



STUDENT HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO WEST40 REMOTE SCHOOL

2023/ 2024



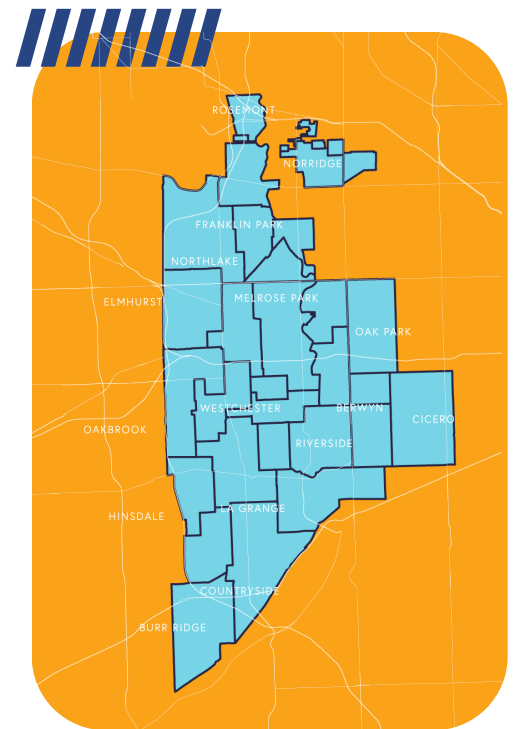
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Welcome to West40!

We are known as "West40" because we collaborate with the 40 school districts in West Cook County, Illinois. We expanded our partnerships to districts in northern and southern Cook County during the 22-23 school year, for a total of 140 possible partner districts.



Remote School At-A-Glance

Serving students in 4th – 12th grades
identified as Medically and Emotionally fragile students

Staffing:

Director of Remote Learning/ Principal of West40 Remote School -

Melissa Hoskins

Lead Teacher - Megan Mathis

Lead Advocate - Kasia Mazur

five additional certified teachers, three additional advocates

Student/ Teacher Ratio 1:20

Student /Advocate Ratio 1:20

Remote School Background

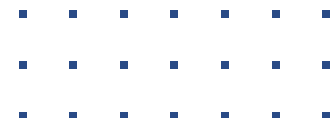


During the 2020-2021 school year, Dr. Klaisner, the Executive Director of West40 ISC#2, regularly met with superintendents throughout Cook County in response to the increasing demands and greater need for support during the pandemic. These weekly meetings provided an opportunity for districts to learn from each other, express their concerns, and come together during a challenging time. As superintendents started planning for the 2021-2022 school year, they discussed their worries about the return of "at-risk" students to in-person classes. These students were identified as those who were medically or emotionally fragile.

West40 created the West40 Remote School to address these needs, which offered remote learning services for students in grades 4 to 12 who required extra support. The purpose of this new program, known as the High Needs Alternative Learning Opportunity (HNA), was to meet the specific needs of these student populations. On September 8, 2021, West40 Remote School opened virtually to students after receiving approval from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).



Vision and Mission



Vision

The vision of the West40 Remote School is to create a safe and diverse learning environment where students feel loved, accepted, and encouraged to reach their full potential by attaining the skills to be emotionally and academically successful individuals.

Mission

We will meet you where you are.
We will be what you need.
We will walk further with you.
We will stand strong with you.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students at West40 Remote School have the right to:

- Function and work in a positive learning environment where they are not bothered by themselves or others.
- Have different ideas, beliefs, cultures, and religious practices, and for these differences to be respected.
- Be treated kindly, fairly, and with respect.
- Have a quiet place to engage in learning.
- Fully take part in school life once all the rules have been met.
- A clear idea of what they are expected to do.
- A fair hearing in cases where academic or disciplinary rules need to be applied.

Students at West40 Remote School have the responsibility to:

- Follow all laws and the school's rules, policies, and procedures.
- Understand and accept that the primary goal of our school is for students to learn and act in a way that makes teaching and learning as effective as possible during instructional time.
- Respect the right of other people to feel safe at school when you are with other people or students.
- Accept that everyone is different.
- Be kind, fair, and respectful to other people.
- Treat private, school, and public property respectfully and keep it safe.
- Make sure that everyone can take part in all parts of school life.
- Understand their place in the school community, and help others do the same.
- Know how the school handles problems, conflicts, and disagreements and use those methods.
- Be courteous and respectful in all your communications.
- Attend all required classes on time and be actively engaged.
- Do your work and turn it in on time.
- Meet with your advocate every week.
- Ask if you are having trouble and need help.

Students Rights and Responsibilities



Student Behavior Guidelines

All students at West40 Remote School are expected to treat each other and school property with kindness and respect at all times. Any violation of the Code of Conduct will be documented and could be used as a justification to transition the student back to their home school.

