

MISSION

Wellsprings Friends School provides alternative learning approaches, supportive community, and a culture of individual affirmation in which teenagers are mentored and assisted towards meeting the challenges of adolescence and adulthood.

GOALS

- To hire only people with the personal level of maturity to support the growth of each student.
- To mutually decide with prospective students if this school is a good match for them, being open to accept and give a chance to students as much as possible.
- To make education at Wellsprings an opening up, not a filling up; and to take the time to get to know each student and their individual learning needs.
- To nourish a community where each person feels accepted and appreciated, and physically and emotionally safe.
- To use dialoguing and problem-solving to deal with any issues that arise in the community.
- To help our students develop an internal sense of responsibility rather than relying on externally imposed controls.
- To assure delight in the ethnic, cultural, and social class diversity among our students and staff, and recognize that every individual will experience the world in a unique way.
- To assure that our educational practices are in harmony with the Earth and with natural processes; to learn about sustaining the intricate, subtle and powerful web of life within and all around ourselves.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Wellsprings Friends School is an open and welcoming environment, where all people are respected. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or physical handicap with regard to student admissions, financial aid awards, the administration of our educational policies, hiring of staff, Trustee selection, or any other program or activity of the school.

STUDENT RECORDS

Student records will be kept confidential and released only upon the signed permission of a parent or legal guardian. Students are welcome to see their own files at any time upon request. Records for former students are kept on file and copies are available upon formal request.

BASIC AGREEMENTS

Agreement 1: I want to be here and want to participate in the Wellsprings community.

I understand that Wellsprings Friends School is a learning community with few but very meaningful traditions and expectations. School traditions include such things as Morning Circle, Community Meetings, Silent Circle, and Friday Activities, which are part of required credit for graduation. Expectations include performing chores, respecting all persons, and respecting the property of others. *I agree to try to live up to the basic ideals of the school and to take part in community activities with a willing attitude.*

Agreement 2: I am here to learn.

The mission of Wellsprings Friends School is education. While learning occurs all the time during the school day, class time is especially focused on content and processes that are important for my growth as a mature human being. I agree to take responsibility, in consultation with my advisor and other staff, for my education in general, and for meeting the specific requirements for graduation. I understand that learning requires consistent class attendance and participation in order to develop mastery of skills and intellectual growth in knowledge, critical thinking, and communication. I understand that being disruptive in class affects both students and teachers in their ability to provide and receive full learning. *I agree not to be disruptive to others during class time. I agree to maintain a minimum of 80% class attendance that is essential for successful learning, full credit, and graduating on time.*

Agreement 3: I will help create a safe emotional climate for everyone.

I understand that one aspect of Wellsprings Friends School that is extremely important to students and staff is the creation of a warm and supportive emotional environment. Many students here have had negative experiences at other schools with verbal abuse or physical bullying, and therefore rely on having a safe and comfortable environment at Wellsprings. I will try to act in a respectful manner towards everyone at the school, including visitors, even though I may not like some individuals as friends. *I agree to avoid hurtful or insulting language and actions towards others, as well as any physical threats.*

Agreement 4: I will resolve conflicts nonviolently and in a problem-solving spirit.

Conflict is a normal part of life, and so are strong emotions. When conflict and emotion result in violence, individuals and community safety are threatened, and relationships are damaged. At Wellsprings, fighting or violent arguing are not appropriate. The Wellsprings way is dialogue and problem-solving, by means of mediation or other non-violent, healing approaches to establishing fair and just results that both parties can accept. *I agree to be willing to seek resolution of any conflict I have with others through non-violent, positive means.*

Agreement 5: I will refrain from using drugs or alcohol at school or at any school activity.

