

Student and
Family Handbook



Where Learning Has No Limits

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Our History

You already know that all students at School Without Walls are here because they asked to be here, but you may not know that students were involved in the creation of SWW and the development and changes over the years.

School Without Walls has been around for a long time now. Its history goes back to 1968 when a couple of students at Monroe High School presented a proposal to the Principal for a program similar to School Without Walls.

The following year, in October 1969, a group of teachers began discussing how to help these students attain their goals. These discussions continued for almost a year before they discovered that parents and more students were discussing the same question. They all joined forces and kept on discussing the kind of school they would like to see. Eventually, they developed a proposal for the School Without Walls that was presented to the Superintendent of Schools in January 1971. On February 4, 1971, the Board of Education approved the proposal and passed a resolution creating School Without Walls. It opened as a High School in September 1971.

So, you see, *we* - teachers, parents, and students - created our own school.

In September 2005, School Without Walls opened its doors to 7th and 8th graders. In 2008, a 9th grade was added to the SWW Middle School.

In the 2012 – 2013 school year, the 9th grade was once again housed in this building. Sadly, the School Without Walls Middle School (SWW Foundation) closed its doors at the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

Though School Without Walls has changed over the years, we have always tried to be true to our beginnings. The entire school community has almost always worked out the changes.

Despite some changes over time, our students continue to be afforded the rich, in-depth, and challenging education for which we are noted. Our students remain excited, our teachers remain committed, and our graduation rate remains high.

Our Mission Statement

We are a caring and supportive community. We recognize that students are individuals and foster each student's individual growth toward academic excellence and social/emotional well-being so that they can successfully meet life's challenges beyond high school.

About This Handbook

This handbook results from the School Without Walls community's decisions over the years. Our community developed and refined almost all the rules, regulations, procedures, and guidelines. It is intended to serve as a guide to life at our school. We hope it will help orient you to our goals and teaching practices and help you feel a part of our learning community.

Please read these pages carefully. The School Without Walls philosophy and programs suit some students and families better than others. You and your child will want to reflect together on whether our goals and programs match what each of you wants. Students need to work hard and have support from home to succeed at our school.

All curriculum, courses, and student experiences at School Without Walls are planned, developed, and implemented with the clear intention of meeting the following goals:

- 1. To Assist Students to Develop Responsibility for Self**
and
- 2. To Aid Students to Understand How to Live in a Complex Urban Society**

Our mission is to inspire an inextinguishable drive toward excellence, service, and adventure in our students. We view learning as an expedition. We work to instill uncompromising academic skills, habits of work and character, and a personal sense of direction and focus. Additionally, we recognize that high school students need caring and supportive adults to help them through this transitional period. We want our students to be prepared to be successful in college and have a lifelong love for learning and service to others.

In the following pages, you will find a detailed description of our school goals, our codes of behavior, and the commitments we ask of our students and their parents or guardians. Additionally, we describe our school's daily life and key features and set forth our school policies.

We hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions about the information in this handbook, please contact your child's extended class teacher, or phone the school at 585.546.6732.

Goals of School Without Walls

All curriculum, courses, and student experiences at School Without Walls are planned, developed, and implemented to meet the goals below.

It is the Intention of School Without Walls

I. To Assist Students to Develop Responsibility to Self by:

A. Providing the flexibility to discover and/or pursue their interests in various structures (group, individual, and independent) and helping them develop their own educational program through continuous academic counseling in extended classes.

B. Supporting the development of independence by helping students to improve survival skills through the following means:

1. Academic: information gathering, interpretation, and transmission-computation.
2. Societal: learning how to operate within the institutional framework of our society, i.e., family, neighborhood.
3. Interpersonal: learning to communicate ideas and feelings with others effectively.

C. Leading students to become self-sustaining by turning problems into goals and developing the ability to identify the dimensions of a problem and engage in the problem-solving learning process, i.e.

1. Identify the existence of a problem.
2. Examine options.
3. Survey the available resources.
4. Define the problem.
5. Identify the usable resources: material and human.
6. Collect and interpret data.
7. Draw conclusions.
8. Evaluate the significance of conclusions.
9. Apply results practically where possible.

D. Helping students to cope with frustration by selecting alternatives when things don't go as expected.

E. Facilitating the clarification and understanding by students of their value systems.

1. Help them to see how these values affect their decisions and choices.
2. Foster the development of thoughtful, responsible value systems for themselves.
3. Explore other value systems.

II. To Aid Students to Understand How to Live in a Complex Urban Society

A. To lead students to discover the relationship between real life experiences and academic learning by:

1. Using an interdisciplinary problem-solving approach to learning.
2. Using student interests as a basis of an individual approach to learning.
3. Using primary sources and direct experiences for learning.
4. Encouraging students to participate directly in decision-making and policy setting in both classes and the school.

B. Become responsible and effective members of the community by:

1. Understanding the nature of a community - that "no man is an island" and that School Without Walls is conceived of as a community whose reason for existence is learning.
2. Fostering interdependence.
3. Providing an environment in which sensitivity to the opinion and needs of others becomes a major factor in individual and group interaction and decision-making.
4. Encourage them to learn how to resolve interpersonal conflicts in socially acceptable ways.
5. Clarifying the need for participation in group decision-making in school and class, particularly emphasizing the consequences of not following the group decision.
6. Striking a balance between their responsibility to the community and responsibility to self.
7. Aiding students to understand their rights and responsibilities.
8. Emphasizing the city as a basis for a major part of the student's experience by:
 - a. helping students be aware of city resources and how to use them.
 - b. helping students see themselves as active participants in the city's life.

