

NORTHWEST SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Home of the Phoenix

Book of Expectations

2026–2027 School Year

A Guide for Students & Families

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Northwest School of the Arts

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A Welcome to Our Families

Dear Northwest School of the Arts Families,

Welcome to the Northwest School of the Arts family. Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning for another year, we are honored that you have chosen to make Northwest School of the Arts your child's school community.

This Book of Expectations is more than a list of rules. It is a shared agreement between school and home about the kind of community we are building together—one that is safe, respectful, joyful, and committed to excellence in every classroom, hallway, and rehearsal space. When families and the school speak with one voice, our students thrive.

Please read this guide together with your child. Talk through the expectations, ask questions, and reach out to us whenever something is unclear. Our policies exist for one reason: to protect the learning, safety, and dignity of every student who walks through our doors. Partnership between home and school is the single most powerful predictor of a child's success, and we take that partnership seriously.

Thank you for trusting us with your children. We look forward to a remarkable year together.

In partnership,

Derrick Lockett Sr., M.Ed.
Northwest School of the Arts

The Northwest School of the Arts Creed

Each day at Northwest School of the Arts begins with a shared commitment. Our Creed guides how we speak to and treat one another, and we ask families to reinforce these words at home as well.

The Northwest School of the Arts Creed

When I want to speak, let me think first.

Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?

If not, let it be unsaid.

When speaking of others this day, I desire to do so with a spirit of kindness.

As a Family Member of Northwest School of the Arts

When your child enrolls at Northwest School of the Arts, they take on a meaningful responsibility. We teach our students that their words and actions reflect not only on themselves, but on everyone who loves and supports them.

Every student at Northwest School of the Arts represents three things:

1. Themselves—their own character, choices, and reputation.
2. Their family—the people who are raising and supporting them.
3. The Northwest School of the Arts Community—the students, staff, and families who share this school.

We call every student to be the very best version of themselves, and we will push them—lovingly and relentlessly—above and beyond that expectation every single day.

We expect our students to carry the character of a Northwest School of the Arts Phoenix 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. This includes during the school year and on vacation; in public; at dances and parties; on social media; and anywhere else they go. Character is not something we turn on at 8:00 AM and off at 3:30 PM.

Why this matters for parents

Student conduct outside of school—particularly online—can affect the school community and may be addressed by the school when it disrupts learning or threatens the safety of others.

Talking with your child about their digital footprint and public behavior is one of the most valuable things you can do this year. Our staff is always glad to partner with you on these conversations.

You are a member of the Northwest School of the Arts family, and we care deeply about who you are and what you do.

Our Core Beliefs

Everything in this handbook flows from a set of beliefs that shape life at Northwest School of the Arts. These are the commitments our staff make to your child:

- Every student deserves a safe, secure, and engaging learning environment.
 - Every student is unique and deserves to be treated as an individual.
 - Diversity is valued, and our classrooms are safe, respectful spaces for all cultures and voices.
 - We foster positive relationships among students, staff, and families.
 - Open communication between school and home is essential.
 - High expectations promote motivation, success, and self-worth.
 - Education is a tool for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.
 - As Northwest School of the Arts representatives, our behavior must reflect excellence in all areas—school, home, community, and online.
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Community Expectations

At Northwest School of the Arts, we respect each person's right to express themselves—so long as that expression does not infringe on the rights, safety, or learning of anyone else. To protect our community, the following behaviors are not tolerated at any time:

- Disruptions to learning
- Disrespectful or hateful speech
- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Physical, verbal, or emotional abuse
- Inappropriate displays of affection
- Academic or behavioral negligence
- Inappropriate language
- Excessive absences or tardiness
- Hostile behavior or a persistent lack of effort

A note to families

When a concern arises, our goal is always to teach and restore—not simply to punish. Depending on the situation, our response may include a conversation, a restorative meeting, family contact, or formal discipline.

We will communicate with you early and often. If you ever have a question about how an expectation applies to your child, please contact the main office.

Vape-, Drug-, and Substance-Free Campus

The health, safety, and clear-mindedness of every student is one of our highest responsibilities. Northwest School of the Arts maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding vaping, tobacco, marijuana, and all illegal or controlled substances. These rules apply on school grounds, at all school-sponsored events, and on school transportation.