The use of drugs and alcohol by minors is illegal, impedes learning, endangers health and safety, and degrades the reputation of the school. Furthermore, some students are recovering from addictive use in the past, and to encourage this recovery, a drug-free school environment is very important. If staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is under the influence, a parent or guardian will be contacted to arrange for the safe removal from school property or activity location. *I agree not to attend classes or remain on campus if I am under the influence, and I agree never to use or bring drugs or alcohol to school or any off-campus school activities such as field trips.*

THE RULE OF DECENCY

Expected behavior at Wellsprings is based on being decent to one another, or “the rule of decency” (our only rule). We do not wish to spell out all the “do’s” and “don’ts” that might occur in daily interactions, so we rely on each person developing and acting from an internal sense of responsibility. Wellsprings students and staff shall constantly demonstrate sincere caring and understanding toward others, in comforting people who are having a tough day, giving people space when they ask for it (verbally or non-verbally), and just being a lot of fun to hang out with and learn from each day. No place or person is perfect, but here at Wellsprings we are proud of our welcoming and supportive community.

PROBLEM SOLVING

At Wellsprings, we do not believe in punishments, blaming, or labeling. Developing an internal sense of responsibility, rather than relying on externally imposed controls, is our goal for every individual in the community. Any issue or conflict that arises at Wellsprings will be dealt with in a problem-solving fashion. Typically, the persons involved will first meet with one or more staff members, and/or the Head of School and other students when appropriate. Causes will be examined, and solutions explored. Follow-up meetings will be arranged if needed.

Our objective is to be proactive in addressing issues with the student directly. If behaviors that contradict any of the five Basic Agreements continue to occur despite those interventions, we will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) to facilitate a resolution. Egregious disregard for school policies will be addressed with family immediately.

Unwillingness or inability to meet agreements over time will result in additional family meetings. The student may be required to take time for reflection away from school and must be willing to show meaningful reflection and to take accountability in a meeting with staff before returning to class. Sometimes an individualized document of specific agreements and expectations will be created for the student to sign. Meaningful effort to meet those agreements will be expected.

If these steps do not result in the student significantly improving or resolving the issues, a meeting will be required to discuss withdrawal from Wellsprings and other enrollment options.

DRESS CODE

Everyone must wear clothes.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Wellsprings is committed to protecting the widest form and interpretation of free expression. At the same time, some limits are recognized, such as when someone’s oral, written, or pictorial expression is demeaning to another person or group, or merely vulgar without other purpose. In the rare instances when an individual’s choice of expression is questionable, a problem-solving meeting will be arranged.

CELL PHONE USE

Cell phones are an ever-increasing distraction from learning. The Wellsprings policy is that cell phones **should not be used during class without express permission** from the teacher. Permission is given on a case-by-case basis and should not be assumed for any given day.

Headphones and cell phones should be put away completely during Morning Circle, Silent Circle and Community Meeting. If inappropriate cell phone use is addressed twice in a class, the student will be told to surrender their cell phone to the teacher or to leave the class if they are unwilling to have the teacher hold their phone for the remainder of the period. Credit will not be awarded to students who do not participate in class due to cell phone use. Persistent inappropriate use of cell phones will result in the loss of cell phone privileges during school hours. In that case, any cell phone brought to school must be turned in to the Head of School or Operations Manager before the start of Morning Circle. It will be returned at the end of the school day.

Parents/Guardians are requested not to contact their child by text or phone call during school hours, except in the case of an emergency. When a non-emergency message needs to be relayed to a student, the school office should be called and the message will be delivered during a break between classes or during lunch.

HOUSEKEEPING

There are a lot of us occupying these premises five days a week, and our facilities are shared with other groups on evenings and weekends. Visitors, whether casual or on official business, frequently come by. It is always important to keep all areas of the school reasonably clean and neat . Each member of the community is expected to be mindful of cleanliness and to help in performing chores.

MEALS

Wellsprings is committed to the optimal development of every student, and recognizes many risk factors for today's youth, including a sedentary lifestyle, poor nutrition, emotional hardship, and inadequate health education. For students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, social, and developmental success we provide breakfast, lunch and snacks twice daily at no charge to all students.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

NEIGHBORLINESS

We wish to be good neighbors with respect to persons living on either side of the school, and to persons passing by on the street. Students hanging out in front of the campus are expected to behave in a courteous manner toward all persons who pass by, whether pedestrians, LTD riders, or vehicle drivers. Students must not occupy the bus shelter, which is intended only for LTD patrons to use. Our immediate neighbors' property should always be respected .