Although no such rights are guaranteed by law, parents/guardians may contact the Principal to discuss their disciplinary incidents and actions involving their children.





Prohibited Conduct



1 Bullying

Bullying typically involves ongoing and organized mistreatment and aggression towards others. It can be carried out by individuals or groups. It can take on many forms that include but are not limited to, the following:

- Physical: extorting, inappropriate gestures, pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, slapping, punching, spitting and biting, defacing property, and any other form of physical violence
- Verbal: name-calling, insults, put-downs, sarcasm, spreading rumors and gossip, false accusations, homophobic remarks, persistent teasing, and threats
- Psychological: tormenting, threatening, intimidation, ridiculing, humiliation, exclusion from groups or activities
- Relational: Excluding, isolating, ruining reputations, destroying friendships
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, suggestive comments, voyeurism
- Bullying can also be perpetrated via electronic devices and Social Media (Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok, etc.).

Cyberbullying can occur in many forms, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Sending threatening or intimidating messages through email, social media platforms, or instant messaging.
- Spreading rumors or false information about someone online.
- Creating fake profiles or impersonating someone to humiliate or harass them.
- Posting or sharing embarrassing photos or videos without consent.
- Engaging in online exclusion by intentionally leaving someone out of group chats or online activities.
- Sharing private or personal information about someone without their permission.
- Making hurtful comments on someone's posts or engaging in online arguments to intentionally provoke and upset them.
- "Trolling," which involves intentionally posting offensive or inflammatory content to provoke negative reactions from others.
- Engaging in online harassment by consistently targeting and attacking someone through various digital means.
- Threatening someone with physical harm or encouraging self-harm through online messages or posts.

Any form of bullying is not acceptable and will be dealt with severely, sometimes even leading to expulsion. The incident may also be reported to the proper authorities, depending on the nature, intensity, and conclusion of the occurrence. A West40 Remote School administrator will notify the parent and/or guardian via email and/or phone call of any student determined by administration to have engaged in or been the victim of bullying.



Prohibited Conduct



2 Harassment

West40 Remote School follows all federal and state laws and regulations that prohibit any form of harassment. At West40 Remote School, individuals are not allowed to harass others. West40 Remote School firmly believes that everyone should be able to attend school without fear of being treated disrespectfully. Harassment includes any action that creates an environment where learning feels hostile, intimidating, or offensive. Harassing any individual, including fellow students or staff members, will not be tolerated.

Harassment can take various forms, and some examples include:

- Sexual Harassment: This can happen through words, gestures, or unwanted physical contact.
 - Examples include making suggestive comments, telling sexual jokes, using insulting gestures, engaging in unwanted touching, slapping, whistling, or leering.
- Gender/Ethnic/Religious/Disability/Sexual Orientation Harassment: This can occur through words, gestures, or inappropriate physical contact.
 - Examples include making written or spoken comments, telling jokes, insulting others based on gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, placing objects to intimidate, hitting, hissing, or using intimidation tactics.

Remember, West40 Remote School takes harassment seriously and strives to maintain a safe and inclusive learning environment for all individuals.

To report any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying, follow these steps:

1. If you believe you have experienced or witnessed any of the mentioned actions or any other type of harassment, promptly report it to West40 Remote School personnel.
2. Contact the West40 Remote School Director immediately to inform them about the incident. Students can reach out to the Director if they are a victim or if they have observed such actions by another student or staff member.
3. Students will be asked to complete the School's Complaint of Discrimination/Harassment/Bullying form, which is available from the Principal.

It is important to note that the school will not threaten or retaliate against anyone who raises or files a harassment complaint in good faith. However, disciplinary action will be taken against individuals who knowingly make false complaints.

Violating the Bullying/Harassment policies may result in the termination of a student's enrollment in the West40 Remote School Program. The school is committed to enforcing these policies to maintain a safe and inclusive learning environment.



Prohibited Conduct



3 Student Dress Code

The administration, faculty and staff of West40 Remote School are committed to providing our students with a safe, respectful learning environment free from distractions. This includes both our virtual learning environment and in-person, school-sponsored events.

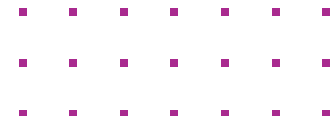
When participating in live class sessions or attending in-person events, students are expected to dress in a manner that is supportive of learning and appropriate to the setting.

