



This guide provides FAQs and tidbits of information that we hope will help you navigate and understand all that goes into being a part of the Woods Charter Community.

The guide was put together by folks from school administration, the Woods Foundation and PTSA – most importantly, Woods parents. While much of this information is critical for NEW Woods families, we expect that it will be helpful to all members of the Woods community.

How do I get information and stay tied in with events?

The school relies heavily on the E-Newsletter to announce events and highlight items of interest. WCS also uses the E- Alert Now (Emergency Phone Call System) for urgent notifications. IF you do not receive the E-Newsletter, aren't sure if you are on the list, or if your phone number or email has changed, please contact Kim Rossi. krossi@woodscharter.org

The place to go for general information about Woods, or to view a calendar of events, is the Woods Charter School website (www.woodscharter.org). The website has information and links to useful information from administration, faculty, the school board and other organizations.

Charter Schools: How can I learn more about them?

All charter schools in NC are public schools of choice. As such, we are publicly-funded, however, charter schools receive only approximately 80% of what a traditional public school would receive per student. In order to bridge this gap, fundraising and volunteerism is critical. The Woods Foundation, along with the PTSA, supplements the school budget each year. The Annual Fund is a must for Woods to continue to operate.

To learn more about charter schools, see the DPI website www.ncdpi.org.

What is the Woods Charter School Foundation?

The Woods Charter School Foundation mission is to provide funding and other means of support to enhance the vision of Woods Charter School. The primary focus of the Foundation is to support the educational pursuits of students through programming, facility enhancements, and supplemental faculty resources. Realizing that Woods Charter School and its families benefit from participation in the greater community, the Foundation also endeavors to provide opportunities to enrich the quality of life in the surrounding region. **The foundation is part of the school's annual budget and as such is committed to raising over \$200,000 each year with the goal of 100% participation from Woods families & faculty in our annual fund drive.**

WCSF Events/Fundraisers:

- Annual Fund Drive (mainly letter campaign, ongoing)
- Into the Woods 5K
- Grandparent/Special Friend Day
- Homecoming (Alumni)
- Benefit Auction (the fundraising event held in April)

What is the PTSA?

The PTSA (**P**arent, **T**eacher, **S**tudent **A**ssociation) is dedicated to improving the educational quality and experiences of the entire Woods community. By raising money throughout the year, the PTSA is able to provide support to enhance all aspects of Woods life – academics, -facilities, extracurricular activities and family events. If you have a student at Woods, they are benefiting from the PTSA volunteers and fundraising. Please contact Stephanie White at ptsapresident@woodscharter.org for more information.

PTSA Events/Fundraisers:

- Grocery Cards/Shop & Earn (Lowes, Food Lion, Whole Foods, BP/Shell)
- Student Lunch Program
- Elementary Read-a-Thon
- Faculty Appreciation
- Parents Welcome Back Night
- Athletics

Volunteerism: I hear so much about this...what am I supposed to do?

All Woods families are asked to commit a minimum of **20 hours each year** to Woods in some volunteer capacity. Volunteers are critical to maintaining the excellence of experience at WCS – and we have fun too!

To make a volunteer assignment successful, it is important to find something that you are interested in that can work into your busy schedule. There are many opportunities to jump-in – you just need to raise your hand!

- PTSA events or committees (such as Teacher Appreciation)
- Assist in the lunchroom once a week
- Sell tickets or refreshments at sporting events
- Help in a classroom or assist after-school clubs
- Weekend outdoor maintenance work (playground mulch, landscaping)
- Guest-teach to fill in for an absent teacher
- Proctor an EOG/EOC test at the end of the year
- Class parent – organizes class parties & teacher gifts
- Chaperone field trips
- Help on Field Day
- Assist with the elementary walking program
- Help with classroom Elementary Reading Groups
- Assist with different school projects or fundraisers
- Participate and attend some of the many school events

The list seems endless! (*and it is*). Do you have a special talent or skill that might help? – Let us know! Check out the website for ideas under volunteerism. Contact Rosline Grant. (rgrant@woodscharter.org)

Tell me more about the Woods Charter School Board

Although Woods is a Public school, the school is not governed by the area school district. Instead, the Woods Charter School Company is managed by a Board of Directors. The elected, voting members of the board (7) are all parents of Woods students. Additional representatives of to the board include the Head of School, a faculty-elected representative and a student-elected representative.