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend school all day, every day. Occasionally, a student may have a special schedule that requires them to be elsewhere part of the day.

Most learning experiences at WFS require consistent class attendance and participation in order to develop mastery of skills and intellectual growth in knowledge, critical thinking, and communication. A minimum of 80% class attendance is essential for successful learning and is therefore the minimum required to earn full credit.

Learning experiences are communal, not solitary activities. It is expected that students (and instructors) will be reasonably prompt for all class meetings. Instructors set guidelines as appropriate for each course. Consistent tardiness, very late arrivals, coming and going during class, etc. are disruptive behaviors that impede learning not only for that individual but also for all other members of the class. If disruptive behaviors arise, instructors will counsel students individually. If the problems continue, grades and/or credit may be reduced, or the student might be asked to withdraw from the class.

If extended absences occur due to illness or family travel, arrangements should be made with each class teacher (in advance when possible) to provide for compensating work. This may not be possible for some classes or some situations; decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

EXPECTATIONS WHILE NOT IN CLASS

It is expected that students understand that personal matters (other than genuine family emergencies) can be taken care of during breaks between classes or during lunch. Students can take breaks, use the restroom, or take care of other immediate needs during class time, but it is the students' responsibility to return to class *promptly* and *not disturb other classes or pull students away from their studies*. If a break is necessary, it should be limited to 5 minutes (unless otherwise authorized) or the student will be marked as late or absent. The lobby or off campus areas are not appropriate places to take a break; an unoccupied classroom, quiet corner of the building, or outside on the provided benches are the acceptable options.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To receive a diploma from Wellsprings Friends School, a student must complete **24 credits**. Specific areas of study must include:

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|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| [LA] | Language Arts..... | 4 |
| [MA]* | Math..... | 3 |
| [SC] | Science..... | 3 |
| [SS] | Social Studies..... | 3 |
| [PE] | Physical Education..... | 1 |
| [HE] | Health..... | 1 |
| [AP] | Applied & Fine Arts..... | 3 |
| [CB]**+[EL] | Community Building + Electives | 6 |
| | Total Credits | 24 |

**All 3 math credits must be at the level of Algebra I and above.*

***The amount of required CB credit is 0.2 per term that the student attends Wellsprings.*

In addition, students are **required** by the Oregon Department of Education to demonstrate efficiency in certain **Essential Skills**. This requirement must be fulfilled in one of three ways: state test; work samples; or other approved standardized tests.

ACADEMIC SCHEDULING AND CREDITS

The school year consists of four, 9-week terms. Credit is awarded at the end of each term. Credit is not ‘all or nothing’ but rather awarded proportionally to the student’s attendance. In this way, the student’s amount of participation is acknowledged, no matter what, a very helpful system for most students who come to Wellsprings. *The drawback of our system, however, is that students who get some credit each term but consistently fail to achieve full credit, will find themselves ‘surprised’ in their senior year by how far they have fallen behind.*

Each student has an advisor (one of our fulltime teachers) who helps them register for appropriate classes each term and encourages them to earn adequate credit. But even excellent guidance can go only so far: it is up to the student to do the work to earn the needed credit.

Each term, a fulltime student normally enrolls in seven classes:

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| Regular M-Th morning classes: | 3 (@ 0.3 credits each) |
| MW and TuTh block classes: | 2 (@ 0.3 credits each) |
| Friday class: | 1 (@ 0.15 credits) |
| Community Building: | 1 (@ 0.25 credits) |
| TOTAL CREDITS EXPECTED: 1.9 CREDITS | |

Credits are earned primarily based on attendance. Occasionally part of the credit for an individual class may be based on fulfillment of a major project. Grades reflect the quality and/or effort of the work performed during the term.