- **Comfort and readiness:** Choose attire that is comfortable and allows you to focus on your studies. Avoid wearing clothing that restricts movement or causes discomfort.
- **Appropriate clothing:** Dress in a manner that is appropriate and respectful for a learning environment. Avoid wearing clothing with offensive language, images, or symbols.
- **Maintain modesty:** Wear clothing that maintains a modest appearance, avoiding excessively revealing or suggestive attire.
- **Pajamas and sleepwear:** While it may be tempting to stay in pajamas or sleepwear, changing into daytime clothes helps create a productive mindset for learning.
- **Personal hygiene:** Practice good personal hygiene by maintaining cleanliness and grooming habits. Dressing in fresh clothes can contribute to a positive mindset.
- **Consider your virtual presence:** Keep in mind that even though you are learning from home, you may still be visible to teachers and classmates through video conferencing. Dressing appropriately helps create a professional and respectful virtual presence.

West40 Remote School administration, faculty, or staff members reserve the right to determine what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate dress for the school setting. In matters of opinion, the judgment of school administration shall prevail. All items of apparel worn for religious observance or medical purposes will be allowed in situations in which such accommodation is required by state or federal law.



Prohibited Conduct



4 Virtual Classroom Behavior

Although our online learning environment allows students to join class from any location, we still require all students to act respectfully during live sessions, just as you would in a traditional classroom.

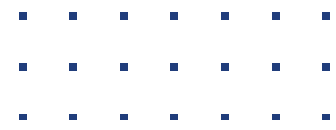
Our conduct standards for the online classroom are outlined in the following rules:

- Make sure you present yourself properly on camera and adhere to the West40 Student Dress Code.
- Ensure that you are in an environment that supports learning, such as a home office, kitchen table, or individual desk.
 - For instance, unless medical needs or impairments require it, students shouldn't participate in live sessions from their beds.
- Please turn off all outside distractions, including radios and televisions, and put your telephone on silent mode if you have one.
- Avoid using language that is offensive or improper in chat, on the whiteboard, or on the microphone.
- Share no personal or contact information (i.e., game identities, invites to external chatrooms, emails, phone numbers, addresses, last names, etc.) unless your teacher or a school official specifically permits you to do so.
- Do not impersonate a teacher.
- Do not publish images, websites, or links to improper or illegal content in the chat box or on the virtual whiteboard.
- Do not attempt to hack into the West40 software and platforms.
- A report of the occurrence will be made to the proper authorities if an illegal posting is made or shared (forwarded, copied and pasted, or emailed).
- Don't forward, copy, or email inappropriate or unlawful content (pictures, images, websites, or links to inappropriate or unlawful content) that was possibly posted in the chat box, on the digital whiteboard, or received via email. Instead, contact your teacher IMMEDIATELY to let her know what might have happened.
- The incident will be reported to the proper authorities if illegal content is shared.

Students who engage in improper or disruptive behavior during live class sessions may be asked to leave by West40 staff. Teachers are permitted to use any other discipline and behavior management strategies as necessary to maintain a safe and healthy classroom, including verbal warnings, written reprimands, removal from zoom sessions, referring the student to school administration, etc.



Prohibited Conduct



5 Treatment of School Property

All students at West40 Remote School are provided Chromebooks. If a need is discovered, hotspots are made available. In addition, materials, books, and other instructional resources may be supplied. The materials are Pearson/ West40 property and must be kept in good condition. Parents are responsible for repairing or replacing any school property that is lost, stolen, or destroyed. The parents are given a list of items that must be returned when a student transitions out of the remote school. All property and equipment must be returned in excellent functioning order upon program withdrawal.

Device Use/Misuse:

Improper use of any computer or the network is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- Use of racist, profane, or obscene language or materials
- Attempting to or harming equipment, materials, or data
- Attempting to or sending anonymous messages of any kind
- Using the network to access inappropriate material
- Sending inappropriate items via chat or email. Saying inappropriate statements during Zoom sessions.
- Knowingly placing a computer virus on a computer or the network
- Using the network to provide addresses or other personal information that others may use inappropriately
- Accessing of information resources, files, and documents of another user without permission
- Vandalism, any malicious attempt to harm or destroy West40 equipment or materials, data of another user of West40's system or any of the agencies or other networks to which West40 has access is prohibited. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance may be viewed as violations of West40 guidelines and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses.
- Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic messages is prohibited. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users or deliberate interference with the ability of other system users to send/receive electronic mail is prohibited. Forgery or attempted forgery of documents is prohibited. Deliberate attempts to create, copy or modify official documents or using West40 technology resources may be viewed as a violation of West40 guidelines and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws.



Prohibited Conduct - Academic Integrity

It is expected that each student's submitted work represents his or her own original effort. It is the student's responsibility to avoid plagiarizing, cheating, and misattributing ideas when writing assignments. Students who do not follow these guidelines will be reported to the administration, which could lead to disciplinary action such as a discussion with the home school or parent, a failing grade on the assignment or exam, no course credit, being denied access to courses, or even suspension or expulsion.