SWW Values

All members of the School Without Walls community, both adults and students, strive to learn and demonstrate the following character values:

Nonviolence	by any means necessary
Perseverance	despite all obstacles
Truth	regardless of the consequences
Courage	to do what is right
Compassion	for all
Responsibility	with no excuses
Respectfulness	under all circumstances
Curiosity	every day learn something new

SWW Code of Conduct

School Without Walls is different because it is a community: a separate and identifiable group of individuals who have come together to share interests and purpose and agree to abide by a set of principles and rules that enable them to maintain their common existence. Sticking to this set of values permits communities to survive.

It is Everyone's Responsibility to:

Treat Other People the Way We Want to Be Treated

We speak to and about others the way we want others to speak to and about us. We tell the truth even when it is hard. We show responsibility and pride in ourselves by working to make the situation right when we have made a mistake, and we listen to other people's side of a situation.

Use School Time for Learning

We bring the supplies we need to class daily. We focus on our work and allow others to focus on their work. We follow class rules. We leave things that might distract us from learning at home or in our lockers. Our behavior (anywhere in the community) reflects on all of us at School Without Walls. When participating in community service, we behave as serious learners and act to build a positive reputation for our school.

Handle Problems Peacefully

We work to control our temper when we are angry. If there is a problem we cannot solve, we ask for adult help or request mediation. We solve problems with our words and minds, not through physical violence. We avoid starting problems by not play fighting, using put-downs, or doing things that can lead to someone getting angry or hurt.

Respect Our Environment and Each Other's Property

We clean up after ourselves and help others. We care for the books, computers, and other materials we use. We don't steal or take property that belongs to others or the school.

Respect Each Other By Not Gossiping

Before we say something about another person, we think about how it would feel if someone else said it about us. We do not believe everything we hear. We remember that rumors can hurt and may be exaggerated or not true. We talk directly to someone if we have a problem with them. We don't bring other people into a problem or gossip behind someone's back. Cyberbullying is unacceptable.

Believe in Ourselves

We know we can reach our dreams by working smart and hard and staying focused on our goals. We take ourselves seriously as students and as young people heading toward a bright future.

What You Can Expect from Us

High academic standards: We believe all students can accomplish high-quality work and that their future depends on it. Students are asked to draft and revise work until it is high quality. We strive to challenge students while also supporting them with the resources necessary to help motivated students of all ability levels find success.

Focus on character development: We care not only about students' academic progress but also about their growth as healthy young people. Adults at the school work with families to encourage students to demonstrate the character values listed above.

Homework: Students must practice work independently to succeed in their classes. Because our school has high academic standards, students will be assigned homework daily.

Course offerings: We will provide required Humanities classes (Social Studies, English, and the Arts), Math, Science, Physical Education, Health, and a Foreign Language. Students will also take a variety of enrichment classes on a rotating basis.

Small classes of mixed ability: Most classes range between 18-25 students. All students are held to the same high expectations.

Challenging projects: We organize our curriculum around academically challenging projects that take a real-world approach to learning.

Ongoing communication: All adults communicate closely to best support your child's progress. We know that you, as a caretaker, work hard to support your child. Please stay actively involved and updated on your child's work. Feel free to phone us if you have questions or concerns or if things are going on at home that you think we need to know about. We at the school also work hard. We inform you about your child's academic progress and behavior through conferences, exhibitions, detailed progress reports, letters, texts, emails, and phone calls. Extended class teachers also serve as advisors to students and have individual conferences with each student at least every two weeks.

Community service: School Without Walls is deeply committed to contributing to the broader Rochester community. We will provide opportunities for students to select a community service site through our Community Service Corner that happens twice in the fall. If students do not select or find something of interest, it is their responsibility to find a non for profit organization to complete their required hours of community service.

Focus on conflict resolution skills: We will teach and encourage our students to develop skills to understand and communicate their feelings and needs to others respectfully and effectively. We are a nonviolent community.

The Commitments We Ask Students

For students to have the most successful school year possible, we must each do our part to hold up to the high standards of the SWW community. For you to have many options for life at SWW and beyond, we ask you to make the following commitments:

- **Learn and follow the Code of Conduct and Character Values:** This commitment includes working to: Respect Each other and Ourselves, Resolve and Manage conflicts Peacefully, Respect our School Environment, Use Class Time for Learning, Help to Stop Rumors and Believe in Yourself.
- **Do your homework:** Do your homework, including at least one-half hour of reading and required journal writing, other than assigned work every night.
- **Come prepared:** Come to every class, including fieldwork and all school activity days, with your book bag, Chromebook, pencil and pen, notebook, textbooks, planner, schedule, and other needed materials.
- **Participate:** Become involved in your classes, community service, and other school activities.

- **Ask for help:** Know how you are doing in your classes and ask for help when needed. Go to extra help sessions when you need to or are instructed to.
- **Dress appropriately:** Wear appropriate clothes to school that meet the dress code. Remember that some attire worn outside of school may not be suitable for a school environment.
- **Keep a current library card:** Obtain a card from the Rochester Public Library, bring it to school each day, and make sure you don't owe any fines or books to the library. We read lots at SWW and go to the library often.
- **Practice Persistence:** Work smart and hard! Rework projects until they are the best you can do.