All students are automatically enrolled in Community Building every term. Not a “class” in the traditional sense, Community Building involves four elements of participation, as explained below. Some students need to be constantly reminded that *Community Building credit is a specific part of Graduation Requirements*.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

“Community Building” is a class unlike others, which carries 0.25 credits per term. You do not earn credit simply by hanging around school on Fridays. **“Community Building” involves genuine participation in daily life at Wellsprings.** It is an essential part of being a Wellsprings student and making the school a comfortable and functional environment—for you, and for everyone here. Formal credit is based on the following criteria:

- Participation in Morning Circle
- Being present in Silent Circle
- Participation in Community Meetings
- Participation in All-School activities
- Participation in School Chores

“Community Building” is required for graduation and is graded is either “Pass” (P) or “No Basis” (NB), with credits calculated proportionally to attendance and participation. Because many students do not begin at Wellsprings in their freshman year, requiring a single fixed number of credits for everyone is inappropriate. Instead, the requirement is individually calculated, based on the expectation that students will earn an average of 0.2 credits (out of a possible 0.25) per term of enrollment, or in other words, at least 80% of the possible credit for Community Building.

COMMUNITY MEETING

Once each term all students and staff gather for a Community Meeting, and at other times when needed. All members of the community are expected to attend. Students and staff are encouraged to bring items for discussion along with concerns and problems that may need to be addressed by the entire community, as well as joys and other sharing. All points of view will be heard and respected, with consensus being reached on any item that requires a decision.

SILENT CIRCLE

Once a week, the school community gathers for Silent Circle, a practice of value for our daily lives rooted in many traditions. As the whole group settles into a sustained period of silence, every person should seek to quiet their mind and body. This is a time for personal reflection and community oneness. During the Silent Circle it is not appropriate to talk, whisper, touch others, pass notes, make noise, listen to headphones, read, share seats, or in any way disturb the peaceful atmosphere. The Silent Circle lasts fifteen minutes and ends with everyone in the circle holding hands for a moment.

VISITOR POLICY

Persons visiting for a full day need to have the host student notify the office at least 24 hours in advance. Upon arrival, the guest should go to the office to check in. Student-hosted visitors not spending a full day with us may come only during the lunch period (12:25-1:00pm). They should leave promptly at the end of lunch. If the visitor’s presence causes tension or conflicts arise, they will be restricted from further visits for a period to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Visitors are expected to come only on an infrequent basis.

VEHICLE SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION

Cars must always be driven in a safe, responsible way. The speed limit on school property is 5 miles per hour and must be respected. Drivers should proceed cautiously, aware that there are frequently pedestrians and bicyclists in the driveway and those other vehicles may be discharging passengers. Visitors' cars and delivery vehicles use the driveway and parking lot at times and should be treated courteously.

The school provides transportation on field trips. Students may NOT drive their own cars on any school trip. Students 17 years or older (with a valid driver license) may transport minors to school before 9:00 am and from school after 3:00 pm. It is NOT permitted for students to transport any other student off the property during school hours (9:00 to 3:00) including lunch.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION POLICY

No student will maintain possession of prescription medication during school hours. All medications must be turned in to the office upon arriving on campus, to be secured. Medications can be dispensed as needed throughout the day by office staff. If any student is found to be sharing their medication with other students, is misusing their medication, or they are too impaired to participate meaningfully in class, Wellsprings will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) to address the situation. Only when this situation is resolved will the student be allowed to return to school.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE POLICY

Wellsprings Friends School recognizes a student's right to privacy and to be free from unreasonable search and seizure. It is the expectation of WFS that students, staff and guests will not bring illegal or prohibited items to school with them. We will all work together to preserve the safety of students and staff and to maintain the integrity of the learning environment.

Should a student be observed or suspected to have an illegal or prohibited item in their possession, a Wellsprings staff member may ask the student to open and reveal the contents of their pockets, bags, backpacks, or cars and to surrender any illegal or prohibited items found. This will be done as privately as possible. In some cases, the surrendered items may be returned to the student at the end of the school day; other items may be turned over to parents. Prohibited items include weapons, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, tobacco products, pornography and pornographic paraphernalia.

Should a student refuse to comply with a request to open pockets, bags, or cars or to surrender restricted items, the student's parents will be contacted, and the student will be sent home for the rest of the day. Before re-admittance, the student and parents must meet with school staff to discuss the incident and work together towards solving the problem.