Vaping (Zero Tolerance)

“Vapes of any kind” includes, but is not limited to, all of the following devices, components, and substances:

- E-cigarettes and any electronic cigarette device
- Vape pens, vape pods, and pod-based systems
- Disposable vapes (including Puff Bar–style and all similar single-use devices)
- Refillable vapes, vape mods, tanks, and box devices
- Nicotine vapes and any nicotine-containing e-liquid, e-juice, or salt
- THC, CBD, cannabis, or marijuana vape cartridges, pens, oils, or concentrates
- Hookah pens, e-hookahs, and vaporizer pens of any type
- Any related components or supplies, including pods, cartridges, coils, atomizers, batteries, chargers, and e-liquids
- Any device used or intended to be used to vaporize or inhale any substance

Consequence — Zero Tolerance

Any vape device or vaping component (as described above) found in a student’s possession, OR any student discovered vaping, will result in that student no longer being enrolled as a student at Northwest School of the Arts.

This applies on school grounds, at school events, and on school transportation.

Marijuana & Substance Odor

Coming to school under the influence of marijuana—or carrying its odor—disrupts learning and affects the health, comfort, and wellbeing of every student in the classroom.

- Any student who arrives at school smelling of marijuana will be sent home.

An important request to parents and guardians

Please ensure that your student does not arrive at school smelling of marijuana. Secondhand exposure and the lingering odor affect the wellbeing of the other students in their class and disrupt the learning environment.

We ask for your partnership in sending your child to school clear-headed, ready to learn, and free of any substance or its odor. If your family would benefit from support or resources, please reach out to the main office in confidence.

Dress Code

Students may express themselves freely through what they wear—within a framework of professionalism, modesty, and safety. Our dress code is designed to keep students safe, minimize distractions from learning, and prepare young people for the expectations of public and professional life.

Please use the guide below when shopping and when helping your child get ready in the morning. A few minutes of planning at home prevents missed instruction time during the school day.

At-a-Glance: Allowed vs. Not Allowed

Allowed	Not Allowed
• All colors, materials, and patterns (except bandana print) • Head coverings worn for religious purposes • Sweatshirts, sweaters, light jackets, and denim • Clothing that fully covers the chest, stomach, and buttocks • Bottoms that are knee-length or longer • Closed, hard-soled shoes with a fixed back (see Footwear)	• Pajamas, crop tops, and tank tops • Ripped, torn, or shredded clothing • Hats or hoods worn indoors • Long coats worn inside the building • Face coverings (medical masks are permitted) • Items with hate speech, drug, gang, or sexual content • Crocs, slides, flip flops, and any backless or open shoes (see Footwear) • Any disruptive or unsafe attire

Footwear (Please Read Carefully)

Safe, supportive footwear is required every day. Students move constantly throughout our building—climbing stairs, participating in physical education and movement classes, walking to and from buses, and taking part in arts activities such as dance, theater, and visual art. Open or backless shoes create a real and frequent risk of trips, falls, stubbed toes, and injuries.

For these safety reasons, the following footwear rules are in effect for all students:

Required Footwear

- **Closed-toe, hard-soled shoes with a fixed, enclosed back** (for example, sneakers, athletic shoes, loafers, or dress shoes that fully enclose the foot).
- The shoe must securely stay on the foot during walking, stairs, and physical activity.

NOT Permitted

Students are not permitted to wear Crocs, or any shoe that does not have a back or is not fully enclosed. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Crocs of any style (including those worn in “sport mode” or with the heel strap)
- Nike slides and all other brands of athletic or slip-on slides

- Ugg slides and any backless Ugg or slipper-style footwear
- Flip flops and thong sandals
- Open-back clogs, mules, and slip-on shoes without a fixed back
- Open-toe sandals and any sandal without a secured back strap
- Slippers or any soft-soled house shoes

Quick rule for families

If a shoe does not fully enclose the foot AND have a solid back that keeps it firmly on the foot, it is not allowed at school.

A heel strap alone (as on Crocs in sport mode) does NOT meet this requirement. The shoe must have a true enclosed back.

When in doubt, send your child in sneakers. Sneakers are always a safe choice.

Tops, Bottoms & Coverage

Clothing should fully cover the chest, stomach, and buttocks at all times, including when a student is seated, bending, or reaching. Bottoms (shorts, skirts, and dresses) must be knee-length or longer. Pajamas, crop tops, tank tops, and ripped or shredded clothing are not permitted.

Head Coverings & Outerwear

Head coverings worn for religious purposes are always welcome and permitted. Hats and hoods may not be worn indoors. Long coats are to be stored and not worn inside the building during the school day. Face coverings are not permitted, with the exception of medical masks.

Prohibited Designs & Messages

Clothing and accessories may not display hate speech or content related to drugs, gangs, violence, or sexual themes. Bandana print is not permitted. Any attire deemed disruptive or unsafe by school staff is not allowed.

How the Dress Code Is Enforced

- Dress code is checked daily during homeroom.
- If a student arrives out of dress code, they will be sent home, or a parent or guardian must bring appropriate school attire to the building.
- Repeated dress code violations will result in suspension.