1 Cheating

Cheating is when you use someone else's work to get ahead unfairly. Cheating happens when a student submits another student's work or an assessment from another person and claims it as their own. The following are examples of cheating:

- Copying a classmate's work. This could be an answer to an essay question, a written assignment, or an exam.
- Copying course comments from another school, person, website, or platform.
- Copying answers to tests from other places, like typing the question into a search engine and then copying the answer that comes up online.
- Using online translators to do homework for language classes.
- Also, it is considered cheating for students to use books or other technological devices (including ai, such as ChatGPT) to help them on tests and other assessments unless the teacher says it is okay.
- These actions also hide the fact that a student needs more help and academic interventions, which can lead to a significant academic deficit in the long run. It may be considered cheating for someone to give you hints or help you find the answers while taking an assessment or test.
- These actions also hide the fact that a student needs more help and academic interventions, which can lead to a big academic deficit in the long run.
- Sending in work that isn't your own.

2 Plagiarism

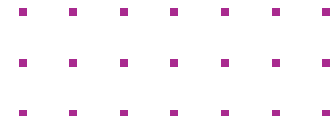
Plagiarism is when you use someone else's work without giving credit to the author. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to the following:

- Using someone else's work without giving proper credit and citations.
- Poor paraphrasing of someone else's work, keeping the original text with few changes or rewording, or not giving credit to the source.
- Copying information without giving credit from a book, play, speech, article, website, or other written or spoken work.

Plagiarism can happen by accident. It's important to know that putting a source in quotation marks or making a comment about it is not the same as citing it.



Attendance Policy



Philosophy

The purpose of an attendance policy is to encourage regular and consistent attendance in an effort to promote responsibility, punctuality, and self-discipline in our students. Due to our student population's fragility, we understand and are aware of the medical appointments that may arise for your child. Below, we have broken down and explained our attendance policy in detail. At the West40 Remote School, we believe that regular attendance and participation foster the experiences necessary for a successful young adult.

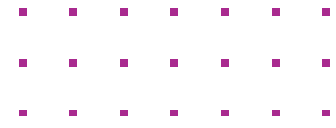
Unexcused Absences

Absences from school that are not recognized as excusable absences. In order to comply with "School Code", the West40 Remote School reserves the right to determine if an absence is valid without cause. The following reasons are absences without valid cause, thereby resulting in an unexcused status. This list is not to be considered all-inclusive:

- Babysitting (siblings, family members, friends)
- Beauty appointments
- Being off camera during class and not responsive to West40 Staff
- Birthdays
- Ditch Days
- Family vacations/planned events
- Job interview
- Missing one class to study for another or make-up test and quizzes
- Oversleeping
- Shopping



Attendance Policy



Excused Absences

Any absence that is considered a “valid cause” for absence. The following could be considered reasons for authorized absences.

- Doctor/Dentist appointments (a note is required for this to be excused)
- Mental health days (up to 5) *Please note:* the second time this is used, it will trigger a social work referral from the homeschool
- Funerals (up to 5 days for immediate family/ 2 days for extended family). Proper documentation from the funeral director is required
- Required Religious Observances
- Court Appointment or Documented Incarceration
- Other Special Circumstances - Any request made by the parent, guardian, or emancipated minor will be reviewed. Approval is at the sole discretion of the principal.

Tardies and Class Cuts

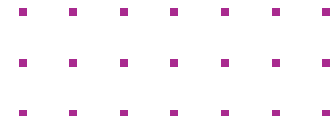
Tardies - A student is tardy when he/she is not logged into Zoom at the beginning of the class and does not have appropriate authorization to excuse the tardy.

Unexcused Period Absence/ Class Cut - Absent from any one class for reasons not recognized as an excusable absence. This includes missing more than 10 minutes of any class at any time of the class (beginning, middle or end) without valid reason.

****Please remember that all attendance is reported to your child's homeschool each month. The homeschool reserves the right to withdraw your child from our program at any time. It is very important to stay within the attendance guidelines as much as possible.***



Attendance Policy



Attendance Form: Reporting an Absence

Note: Only reports from parents or legal guardians are acceptable when reporting absences. If a parent/legal guardian will be out of town, prior written documentation must be turned in through the Absentee form to approve a student's absence. Any submission is subject to verification by phone call.

When a student will be absent, his or her parent/guardian must report the absence using the West40 Remote School Absentee Form on the day of the absence or obtain approval before the absence in order for the absence to be excused. All unreported absences are considered unexcused absences. