas. Athletic participation is subject to these guidelines and regulations.

### Eligibility Standard

To be eligible to participate in a sport, the student athlete must meet the Co-curricular Eligibility Policy standards (described elsewhere in this handbook).

### Insurance Standard

Students who wish to participate in athletics must have health insurance coverage or be willing to sign a liability waiver releasing Woods Charter School from liability for any sports-related injuries incurred while participating in the athletic program. The student's insurance is the first-dollar insurance in all circumstances.

### Physical Examination Standard

Students who wish to participate in athletics must have an updated physical on file in the office of the Athletic Director prior to any participation. The physical form is available on the school website under athletic forms. The form must be completed by both a parent and a medical professional (MD, PA or CNP). Physicals are considered updated if they were completed within the past 365 days. Physicals may expire mid-season causing a student to become ineligible. It is the student's responsibility to keep his/her physical updated.

### Fair Share for Athletics

A contribution of \$50 per student per sport will be requested by each student-athlete with a maximum contribution of \$150 per household per academic year. This fee pays only a portion of sports expenditures such as practice/game field rentals, uniforms and referee costs. Additional monetary support for the athletic programs may be obtained from game admission fees, concessions sales, and

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occasional school-wide fundraising events. The Woods Charter Booster Club also supports athletics through fundraising; student-athletes and their families are encouraged to become an active part of this organization. No student will be denied the opportunity to participate on an athletic team for inability to make this contribution.

## Forms

Students are responsible for completing the Forms Package which will be available before the start of each sport season including, but not limited to, the behavior pledges, medical forms, registration forms, and travel permission.

## Practices

Participation on an athletic team requires a student-athlete to be at every practice, game, or team function, barring illness or academic necessity. Failure to adequately participate in practice sessions may result in disciplinary action by the team coach which may include that the student athlete will make up all physical conditioning conducted during the missed practice. The student athlete should also expect decreased playing time or not being allowed to dress for a game, match, or meet.

*Weekend/Holiday Practices:* All practices are held on school days if possible; however, it occasionally becomes necessary for a team to train or play on a non-school day. Student athletes and their families should be aware of these situations and plan other activities accordingly. Coaches should communicate practice schedules as early as possible to minimize conflicts.

*Vacation Practices:* Practices held over vacations should be limited. These sessions should be scheduled in advance and may take into consideration the established plans of a majority of team members.

## Transportation

Parent carpools and student drivers are the main modes of transportation for student athletes to and from athletic events. Athletic events include practices, games, matches, meets, and other team functions. If student transportation is by private vehicle, the vehicle owner's liability coverage is applicable to any vehicular accident. Parent, adult and student drivers should be aware that they may be held responsible for injuries to any individuals they are transporting and must certify that any private vehicle used is covered by at least the North Carolina state required insurance coverage. All student athletes who travel with the team to any athletic event must return to the school with the team. The only exception to this policy is when the coach is made aware that the student athlete will ride home with a parent/. Student athletes are not to ride home from athletic events with any person other than a pre-arranged . Student athletes who ignore this policy may jeopardize their eligibility.

## Scheduling

It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director to schedule all games, matches, and meets. Various coaches may be asked to assist with this process. The Director is also responsible for scheduling venues, officials, event workers, and transportation. League commitments must be honored above all else. In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen cancellations, athletic events will be rescheduled by the Athletic Director in consultation with the Principal. Communication will be made with the sport's head

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coach as soon as the decision is made. Information regarding cancellations will be communicated via available Woods communication systems, including phone trees and the website.

## Release from Class

Athletic events should be scheduled to minimize the student-athlete's absence from the classroom. The Athletic Director, in consultation with the Principal, shall determine when players may be excused early for athletic events and such decisions shall be made after consideration of the amount of class time that will be missed and the overall academic and classroom distraction that may be incurred. In the event of an early dismissal, it is the student-athlete's responsibility to determine what academic work will be missing and to ensure its timely completion in consultation with the academic teacher.

## Playing Time

Head coaches are responsible for making all decision regarding playing time. The following factors (in no particular order) are considerations for affecting playing time: effort, practice attendance, ability, team chemistry, attitude or any other factor established by the coach. Players and parents concerned about playing time should discuss with the coach what can be done to earn more playing time. Such discussions should be conducted in a private setting and in a courteous manner. Players and parents should understand that coaches will not discuss the playing time of others and cannot promise additional playing time. The primary concern of the coach in terms of playing time is to put the best possible team on the field and put the team in the best possible position for success while encouraging character development. Players and parents should understand that this is not a recreational league where everyone gets to participate in every game. Playing time must be earned.

## Good Sportsmanship

Each student athlete, coach and parent/ shall sign a Pledge affirming the principles of good sportsmanship which include integrity, fairness and respect. Engaging in behavior contrary to these principles may result in disciplinary action by the team coach or the Athletic Director which may include removal from the team for a number of games (or the season), decreased playing time, or not being allowed to dress for a game, match, or meet.

## Failure to Finish a Season

A student-athlete who chooses not to complete a season after the athlete has been selected for a team may not participate on another team until that season is completed. If the incident occurs a second time with the same student-athlete, the athlete will be prohibited from trying out for a team for one academic year.

## Use of School Equipment

Team gear is issued to a student-athlete just like textbooks. Failure to return the gear in proper order will result in the student being fined the cost of replacement gear. Team gear may only be used for team functions. Anyone found using team gear for a non-team function may face disciplinary action as severe as removal from the team.

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## Recognition Awards

To honor the commitment of time and effort that student athletes make to the sports teams, an annual athletic awards ceremony will be held in the spring. All student athletes and their families are invited to attend. The Athletic Director, in consultation with the coaches and the Principal, will determine the awards to be given during the annual awards banquet and they will include, but are not be limited to, the following:

- *Participation Award:* Each student athletes will be recognized for their participation on sports teams during the school year. Athletes who do not meet the minimum standard to letter will be awarded a participation certificate.
- *Scholar Athlete Award:* Academics are a key focus for the Athletic Division at Woods Charter School. Those student athletes able to participate in athletics while excelling in the classroom should be honored. The minimum grade point average for this honor is a weighted 3.5 GPA. Those student athletes able to maintain this level of academic performance while participating in athletics through two trimesters of the year will be eligible for this honor.
- *Team GPA Award:* This award is given to the team with the highest grade point average through the first two trimesters. All team members' grades will be included in this calculation. The award is a rotating award with each new team's GPA and the year added to the award. The award is kept at the school.

## Lettering

It is an honor to be a letterman in a sport. Certain participating and performance requirements are established for each sport by the Athletic Director and the head coach and will be communicated to the team at the start of the season. Lettering criteria may include, but are not limited to the following: participation in team practices, participation in matches or games, exhibiting good sportsmanship, exhibiting character, and maintaining academic eligibility throughout the season. Head coaches may withhold the honor of lettering from any student athlete who has been a discipline problem or has not upheld a team's character pledge.