The Commitments School Without Walls Families Are Asked To Make

As teachers and caregivers, we want our children to build strong learning habits and genuinely enjoy learning. To help your child, please do the following:

Stay involved in your child's school life:

- Attend all Parent Teacher Conferences.
- Read all material that comes home from the school and the Rochester City School District.
- Read and go over your child's progress reports with your child.
- Post a copy of the school calendar where you can see it daily. Ask students what assignments, projects, and presentations are coming up.
- Contact your child's extended class teacher about issues that may affect your child's learning.
- Promptly notify the school of any changes to your address or phone number.

Support good homework habits and help your child make school a top priority.

- Set a regular time for homework.
- Arrange a quiet, well-lit place to work.
- Check work nightly; all students have homework every night. There are no exceptions.
- Encourage your child to read at least a 1/2 hour each evening, in addition to assigned work. Help your child maintain a current library card (with no fines), and provide lots of books and magazines to read.
- Demand regular school attendance.
- Limit TV, computer time unrelated to homework, video, and telephone. We strongly suggest not putting a TV or video games in your child's bedroom.
- Arrange healthy after-school activities for your child.
- Remind your child that you think school is important, that you know SWW students have to work hard, and that you are proud of your child's progress.
- Help your child live a healthy lifestyle by ensuring they have regular bedtimes and a healthy and nutritious diet.
- Keep your child safe from cyberbullying and internet predators by not allowing chat room visits and other such accounts and monitoring your child's computer activity whenever they are connected.

Other Parent Involvement Opportunities

- Consider participating in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
- Join the School-Based Planning Team (SBPT)
- Share in Career Day
- Share your expertise as a Community Expert for senior projects
- Share your expertise as an outside evaluator on Performance-Based Assessments
- Participate in school cultural celebrations



STUDENT CELL PHONE POLICY & GUIDELINES

Directions for usage for all mobile devices
are as follows:

Cellphones are not to be used anywhere in the building during class time. Every student is assigned a personal Yondr Pouch. While the Yondr Pouch is considered school property, each student must bring their Pouch with them to school every day and keep it in good working condition.

DAILY PROCESS

As students arrive at school, they will:

- 1) Students will be scanned upon entering the building and upon return from Personal Needs.
- 2) Turn their cell phone off before proceeding to class. This includes seniors with free periods.
- 3) Open their Yondr Pouch by tapping against the Unlocking Base.
- 4) Place their cell phone inside the Yondr Pouch and secure it in front of the school staff.
- 5) Store it in their backpack or locker for the day.

At Personal Needs time and/or at the end of the day, students will open their Pouch, remove their phone, close their Pouch, and put it in their backpacks. At the end of Personal Needs, phones must be secured in pouches before returning to class. Students must bring their Pouch to school with them each day.

*Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch or remove their phones from the pouch in the Main Office.

VIOLATIONS

Pouch Damage / Lost Pouch / Using Cellphone During School

If a student damages their Pouch or is caught with their phone, the phone will be collected and turned in to the office until the end of the day. Parents will be called to inform them of the violation.

A 2nd violation will require the student to leave the phone in the Main Office daily until further notice without the ability to use it during Personal Needs. Students who lose or deliberately damage a pouch must pay \$10 for a replacement.

Examples of damage:



- Ripped
- Cut
- Torn
- Pen/pencil marks
- Bent/cut pin
- Signs of force to black button on flap

Forgotten Yondr Pouch

If a student forgets their Pouch, their cellphone will be collected and kept in the office. A call home will be made to remind the Parent of the policy. The phone will be returned to the student at dismissal.

If a student consistently forgets their Pouch, it is considered Lost.

Refer to the Lost Pouch policy above.

All other mobile electronic devices, except Chromebooks or laptops, are to be turned off and kept in a backpack or locker at all times except during Personal Needs. This includes all smartwatches, earbuds, headphones, etc.

If you need to reach your child during the school day, please call the school office at 546-6732. PLEASE DO NOT CALL YOUR CHILD'S CELL PHONE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY OUTSIDE OF THE DESIGNATED TIMES.





SWW Graduation Requirements



There are four main areas students must successfully fulfill to earn a School Without Walls Regents Diploma.

A. Credit

B. Regents Exam / Performance-Based Assessments in all core subjects

C. Community Service

D. Senior Project

A. Credit Requirements

Subject Area	Number of Credits
English	4
Social Studies	4
Math	3
Science	3
Fine Arts	1
Health	0.5
Physical Education	2
Electives	3.5
Foreign Language	1
Community Service	3
Senior Project Research	0.5
Total Needed	25.5



NYS requires students to take English and Physical Education every year they are in school.

Electives are credits that may be earned in all areas except physical education. Only two credits of work experience can count towards graduation

B. New York State Regents / Performance-Based Assessment Requirements

School Without Walls is a member of an educational organization called the New York State Performance Standards Consortium. As a member of the Consortium, our students are required to complete specific Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) for each core subject area. The tasks are completed in classes and then presented at a formal committee meeting. The SWW Performance-Based Assessments are requirements that are in place of the New York State Regents exams in social studies, math, and science. Our students earn a New York State Regents Diploma.