Family partnership on dress code

Please review your child's outfit—especially their shoes—before they leave for school each morning.

If your family needs support obtaining appropriate footwear or clothing, please reach out to the main office in confidence. We want every student dressed safely and ready to learn, and we are glad to help connect families with resources.

School Hours & Attendance

Consistent attendance and punctuality are essential to your child's success. Instruction begins promptly, and students who arrive late miss important learning and community-building time at the start of the day.

Daily Schedule

- School Hours: 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM
- Breakfast is served from 7:30 AM – 7:55 AM only.
- Students must be in their seats by 8:05 AM. Students who are not seated by 8:05 AM are marked tardy.
- All early dismissals must be arranged through the main office and require photo ID verification of the adult picking up the student.

Helping your child arrive ready

Plan to have your child in the building no later than 7:55 AM so they can eat breakfast and settle in before instruction begins.

Repeated tardiness affects learning and may require a meeting with school staff. If transportation or scheduling is a challenge, please contact us so we can problem-solve together.

Not Permitted During the School Day

- Leaving campus for food
- Food deliveries to students or staff
- Glass containers or open containers
- Eating in classrooms (water bottles are permitted)
- Selling food, unless it is part of the school's entrepreneurship program
- Self-carrying medication (all medication is managed through the office)

Medication reminder for parents

For the safety of all students, children may not carry their own medication. Please bring any required medication to the main office along with the proper paperwork so our staff can store and administer it appropriately.

Birthday Celebrations

We love celebrating our students. To keep celebrations safe and equitable, the following guidelines apply:

- Store-bought treats are allowed and must be dropped off by 12:00 PM. Homemade treats cannot be accepted, for allergy and safety reasons.
- Decorations and gifts are not permitted at school.
- A maximum of 2 adult visitors may attend a celebration.

Before you plan

Please check with your child's teacher in advance regarding classroom allergies and the best time for a celebration. A quick note home or message to the office helps us keep every child safe.

Our Attendance Plan

At Northwest School of the Arts, we believe that every day matters. Attendance is the foundation of student success—students cannot learn, grow, or build relationships when they are not in the building. Our Attendance Plan is built on one simple belief: families are partners, not adversaries. When a child struggles to get to school, we respond with community, communication, and compassion—not punishment alone. We meet barriers with support, and we work alongside families to remove them.

Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

Under Ohio law, the following are generally recognized as excused absences when properly documented:

- Personal illness or medical/dental appointments
- Illness or death in the immediate family
- Religious observance
- Court orders or required legal appearances
- Other absences approved in advance by school administration

Any absence that does not fall into an approved category, or for which documentation is not provided, is recorded as unexcused. Please send a note, doctor's documentation, or other verification to the main office promptly so absences can be excused correctly.

Key Attendance Thresholds Families Should Know

Ohio sets specific definitions that families should understand. We share these openly so there are no surprises:

- **Chronic Absenteeism:** Missing 10% or more of the 180-day school year—about 18 or more days—whether the days are excused or unexcused.
- **Habitual Truancy (ORC § 3321.19):** 30 or more consecutive unexcused hours (about 5 days), OR 42 or more unexcused hours in one month (about 7 days), OR 72 or more unexcused hours in one school year (about 12 days).

What these numbers mean for your family

Even excused absences add up. A student can be chronically absent without ever being truant—which is why we begin reaching out early, long before any legal threshold is reached.

Our goal is always to partner with you to keep your child on track before attendance becomes a legal matter.

Our Four-Tier Support Approach

When a student begins missing school, Northwest School of the Arts follows a caring, step-by-step plan. Each tier adds more support and brings more team members alongside your family.

Tier 1 — Classroom Support (Teacher-Led)

- On the first day of an absence, your child's teacher records it and reaches out to you by phone.
- If absences continue, the teacher sends a written Attendance Concern Notice home and a personal note letting your child know they are missed.
- Every time a student returns, we welcome them back warmly—relationship before academics.

Tier 2 — Family Community Liaison Engagement

- Our Family Community Liaison (FCL) reaches out by phone, message, and letter, and schedules an Attendance Support Meeting with your family.
- Together, we identify the real barriers to attendance—such as transportation, health, or schedule challenges—and build a plan to address them.

Tier 3 — School Leadership & Home Visits

- If absences continue, the FCL and Dean of Students may conduct a home visit to connect with your family directly and offer support.
- We hold an Attendance Improvement Conference and create a written attendance plan together.

Tier 4 — Habitual Truant Intervention Plan (HTIP)

- If a student meets Ohio's habitual truancy thresholds, the law requires the school to complete a formal Habitual Truant Intervention Plan before any other step.
- Families receive a written truancy notice and are invited to a mandatory, solution-focused HTIP conference.
- Referral to Juvenile Court (ORC § 3321.22) is a **last resort**, used only after all school-based supports have been exhausted.