The board meets monthly, usually on the third Thursday of the month in the Glade at 7:00 pm. School Board agendas and minutes are posted on the website. All members of the Woods Community are invited to attend board meetings (counts toward volunteer hours). Attending a board meeting allows you to have input to the board on important decisions regarding the school. Come to a meeting and learn more!

School Calendar: Is it the same as county schools?

The Woods school calendar is unique to WCS and can be found under “Resources” on the website. The calendar is approved and voted on by the school board each year. Woods operates on a trimester schedule rather than on quarters. Traditionally, Woods will have a mini Fall Break in October; two weeks for Winter Break (days permitting); the last week in March as Spring Break and end with Graduation the second Saturday in June. Middle and High school students take their midterm exams prior to the start of the winter break.

What is the Glade?

The Glade is a meeting room down the first floor hallway on the gym side of the building. School Board Meetings, PTSA Meetings, after-school clubs, etc. will use this room. The room can be reserved through the front office.

What is the Great Room?

The Great Room is the center of Woods in more ways than one! In the center of the school it serves as space for meetings, performances and events. Every day the Great Room serves as a gathering spot for lunches and a meeting spot for families at school pick up.

Lunch Program: How does it work?

Our students eat lunch starting at 10:40 with elementary; 11:30 for middle school; 12:20 for High school. Elementary students have an in-class snack break in the afternoon and MS/HS has a scheduled morning break. WCS works with area restaurants to supply the catered food choices (Guanajuatos, Dominos, Harris Teeter, etc.). The catered lunches must be ordered on-line at least one week in advance. Lunch menus and on-line ordering is available at www.woodscharterptsa.org

Students may also purchase from a selection of “A La Carte” choices such as Hot Pockets, Lean Cuisine, chips, granola bars, milk, juices or water. Many students purchase A La Carte items for their meal or simply to supplement their lunches. A La Carte account purchases are added to your lunch account balance.

The Lunch Program is run by our PTSA and staffed by volunteer parents. Many volunteers are needed to continue to make this program a success. For lunch program questions or to volunteer, please contact Jamie Horil . (jhoril@woodscharter.org)

What should I do if my student forgets their lunch?

No worries. Students can purchase lunch from the a la carte menu. If they do not have money or a card set up to purchase from, the PTSA will simply create a card and let you know the balance.

Food sharing rules: How is this handled?

Elementary students are not allowed to share any food in the class or lunchroom. If a student wishes to bring in a food item to share with his or her class, the parent must notify the teacher at least one week in advance. The teacher will then notify all class parents about the food to be brought in. This rule is important to support those students with severe food allergies and to allow all parents to ensure they know what their student is eating during the school day.

Transportation: What is the bus program like?

WCS provides three different bus shuttle runs each morning and after school to Pittsboro, Chapel Hill/Carrboro and Hwy 54/I-40 in Durham. Because Woods receives no funding transportation, it operates under a “fair share” payment program which allocates costs based on usage. Those utilizing the buses will be sent a monthly billing statement from the school to cover their fair share. See the website for bus routes and more information, or contact Ann Kaiyala. (akaiyala@woodscharter.org)

What time can I drop off/pick up my student?

The official school day is 8:20 am – 3:05 pm. You can drop off your student starting at 8:00am and pickup as late as 3:30 pm. Between 8:00am and 8:20am elementary students wait on the stage and are supervised by Teachers' Assistants, while the MS and HS students wait in the Great Room. First bell rings at 8:15 and the students will proceed to their lockers/homeroom. At the end of the day, Elementary students are dismissed at 2:55pm to assist with the pick-up line, MS/HS is dismissed at 3:05pm.

Any students who are not in their classroom or advisory at 8:20 are late and must get a late slip from the office. They will be asked why they are late and depending on the reason, it will be excused or not (*NOTE: sleeping-in or running late is not a good reason. Car trouble, sickness, etc. would be excused*).