Subject Area	Regents Requirements	NYS/SWW Performance Based Assessments Tasks
English	Comprehensive English (ELA)	Literary analysis (comparing two pieces of literature)
Social Studies	N/A	Research paper (focusing on any social science issue)
Math	N/A	In-depth project
Science	N/A	Original experiment (written up as a formal lab report)

C. Community Service

Community service is an ongoing, student planned experience with a local non-profit or civil organization that is designed to help you develop your responsibility and skills for living within a complex urban society. Our experience shows that community service will help you learn to give back something to your community that is continually supporting you. It will also further develop your sense of community, independence, and responsibility.

Definition of Community Service: Community service means providing service to your community. This definition, combined with NYS Education Policy that forbids any public institution from aiding an organization in making a profit, leads SWW to require that Community Service credit be given only for those service activities that are with a non-profit organization.

Community service with a religious organization is allowed if and only if the activity or program that is sponsored by the religious group:

- Makes a concentrated effort to offer its non-religious based program to the entire neighborhood in which it is located or to the entire community, and
- Makes no attempt to proselytize participating in the program,
- Receives NYS or Federal funding, is co-sponsored by the City School District or meets criteria #1 and #2 above, but does not receive funding due to small size or unique service to the community

Requirements and standards for credit include:

1. Completion of the “Contract for Community Service” and handed into your advisor.
*Final approval of your community service site rests with your advisor.
2. Time is set aside in the schedule on Wednesday afternoons— (travel time does count towards time completed).
3. A total of 75 hours must be achieved every year. Students may not “get ahead” by doing more hours early.

- A. If a student needs time to explore appropriate community service sites, students may use the first quarter, but this will not count towards community service credit.
- B. Students should maintain a log of dates and hours worked.
- C. On-going discussions about your community service experience with your advisor during conferences and writing about your experience in your journal.
- D. A satisfactory evaluation by the community service supervisor at the end of the year.

D. Senior Project

The senior project is a School Without Walls graduation requirement. Successful completion of a senior project is critical because it demonstrates that you have mastered the learning process that School Without Walls has been trying to teach you during your time here. It is this process that is important, perhaps as important as the product itself. Every senior must form a committee for their project. Their committee consists of two SWW staff members, two community experts, and two students (not seniors). Seniors will be provided with a Senior Project Handbook that describes the project and has a detailed deadline timeline.

The Senior Project Must:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be the student's idea and should not be something they have already learned to do well. ● Be well thought out and take a school year to learn. ● Yield a product that clearly demonstrates growth on the part of the student and the development of newly acquired skills or expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate acceptance of responsibility in meeting the terms of the proposal. ● Be completed with regular consultation with a senior project advisor/committee members. ● Be completed during the school year in which it is proposed. ● Be completed before June graduation and cannot be extended into the summer.
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Some examples of recent Senior Projects

Learning how to:

- rebuild an engine
- sing opera
- work with and steer horses (horse-driving)
- earn a CNA certification (Certified Nursing Assistant)
- be a journalist/television reporter
- design and construct a Zen Japanese Garden
- organize an exchange program between SWW and a Russian high school
- build a brick oven
- build houses and learning how to use tools for Habitat for Humanity
- design and make clothing

Learning about:

- design a legislative piece to voted on in Albany and design their own political party
- computer programming or build a computer
- construction and music of pipe organs

- art of ceramics and creating a pottery collection
- plans for renovation of a landmark building

Early Graduation Requirements

- 1) Students wishing to graduate early must meet with their school counselor to conduct a credit review. Students must have earned credit for all classes in the years preceding and be on track in community service.
- 2) Students are responsible for passing the ELA Regents Exam with a minimum score of 80%, Exit PBATs, Senior Project, Community Service, and all other NYS graduation requirements:

Classes	Credits
English	4
Social Studies	4
Math	3
Science	3
LOTE	1
P.E.	1.75*
Art/Music	1
Elective	3.5
Community Service	2.25*
Research Methods	.5
Total	24.25

*One year of P.E. and Community Service will be waived for approved early graduation.

- 3) Students must demonstrate proficiency at the 12th-grade level, which meets New York State and Consortium criteria via multiple on-demand tasks representative of SWW curriculum/academic areas.
- 4) Students must maintain the minimum Rochester City School District attendance rate of 93% and no suspensions for any reason. Students must also abide by the RCSD Code of Conduct and SWW Student/Parent Compact.
- 5) Students must submit an application to the counseling office by the third Friday of September in the year they intend to graduate. Since the list of applicants must be reviewed and approved by the building Principal, no applications will be accepted after this deadline.
- 6) The completed application will be submitted to the building principal for review, and an interview including the student's advisor, school counselor, building principal, and SPED teacher (if applicable) will occur.
- 7) In addition to the completed application, students will write a reflection on an on-demand writing prompt.

- 8) The parent or legal guardian and all committee members must sign the approved application and contract for early graduation. This application must be turned in within two weeks after the student is notified of approval.
- 9) Off-track status in any course(s) will result in immediate disqualification toward early graduation. Early grad candidates should refer to their 5-week reports as a progress indicator and utilize Personal Needs and afterschool for academic support. Students cannot miss any senior deadlines, which will also revoke their status.

Life at SWW

Extended Class

Days Held: M/T/Th/F

Credit: 1.5

The extended classes are classes where the curriculum is created by student interest and choice. This class meets more often and for a longer period of time compared to any other class at the school. Your extended class teacher is also your advisor during that academic year. The key goals reflected by the extended classes are:

- To help students become independent by providing them with an environment where they can develop a responsibility to themselves and the community.
- To help students develop the ability to identify and solve problems and deal with the inevitable frustrations accompanying such a process.

