



WESTERN CHRISTIAN
HIGH SCHOOL

Manners Matter!

Dear WCHS Students, Parents and Staff:

March 23, 2020

Greetings, we hope this letter finds you well today. One of my personal highlights from our “new normal” is reading and hearing stories of how families and students are finding a **healthy balance** for living. I received one of my favorites this morning: “...I have been really impressed this week by [said student’s] willingness to help her brothers and sisters with homework, keeping the house picked up, and just being a good leader inside the home. As challenging as these times are, I think there will be a lot of positives that come from this situation.”

Our administrative team is working to find the right balance for communication. I am sure you have been inundated with emails, assignments, ideas, articles and more. Our goal is to over-communicate without adding stress to an already overwhelming situation. **Please help us find the right balance by respectfully sharing your feedback, ok?**

Overall, WC Online Learning is off to a good start. Now it is time to take the necessary steps to make this style of learning more effective. Based on feedback from WC teachers, students and parents, and as informed by collective research, we believe your attention to the following “online rules” will help our new style of education flourish.

Guide for WC Online Learning | Manners Matter!

After 3-4 days, almost every WC class has offered opportunities for social interactions, but the difference is that most communication is via written text in an online environment. Because this means you are missing body language cues and immediate feedback from your “listener,” it is very important to understand some common rules for good online etiquette. We do believe that if we follow these rules together, WC Online Learning will be enhanced:

- 1. Be respectful.** While it is easier to say hurtful or disrespectful things without standing face-to-face with someone, it is important to remember that your classmates and teachers are real people who are affected by the words you say and write. If you wouldn’t say it to someone’s face, don’t say it online either.
- 2. Use Academic Integrity.** We have already experienced situations where students have copied/pasted a peer’s answers, or cheated off their responses for various assignments. It is as easy as a quick Snap sent in real time. Students, please take ownership of your learning. Also, be thoughtful about tempting your peers to join you in cheating. Bringing about this pressure is not fair.
- 3. Be aware of strong language, all caps, and exclamation points.** It is easy for written text to be misread and misunderstood. Have you ever sent a text message with good intent but your recipient thought you were being rude? If so, then you’ve experienced this firsthand. By being cognizant of strong language, you can identify potential confusions before sending messages. Tip: Read everything out loud before you send it.

4. **Be careful with humor and sarcasm.** Certainly you shouldn't avoid being funny. We love to see your personality shine through in online classes. Many of our teachers are exceptionally funny too. But like mentioned in Rule #2, make sure that it is clear you are being funny and not being rude. Emoticons and smileys can be helpful when conveying humor or sarcasm so that it is read correctly. Just remember to keep the smiley faces away from academic papers. 😊
5. **Interact with classmates in meaningful ways.** When responding to classmates, either affirm/support their responses with specific insights from your own learning. Or, respectfully challenge a peer's position.
6. **Yes, grammar and spelling matter.** While texting, textspeak can be great for your friends. In an educational setting (even online) however, keep it formal. Your written communication should be professional and reflect proper writing style. Make yourself look good online.
7. **Don't post or share (even privately) inappropriate material.** Enough said there. Nothing is truly private online.
8. **Be forgiving.** Remember that not everyone will know these rules before posting. Try to be understanding of others when they struggle with written communication. It is very different than simply talking to a person face-to-face.

These rules were adapted from the following sources:

~Albion, (2015). *The Core Rules of Netiquette* — Excerpted from *Netiquette* by Virginia Shea
<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

~Common Sense Media, (2015). *7 Rules to Teach Kids Online Etiquette*. Retrieved 26 August 2015, from
<https://www.common Sense Media.org/blog/7-rules-to-teach-kids-online-etiquette>

~Connor, P., (2015). *Netiquette: Ground Rules for Online Discussions*. Retrieved 26 August 2015, from
<http://teaching.colostate.edu/tips/tip.cfm?tipid=12>

Stay Connected

- [Daily Announcements and Student/Staff Devotional \(Video Broadcast\)](#) | Posted by 8:30am every day.
- [Prayer Locker](#) | [Submit your prayer requests here](#) so we can pray for one another. Prayer requests will remain posted for a week, from Monday to Friday.
- [Western Witness](#) | March 2020 Edition | Please share the link with your network!
- **We Are Here For You** | The school office is eager to serve you. This is our top priority! Feel free to reach out at any time of day, seriously. Daily "office hours" for teachers are 9:00am-12:00pm.

Thanks for reading. You can expect another communication later this week as we inform you of new developments for the week(s) ahead. Until then, may God bless your efforts in finding a healthy life balance.

Lead well,



Brian Verwolf
Head Administrator