Any student remaining on the school property past 3:30pm must be participating in a supervised activity (after-school program, sports team, etc.) or supervised by an adult. If you are late to pick-up your student, they must check-in and out at the office.

How does the car-rider work? Can I walk my student into the building?

You have the flexibility to decide what works best for your family. If you want to walk in with your student, please park and walk in together. Please cross only at the crosswalk in front of school and wait for signals from the faculty member directing traffic.

You cannot park in front of school and wait for your student to come out. IF you arrive and your student is not in front of the building, you must circle around or park your car in the parking lot.

What is the traffic flow in the parking lot?

As you can imagine, the parking lot is very busy before and after school. It is important for the safety of all Woods families for you to follow some simple rules regarding traffic flow and parking at the school:

1. Traffic flows one-way in the two main parking lanes in front of the school. You should drive only in the directions of the arrows and circle around if needed.
2. When dropping off and picking up **STAY IN LINE**. Cutting around cars jeopardizes the safety of all involved. The lane to the far right and closest to the school is for the car-rider line, the other lane is for traffic exiting from parking spaces.
3. The car-rider line should move **QUICKLY**. If your student(s) cannot gather items and exit the car in a timely manner, you should park.
4. In the car-rider line students should exit **ONLY** from the right-hand side of the vehicle.
5. There is no parking allowed in the upper parking lot near the buses.
6. Parking on the left side of the school near the soccer field is reserved for HS students and faculty.

My student is sick. What should I do to notify the school?

Generally speaking, an email to the teacher/advisor is the best way to provide notice. Officially you must bring in a written, signed note to school within three days of return to school. The note should be given to the teacher/advisor. Saying “please excuse my child” in a note does NOT necessarily mean that the absence will be excused. Look to the handbook for what reasons qualify as excused or unexcused absences.

Can I take my student out of school for a family vacation/reunion?

Please see the handbook for what the state allows as excused absences. If you plan to miss school for an educational opportunity, you must get approval in advance. You can send a note to the Division Director (Elem/MS/HS) with details.

Can you tell me a bit about traditional events in Elementary?

- **Storybook/character day** is usually held on or near Halloween. Students dress as a storybook character or a historical character and have a morning parade through the school. Parents are invited to watch the parade. Some classes also write reports and give presentations about their character.
- **Café Night** is usually held in the Fall and is an opportunity for elementary and middle school students to share a talent or performance with the school community.
- **Grandparents Day** is a day when Grandparents or special friends are invited to join the kids in the morning, in their classrooms for special activities.
- **Winter Music Performance** is held in December and **Spring Sing** is held in April or May. Each grade sings in a performance and parents are invited to attend. Each grade sings in a performance and parents are invited to attend.
- **Field Day** is held during the last week of school. In the morning, students participate in traditional field day games followed by lunch. Parents can volunteer to help with field day.

What about traditional events in Middle School?

- **Two or Three MS Dances** are held during the year put on by the MS Student Council
- **Café Night** is usually held in the Fall and is an opportunity for elementary and middle school students to share a talent or performance with the school community.

- **Choral performances** throughout the year, both at the school and in the community
- **Spirit Week** planned by the Student Council. Each day has a theme (such as wacky hat day or school colors day) and students are invited to join in the fun.
- **Capture the Flag Tournament** is held in the spring of the year for the entire middle school. The fun tournament mixes the grades on different teams in good-spirited competition.
- **Field Day** is held during the last week of school. In the morning, students participate in traditional field day games followed by lunch. Parents can volunteer to help with field day.
- **Out-of-Town Field Trips** are held by each grade during the spring. For 6th-8th grade the trips involve an overnight stay. Trips are both educational and team-building.

What sort of after school activities are there?

The Woods community is enriched by many after-school clubs and activities. This allows students a chance to participate in areas of interest and meet others who share those interests.

