



Parent Council Handbook

This handbook describes how the Parent Council functions within Willow Creek Academy. Many opportunities are available to you to volunteer your time and talent for the benefit of WCA. Your volunteer work supports many school programs, thereby enabling WCA to stretch its resources further to create a rich and safe learning environment for our children!

The Parent Council Structure:

All parents and caregivers are part of the Parent Council. Together we **are** the Parent Council!

The **Executive Committee** heads the Parent Council and consists of 4 volunteer members:

President

Responsible for key communications between the Parent Council and the School Board, Head of School, Staff and Families. The President may use the Vice President or the Secretary to execute those communications.

Vice President

Responsible for assisting the President in his/her communications. Parent Council Committees will be overseen by the VP. The VP heads the PC Meetings and creates the agendas.

Secretary

The PC secretary is responsible for communications between PC Committees and Head Room Parents. The secretary writes a Parent Council **update** after each PC Meeting which appears in the schools' Monday Newsletter. Also responsible for overseeing Volunteer Log.

Treasurer

Responsible for keeping records of all monetary spending and income of the PC.

The PC has several **Committees** which address specific needs at WCA.

A committee consists of committee members and a Committee Head, who is responsible for the general organization of the committee. The Committee Head is expected to attend the monthly PC meetings and reports back to the PC.

The following 8 committees currently operate within the Parent Council:

Curriculum:

This committee explores ideas for new curriculum, examines existing curriculum, organizes the video library and discusses education issues in general in relation to WCA.

Emergency Preparedness:

This committee oversees the school's preparedness in the event of an emergency. It organizes Comfort Bags, assists in Fire drills, holds First Aid courses etc. WCA collaborates with the Sausalito School District in following County guidelines.

Emotional Safety:

This committee (Carol?)

Facilities:

This committee is responsible for organizing workforce to keep grounds maintained and improved (ie. installing play equipment, painting, parking lot organization, grounds beautification etc.)

Fundraising:

This committee organizes the fundraising events for the Parent Council and the Willow Creek Foundation. Some of our major fundraisers are the Sausalito Arts Festival (Sept.), the Spring- into- Health-Walkathon (April) and the Spring Fair (May). Individual class rooms may organize their own Fundraisers for specific classroom events like fieldtrips etc. These are separate from the PC fundraisers!

Garden:

This committee keeps the garden in good shape, organizes the watering and assists with science and environmental education that takes place in the garden.

Hospitality:

This committee organizes school festivals, concerts and other extra-curricular events. Our annual Halloween party, Festival of Lights (Dec.), Valentine Day Fair and Spirit Week (Apr.) are some of this committees' activities.

Snack Committee:

This committee is responsible for our lunch and milk program and organizes the snack program. The Lunch program is a steady fundraiser for the Parent Council.

Most Committees meet once a month at a time and place determined by the committee itself. The Head of School attends the Curriculum and the Emotional Safety Committee Meetings as well as the general PC meeting.

The last but not least component of the Parent Council is the **Room Parent Organization**.

The Room Parent Organization can be described as a comprehensive 'phone tree' that is responsible for direct communications with each WCA family.

Each classroom at WCA has 1 Head Room Parent and a small group of Room Parents, each responsible for about 5 families.

Throughout the year requests for volunteers and materials will be coming from the Parent Council committees (via the PC Secretary) and the teacher to the Head Room Parent. The Head Room Parent then contacts the Room Parents who in their turn contact their families. Other communications, for example field trip reminders, emergency announcements etc. may also happen through this system.

Head Room Parents and Room Parents are to keep notes on their communications to measure the families' responsiveness to their requests. They are also expected to get to know their families and find out when, what and how these families can participate in the school and fulfill their volunteer hours (this will likely happen through a survey issued at the beginning of the school year) and to create a sense of community at the school. *Families* are required to respond promptly to requests from their Room Parents in order for our phone tree to be effective!!!

Parent Council Meetings

The Executive Committee, the Head Room Parents and the Committee Heads meet once a month (every second Wednesday at 5.30 pm in the Art Room, unless announced otherwise) to discuss general Parent Council issues, hear Committee reports and direct requests for volunteers etc. to the Head Room Parent. However these meetings are open to anyone who wants to attend. For an item to be added to the agenda one needs to contact the Vice President at least 3 days before the meeting.

Special Parent Council Meetings

Three times a year a Special Parent Council Meeting will be held for the purpose of discussing concerns by parents. This would be the time and place to discuss and find solutions to issues that cannot or have not been resolved through following the regular channels (Head of School). Items for this agenda should be put to the VP two weeks in advance. These meetings and their agendas will be announced in the Monday Newsletter PC Updates!

Once or twice a year WCA holds mandatory Parent Meetings like the orientation meeting before the start of a new year.

Volunteer Hours

At the beginning of each year families sign a contract committing to 50 hours of volunteering per year for the first child! Every additional child will be 10 hours.

For example if you have 2 children in the school you are required to do 60 (50 + 10) hours!

There are many ways one can fulfill these hours!

If you have certain talents or a preference as to where you put your energy joining a **committee** is the way to go! A guaranteed way to do your hours in a focused way! Committees are essential to WCA!

Is organization your strength, are you good on the telephone, can you not volunteer during the daytime? Consider becoming a **Room Parent or Head Room Parent**. Communication is the key to a well functioning school.

Although the above two suggestions are recommended there are many other ways to volunteer! Read the Parent Council updates and respond to requests from your Room Parents! Many volunteers are needed for our Fundraisers, Festivals, Bake Sales, Spruce Up days, workshops etc.

Often there will be requests for materials or food which translate to one volunteer hour per \$10.- spend! (This only applies when specifically mentioned at the time of the request! General costs like your child's school materials or lunches etc. **can not** be translated into volunteer hours!!)

Although the Parent Council can assist you in finding ways to fulfill your volunteer hours if you have trouble doing so it is still **ultimately your responsibility** to produce. You are required to contact the Head of School promptly if you feel you cannot fulfill your hours due to unforeseen circumstances.

In the event when volunteer hours are not fulfilled families are to **pay for the remaining hours at \$10.- per hour!** An invoice will be send to you by the end of the year.

Although WCA prefers families to put in time, a family has a choice of 'buying' their hours at \$10.- per hour!

Bimonthly, a letter will be send to all families with a status report on their volunteer hours.

All volunteer hours need to be **recorded** as soon as possible! In the school office the Volunteer Log Book has families listed alphabetically. Please record the date, event and the amount of hours. When donating materials or food please record what and how much you spend! If you cannot make it to the office in person you can call the school secretary and ask her/him to record your hours. Being diligent with your recording reflects in an accurate status report!