We also believe that for students to feel a developing sense of community responsibility, they should be involved in making decisions and setting basic school policies. Each extended class must devote part of the extended class on Fridays to decision-making in which school policy and community-wide concerns are discussed. At this time, students raise questions about school policies, discuss proposals, and vote on issues needing to be resolved.

Extended Class Requirements for Students

- All students are required to write regularly in their journals
- Attend bi-weekly conferences with advisor
- Participate in Decision-Making
- Participate in CPR (Circle of Power and Respect) and other community-building activities
- Read 40 articles per year
- Submit bi-weekly Writing Group
- Participate in All-School-Read and complete all assignments
- Complete 1 research project related to the extended class topic
- Participate in class discussion and be prepared to speak in front of others
- Travel to all destinations decided upon by the class
- Initiate and develop activities with other extended classes
- Fulfill additional requirements specific to extended class

Decision Making

At SWW, decision making occurs during extended class on Fridays. Students need guidance and direction: however, they also need responsibility and decision-making opportunities to grow intellectually and psychologically. Our decision-making process is designed to give students the opportunity to have a voice in our school and to help them understand the democratic process so they are better citizens. Major school decisions can be made by students and staff voting on proposals: one person-one vote.

Some decisions must be made by the staff, Principal, or School Based Planning Team because of the law, education policies of New York State and the City School District, and the spirit and philosophy of School Without Walls.

The school community developed the decision-making process in 1976 to ensure a more effective process involving the maximum number of students in decision-making.

The process is designed to help students in:

- Defining issues and needs,
- Presenting their views of problems and/or proposed solutions
- Refining rough draft proposals,
- Coming to a clear understanding of the final proposal,
- Voting in an informed and reasoned manner

For this process to work effectively all of the school must be available at the same time: All extended classes must be in their rooms during the time allotted for school-wide decision making. Decision-making at SWW is a complex process but can be generally explained using the following dimensions of responsibility:

1. When the issue ***affects only students***, any student, staff member, or parent can follow the decision-making process to initiate a proposal for the change. A proposal may be discussed and voted on even if only 51% of those students enrolled in the school are available to participate. A majority vote among students will determine the outcome unless there are legal or policy violations or if the outcome conflicts with previously scheduled activities (e.g., social events, travel, availability of courses to meet student needs, lunch, fund-raising, clubs, extracurricular activities, sports). All policy changes will be recorded in a portfolio the School Secretary keeps.
2. When the issue ***affects staff directly*** (i.e., teaching time, class assignments, purchasing instructional materials and equipment, personal conflicts, teaching strategies to help students attain SWW goals), the entire staff will be responsible. Students or parents may suggest that staff deal with specific concerns at staff or SBPT meetings. Students may also demonstrate their position by using the decision-making process. Staff will seek student input whenever appropriate.
3. When the issue ***affects the entire school community***, the SWW School-Based Planning Team will make the decision. Although *this* Team is ultimately responsible for making these kinds of decisions, representatives may, if time permits, seek feedback from their constituencies. The School-Based Planning Team will decide on Evaluation Form changes.

4. When the issue **is of an emergency nature**, the SWW principal will decide.
The principal will consult with as many appropriate constituencies as possible.

I. Identification of Issues or Needs

A. When an individual or group identifies an issue (i.e., use of drugs or alcohol during school time, control of student-raised money, improving the decision-making process...), it should be raised in extended class during Friday morning decision-making. After the group has examined the issue or has developed a proposal, it can present its concerns to the school body.

B. Since all groups meet at the same time for the same purpose, it is possible for

1. people from two or more extended classes to form a problem-solving group to write a proposal or identify a problem
2. two or more groups to meet together, when both agree to, to share concerns and feelings
3. a group to **REQUEST** a town meeting for Extended classes who want to participate. Town meetings are to be held only on Fridays except under extraordinary circumstances.

II. Communicating With the School Body

Two methods of communicating with the school body for clarification and input are to send representatives to each extended class or to request a town meeting.

III. Refining of Final Proposal

The group's representatives then return to their Extended Class to examine the concerns and input from the rest of the school body. This combined information can then be used to write the final proposal, which the advisor and the principal must sign. The final draft of the proposal should be checked with the principal to see if it has dealt completely with the issue and if it has been drafted in the appropriate form.

IV. Presentation of Final Proposal For a Vote

Copies of the proposal is to be sent to other extended classes for a final discussion and vote. The original copy of the proposal **MUST** be sent to the office for filing. It is suggested that representatives of the presenting group accompany the proposal to address questions.

V. Tallying of The Vote

All extended classes must report their vote to the school office by the following Wednesday, where the tally will be made final. Decisions are made based on the grand total of the individual votes, and the results are binding on the school community. Again, a proposal may not pass if fewer than 51% of those students enrolled were available to discuss it and vote. This process can take as little as one day. However, complex issues or proposals may take longer.

No extended class or problem-solving group has the right to demand from other groups to stop doing what they are doing to listen to those who call the meeting. They may ask the other groups to come together to identify a concern or explain a proposal.