Clubs are easily started up. It simply takes a group of interested students and an adult to supervise. Administration approval is required. Examples of after-school activities:

Elementary

Running with the wolves, Mini-milers, Science Olympiad, Young inventors, Young Rembrandts Summer wonders afterschool and Summer camps Quest Center Martial Arts

MS Clubs:

Student Council, Science Olympiad, Envirothon, Girls Learn International. **MS Sports:** (Cross Country, Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Cheerleading Baseball

HS Clubs

Envirothon, Science Olympiad, Debate Team, GSA, Games Club, Prom, GLI, Ronald McDonald Club, Yearbook, etc.

HS Sports (part of NCHSAA): Cross Country, Volleyball, Soccer, Basketball, Cheerleading, Ultimate Frisbee, Tennis, Golf, Track

Does Woods have an after-school program?

Yes. YMCA operates the after-school program for a fee at Woods from 3:00-6:00pm and a complimentary before school supervision from 7:00am to 8:00am. Please contact the YMCA directly for details or visit the YMCA website.

Curriculum Information: How can I learn more?

WCS follows the Core Knowledge curriculum for Kindergarten through Eighth Grade (www.coreknowledge.org). Singapore math and Jolly Phonics are some examples of programs used in the Elementary division. The high school curriculum is only college prep and offers numerous AP (advanced placement) college-level courses. Check the website under each division for details.

What elective classes are there?

Elementary: (referred to as “specials”) the elementary division offers PE, Walking program, Art, Music and French.

Middle School: Middle School students are required to participate in PE, Art, Music, and Spanish or French. Public speaking, Digital Media, Intro to Earth & Physical Science and Chorus are elective options in 5th and 6th grades. Drama is an added elective offered in 7th and 8th grade instead of Digital Media.

High School: High School offers options in Art, Technology, Marine Biology, Journalism, AP courses, Sociology, Physics, etc. See the website for a detailed list and descriptions.

What about School Supplies?

Elementary school has fees that range from \$100 to \$200 to cover the cost of workbooks and other consumable materials. Some teachers purchase class supplies (pencils, papers, folders, markers etc.) and the families are expected to reimburse them. Other elementary teachers provide a list of school supplies that families can purchase individually. Additionally, some teachers will collect the field trip fees for the entire school year at the beginning of the school year. In August, each teacher will list their supply fee and supply list on the WCS web site, www.woodscharter.org under “Resources”.

Supply lists for individual classes in Middle School and High School are available on the website under “Resources” in August.

What is an advisory for Middle & High School?

The first fifteen minutes of each day starts with in Advisory. It is generally a smaller group of students (13-15) that meet for attendance, announcements, etc. but is also important for social growth and character education. As the students go through high school, college readiness also comes into play.

Field Trips: How often do your students go on field trips?

Elementary will typically go on 5-7 trips per year. Each grade will coordinate field trips that supplement what is being learned in the classroom. Typically an elementary field trip day will leave school around 8:45am and return around 2:00pm. Parents are encouraged to chaperone field trips.

Middle school students usually go on 1-5 field trips during the year with an end-of-the year trip held out of-town: a 1-day trip to the beach for 5th; an overnight to the mountains for 6th; an overnight to the beach for 7th and a three-day mountain trip for the 8th grade.

High school will go on several trips each year. Each grade has an overnight trip as well. Parents are welcome to chaperone and can contact the teacher directly.

My student loves sports. How can I get involved?

We need LOTS of volunteers for our athletic program in both middle and high school. Woods students benefit tremendously from the opportunity to participate on teams and attend sporting events. Athletics at Woods is 100% financed by fundraising. Those who participate on teams are asked to pay a “fair share” fee to cover the costs of uniforms, equipment and referees.

The Woods Booster Club is an active committee of the PTSA and handles all fundraising for athletics. We need parents to sell entry tickets as well as concessions at each event. Each team will have a sign-up sheet for volunteers to assist. Contact the Athletic Director, [Dena Floyd](#), for more details at dfloyd@woodscharter.org.

What if I have more questions? Where do I go?

You can find information in many ways depending on your questions! The website is a great place to start. There you can find contact information for the School Board, Woods Foundation, PTSA, Booster Club and Faculty.

If you think we missed a crucial question that should be included in this guide, please contact Rosline Grant (rgrant@woodscharter.org) so it can be added!