How families can partner with us

Make school attendance a daily priority and set a consistent morning routine.

Report and document absences promptly so they can be excused correctly.

Tell us early if something is making attendance hard—transportation, health, work schedules, or anything else. The sooner we know, the sooner we can help.

Answer the phone and attend meetings when we reach out. Every contact we make is an offer of support.

Field Trips

Field trips are one of the most exciting parts of the Northwest School of the Arts experience. They extend learning beyond the classroom and create memories that last a lifetime. We want every student to enjoy these opportunities.

At the same time, families should understand an important distinction: a non-academic field trip is a privilege, not a right. Participation is earned through consistent attendance, positive behavior, and a genuine commitment to learning.

When Field Trip Privileges May Be Limited

Students may be excluded from a non-academic field trip if they have demonstrated any of the following:

- **Chronic attendance concerns** — a pattern of tardies and/or absences.
- **Behavior concerns** — conduct that does not meet our community expectations, including disciplinary incidents.
- **Academic concerns** — missing assignments, incomplete work, or grades that indicate a student should be focused on their learning.

Teachers and administration reserve the right to revoke a student's field trip privilege based on any of the factors above. This decision is made in the best interest of the student and the group, and is never intended as a punishment alone—it is a reflection of the responsibilities that come with these opportunities.

What this means for families

Field trip eligibility is connected directly to attendance, behavior, and academic progress. Supporting strong attendance and positive conduct all year is the best way to ensure your child can take part.

If a privilege is revoked, the school will communicate with you, and the student will be provided with a safe, supervised, and meaningful alternative at school during the trip.

If you ever have questions about your child's eligibility for an upcoming trip, please reach out to their teacher or the main office in advance.

Cell Phones, Technology & Social Media

Northwest School of the Arts is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones or personal technology. Students who bring such items do so at their own risk. We strongly encourage families to consider whether their child needs to bring a personal device to school at all.

Device Guidelines

- Cell phones, iPads, mobile gaming devices, and smartwatches must be powered off and placed in the designated bin by the start of homeroom.
- Smartwatches and earbuds may not be used during the school day unless a staff member has expressly permitted it.
- Students may not take photos, audio, or video recordings, or livestream any student or staff member without that person's explicit consent.
- Phones or devices used inappropriately may be confiscated.

Possible Consequences for Violations

- The phone or device is held until the end of the day or class period.
- Loss of phone or device privileges at school.
- Parent or guardian retrieval of the device may be required.
- Suspension or other disciplinary action for serious or repeated violations.

Partnering on technology

Knowing where your child's phone is during the school day—powered off and in the bin—helps everyone focus on learning.

We also ask families to talk with their children about consent and privacy: recording or photographing classmates and staff without permission is never acceptable, in or out of school.

Cyberbullying

Northwest School of the Arts maintains a zero-tolerance policy for cyberbullying. We treat the emotional safety of our students as seriously as their physical safety.

Cyberbullying is any form of bullying, harassment, or intimidation carried out through digital means. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Text messages
- Social media platforms (for example, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook)
- Online forums, group chats, and email
- Any use of photos, videos, memes, or posts that ridicule, embarrass, threaten, or emotionally harm another person

Cyberbullying also includes:

- Posting derogatory comments about students or staff on any public or private platform
- Creating fake accounts or anonymous messages to target others
- Sharing private or embarrassing information or images without consent
- Participating in or sharing harmful digital content, even if the student was not the original creator

Important

Any post, message, or comment—whether made during school hours or off-campus—that threatens the emotional or physical safety of others or disrupts the learning environment is considered cyberbullying and will lead to disciplinary action.

Students are accountable for their behavior both in person and online.

Possible Disciplinary Actions

- Removal of technology privileges
- In-school or out-of-school suspension
- Restorative justice or counseling sessions
- Police involvement if the behavior violates the law

How families can help

Stay aware of the platforms and group chats your child uses, and keep an open line of communication about what they see and experience online.

If your child is being targeted online—or if you are concerned they may be harming someone else—please reach out to us right away. The sooner we know, the sooner we can help.

Family & Student Acknowledgment

Please review this Book of Expectations together as a family, sign below, and return this page to your child's homeroom teacher. Your signatures confirm that you have read and discussed these expectations together.

We have read and discussed the Northwest School of the Arts 2026–2027 Book of Expectations and agree to support these expectations at home and at school.

Student Name (printed)

Student Signature

Date

Parent / Guardian Name (printed)

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date

Thank you for being part of the Northwest School of the Arts family.