Other Classes (1.0 credit per year)

All students at SWW will take Social Studies, English, Math, Science, Art and/or Music, Foreign Language, Physical Education/Health, and a variety of other classes. They may be taught by School

Without Walls staff or students approved by, and under the direct supervision of, staff, or they might be taught by people in the community (approved by staff). These classes meet three hours per week.

Community Learning

If you are interested in working with someone in the community (inside or outside of school), you may discuss and make arrangements for this with your advisor. You may earn credit by working with a community resource, but only if it is approved and a contract has been completed in advance – no credit can be assigned retroactively.

Work Study

Did you know that you may earn credit by working? It's true! If you have a steady job and are in good academic standing, you may be eligible to earn up to 2.0 elective credits. You need to connect with your School Counselor to receive the contract. At the end of the year, your employer will verify that everything listed on your contract has been met via signing off on the contract, calling a district Work Based Learning Coordinator, or writing a short evaluation. Once your employer has verified the contract, the Work Based Learning Coordinator will tally the total number of hours worked and submit credit(s) to the School Registrar and School Counselor.

150 hours = .5 credits	300 hours = 1.0 credit
450 hours = 1.5 credits	600 hours = 2.0 credits

Evaluations

Student Progress Reports are the School Without Walls report card. They are a measure of personal growth and academic development. Although evaluation is constantly going on, these written evaluations provide an official record. Evaluations are done four times a year, the last week of each quarter. The forms serve a dual purpose:

1. As a contract that indicates that the student knows what is expected.
2. As a measure of how well the student has accomplished course standards and expectations.

They are used as a basis for an evaluation conference with the student in each class during evaluation week. All evaluations of student work will clearly delineate what was expected and what was done. Parents and guardians will be able to tell the experience's content, the level at which the student functioned, and what the student accomplished. If the student is not meeting the course requirements, the instructor will inform the student's advisor and parent or guardian at any time.

Grades

We believe that each student is an individual who cannot and should not be measured against each other. **We do not give conventional letter grades.** Our students will earn 1.0 credit or 0 credit. If a student fails two-quarter periods in any subject, a conference will be scheduled to put an intervention plan in place to help the student and/or determine if School Without Walls is the appropriate placement.

Student Parking

Any student who drives to school must first register the vehicle (make and model, license plate number, and student's phone/cell number) with the Main Office. The designated student parking is in the back row of the lot directly across the street from the school.

Personal Needs Time

Each day, students are given time in their schedules to attend to Personal needs. This may include working with a teacher, working with other students, eating lunch, conferencing with teachers, completing teacher-assigned tasks, or study hall. This is not a time to congregate in the halls or classrooms. The Commons Area or outside are the designated spaces for socializing.

The City School District provides breakfast and lunch for all students. However, the “open campus” privilege will **not** be available to 9th grade students until the beginning of the second semester (February 1, 2024). This means that grade 9 students will **NOT** be allowed to leave campus.

Only students in good academic and behavioral standing are allowed to leave the building for lunch. It must be understood that going off campus for lunch is a **privilege**, and academics are the first priority. Students are expected to behave as responsible citizens while representing SWW off campus and know that this privilege can be taken away by a parent, teacher, or administrator.

School-Based Planning Team,

The Rochester City School District requires that every school have a team composed of teachers, administrators, parents, and students to make decisions about each school’s goals, curriculum, and organization. Our School-Based Planning Team meets once monthly to discuss and reach a consensus on various issues, proposals, and problems. Although there are elections for the voting students and the four voting parents, any student or parent may attend this meeting as an observer.

School Policies

RCSD Attendance Policy

What does the policy say?

The policy requires students to maintain a minimum level of attendance in each class and each evaluation period to be eligible for a passing grade. The minimum level of attendance is 93% of each evaluation period. If the attendance falls below the minimum level in any class, the student will not pass that class for that marking period. Of course, all students are expected to strive for 100% attendance, not just the minimum. Being on time every day counts.

What is the difference between an excused and unexcused absence?

- Excused absences are for legal reasons such as confirmed illness, death, class trips, etc.
- Unexcused absences are for reasons such as family vacations, oversleeping, and missed bus.

All absences will be counted against the minimum attendance requirement, whether excused or unexcused. However, unexcused absences will trigger specific interventions, including phone calls, letters, home visits, and referrals to community agencies. Therefore parents are expected to notify the school via phone, email, or letter when the student is absent.

What if there is no way I can avoid an absence?

Students can make up any missed work within 10 school days after returning to school from an absence. The student is responsible for contacting the teachers regarding missed work.

How will I know if I am falling below the minimum attendance requirement?

District officials will notify parents or guardians via mail as soon as you fall below the minimum requirement. Parents are encouraged to contact the school counselor or social worker if they are experiencing difficulty getting their child to attend school.

*Every time a student is absent from a class or school,
the school will call home.*

When a student returns from an absence:

- Bring a letter of excuse from the parent or guardian and give it to the Main Office staff.
- Contact each teacher requesting the work missed on the day(s) of absence and try to talk to them at the appropriate time at the end of each class. Work assigned before the absence will be expected upon the day of return.
- Make up any quizzes or tests missed.

Remember, all missed school work must be made up within 10 days of returning to school after an absence **and** must be of acceptable quality.

If you're late to school, sign in at the Main Office and immediately go to your scheduled class.

RCSD School ID and Bus Pass

Your school ID card can be used for transportation during school hours to carry out your academic commitments. This pass is good on school days at times and routes as agreed upon by the RCSD and RTS and is in effect until 7:00 pm. SWW **cannot** issue replacement bus passes or RTS passes. If a pass is lost or stolen, please report it to the school clerk, who will notify the Transportation Department. The first replacement pass is free, and after the second lost pass, students must go directly to the RCSD Transportation Department, located at 835 Hudson Avenue, Building #1. There is a \$2.00 charge for replacement bus passes.

Main Entrance and Emergency Exit Doors

The only doors used to enter or exit our school are through the main entrance. Only in the case of a true emergency are the side doors used. If you are trying to enter the building when the main entrance doors are locked, there is a buzzer to the right of those doors, which connects you to the Main Office. Office staff will then unlock the door through the buzzer system. Under no circumstances should any student open the door for students, parent(s), or visitors to the building.

RCSD & School Without Walls - Dress Code

We expect everyone to attend school wearing clean, neat, and appropriate clothing to a serious learning environment. Specifically, the following dress requirements must be adhered to:

- Skirts, dresses, shorts/skorts must cover half of the thigh area so as not to expose any part of the buttocks while standing or sitting.
- Boys' pants must be closed at the waist with a button, snap, or zipper and secured by a belt if necessary and fit properly. Pants worn too low are not permitted. Underwear must not be seen.
- Clothing made of transparent fabric, beachwear, strapless tops, halter tops, low-cut, open-back, bra tops, or showing of midriff/stomach is prohibited.

- Students must remove sunglasses, nightcaps, and bandannas upon entering the school building.
- Students may wear hooded sweatshirts; however, hoods must be removed from the head while in the building. This is for safety reasons in the event that an individual needs to be identified in an emergency situation.
- Clothing with violent or sexually suggestive messages or imprints may not be worn. Students are prohibited from wearing any sign, symbol, logo, or garment which has become synonymous with any gang, cult, Satanism, unauthorized club, or organizational activity. Provocative clothing is not allowed.
- For safety reasons, students must wear appropriate shoes that always fit securely. No house shoes or slippers may be worn except during approved school activities.
- Pajamas, sleepwear, and blankets shall not be worn except during approved school activities.

We enforce the dress code guidelines to help keep an orderly school environment focused on learning. Students who come to school with clothing that violates school policy will be asked to change into different clothing we keep at school. If they do not have clothes here, we will call a parent to bring a change of clothing. The Administration has the discretion to determine appropriate dress.

RCSD SCHOOL BOARD POLICY STATES THAT STUDENTS WEARING QUESTIONABLE DRESS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND CLASS.

Plagiarism

It is expected that you are attending School Without Walls not only to gain knowledge and skills but also to become a more responsible citizen of the community. Attempting to pass off as your own ideas or words of another, whether from a published text, a computer, an internet site, or another person's work, is absolutely unacceptable. If you submit any plagiarized work to a teacher, you shall not receive credit for that work, which will be noted on your evaluation. Any plagiarism could also lead to a not progressing for that marking period and a research paper on plagiarism must be completed.

Lockers

Each student will be issued a locker. Students must purchase their own key lock or combination lock for their locker and give the combination or spare key to the School Secretary. The student is responsible for keeping his or her locker clean. Students are required to use their assigned lockers. **They may not be shared.** Coats and items not used in class should be stored in a locker. Students are permitted to go to their lockers throughout the day.

School administrators and school safety officers have the authority to search student lockers and any items in the lockers, such as book bags, coats, etc. Students will be held accountable for the contents of their lockers. Any contraband or evidence of a crime found due to a locker search will be turned over to the appropriate authorities.

Locker abuse will result in a suspension of locker use or permanent removal of locker privilege. Locker abuse includes but is not limited to, the following: hiding an item not allowed in school, displaying inappropriate material in the locker, and damaging the locker.

Transition (time between classes)

Students are expected to act maturely and walk from one class to the next. Since there are no school bells, students must be responsible to arrive at their classes on time.

Computer Use



Every student at School Without Walls will be assigned their own Chromebook. Access to the Internet will be granted when the parent or guardian and student have signed the Internet Usage Agreement form, and it is on file in the office. Students may only access websites allowable by the district. Under no circumstances will cyberbullying be tolerated. Abusing internet privileges will result in the suspension of the privilege. Students will be held financially responsible for breaking or damaging computer parts.

Bathroom Use

At School Without Walls High School, we do not have hall monitors or passes. You do need permission from your classroom teacher to use the bathroom. However, you are expected to return to class promptly after bathroom use. You are responsible for finding out what you missed while you were out of the room.

Student Use of School Telephone

School telephones are strictly for school business. There is a telephone for student use located in the Commons area near the school store.

Participation in Extracurricular Activities

A student must be in good academic standing and meet SWW citizenship standards to participate in any extracurricular activity or event. If you are unsure if you meet these standards, consult your advisor or school counselor. We do not participate in the NCAA clearinghouse for athletic scholarships.



Alcohol, Smoking & Use of Other Drugs



In September of 1978, the school community clarified the policy on the use of drugs (non-prescribed) and alcohol at School Without Walls. A student cannot function under the influence of drugs or alcohol; such an individual doesn't belong in school.

The use or possession of any alcohol or non-prescribed drugs in any form is absolutely forbidden and will result in immediate disciplinary action and the recommendation for immediate substance abuse assessment. Repeated offenses may have more severe consequences, as outlined in the RCSD Code of Conduct. This policy and these guidelines will be followed whenever drugs or alcohol are used during the school day or at school events, wherever they occur.

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on school grounds. Smoking products include:

- Cigarettes
- Contraband of any kind
- Electronic Vapor Products
- Cigars/Pipes
- Smokeless Tobacco

Any student smoking on school grounds will be subject to disciplinary action.

Visiting Other Schools

Students are not permitted to visit any other school without making prior arrangements with the parent or guardian, the other school, and the student's advisor. A student can be arrested for trespassing at other schools if the above arrangements are not secured.

Visitors to School Without Walls

Visitors to SWW are welcome for business or educational purposes. Social visiting is not allowed. Visiting by former students is only permitted with the Principal's approval.

1. All visitors must make arrangements at least 24 hours in advance unless waived by the principal, except for
 - a. School Without Walls graduates on official business.
 - b. Parents or guardians of School Without Walls students.
 - c. School district personnel.
2. Children of current School Without Walls students are not permitted in the building during school hours.
3. All visitors must sign in at the main office before being permitted anywhere else in the building.
4. The School Without Walls student being visited is expected to inform the visitor of our rules for behavior, and visitors are expected to follow those rules.

**This visitor's policy applies to the entire School Without Walls property,
including the parking lot.**

Persons who do not register or do not follow the rules for behavior of the School Without Walls may be removed from the property or prosecuted for loitering or trespassing under sections 240.35 and 140.10 of the New York State Penal Law.

Books/Equipment Use

Books and equipment for classes are loaned to students by the school. Every student is responsible for every book and item of equipment in their care. Students are responsible for paying for lost or damaged items.

Fundraising and Student-Generated Funds



Students involved in a fundraising activity are responsible for collecting money and promptly turning it in to the advisor of the activity. The advisor of the activity is responsible for all collected money. 15% of all money raised goes to the Student-Generated Fund (SGF) in the main office immediately following the fundraising activity. This fund is to be used at the discretion of the School Without Walls community. Money can be withdrawn from the SGF for purposes deemed reasonable by the community and agreed to through a Decision-Making proposal. Any proposal that calls for \$250.00 or more from the SGF requires a 2/3 majority of total school enrollment to pass. Classes or groups that propose taking over \$50.00 out of the SGF must donate 20% of their revenue from their fundraisers for the remainder of the year.

All-School Social Events

All social events will occur upon the authorization of the school community (students and staff). The purpose of all-school events includes:

1. Learning how to plan and implement such events.
2. Encouraging camaraderie and school spirit.
3. Encouraging and channeling creative energies.

Unless otherwise stated, all-school social events are only for current SWW students, SWW graduates, and staff. It is the entire community's responsibility to ensure that the integrity of all-school social events is maintained.

Authorization for all-school social events must be in the form of a majority vote on a formal, detailed proposal. Proposals must include the following:

1. Rationale for the event.
2. Date, time, and place, including a rain date.
3. Transportation arrangements and schedules.
4. Food and beverage arrangements, including paper and plastic ware.
5. The program (see below) includes provisions for cleaning up and returning borrowed items.
6. Safety of all students.

Any school social event must include a carefully considered written program. To meet the primary purpose of an all-school social event, program planners should consider items such as the overall theme, games, and competitions (including detailed instructions), music, costumes, judges and prizes, and safety rules. Program planners should arrange for publicity which, in addition to conventional announcements and posters, may include visits to extended classes during decision-making, skits, town meetings, and other creative endeavors.

School Logo, Colors, and Mascot

The school logo, as pictured on the cover of the handbook and other official documents, were voted on and accepted by the student body. Changes to the logo should be made only through decision-making. The School Without Walls's official mascot is the Panther. This was established by a school-wide vote endorsed by the decision-making process and may be changed only by similar means. Our traditional school colors are black, white, and red.

Conflict Resolution

When you have a conflict with someone, there are many peaceful ways to solve it. Violence is NEVER an answer to a conflict at SWW. Some ways in which we work through conflicts is through mediation (advisor, staff member, school safety officer).

Political Activity

As a student at School Without Walls, we encourage you to engage in political activity. BUT, it is **only** done in the name of School Without Walls **if the school community agrees**.

Injury

If you get hurt during a school activity, notify the school nurse and office personnel immediately.

Agencies for Assistance

If you want help for yourself or someone you care about, you can talk with your advisor or school counselor and/or contact any of the agencies below:

Emergency:

Fire, Police, Ambulance	911
Lifeline	275-5151
Threshold Center for Youth	454-7530
Center for Youth	473-2464

Individual Abuse/Neglect:

Child Protective Services	461-5690
24 Confidential/Anonymous Hotline	1-800-342-3720
Parent Help Line	454-5060
Alternatives for Battered	232-7353
Rape Crisis	546-7582

Homeless/Runaway:

Center for Youth	473-2464
Hillside Children's Center	473-5197
Salvation Army	987-9500

Legal Advocacy:

Rochester Mental Health Center	922-2500
Youth Emergency Services	263-2257

Sexuality/Pregnancy:

Gay Alliance	244-8640
Planned Parenthood	546-2595

Support Groups:

Alcoholics Anonymous	232-6720
Al-Anon/Ala-Teen	442-2290
Narcotics Anonymous	238-9096

Health:

AIDS Hotline	232-4430
Behavioral Health @ Strong	275-3535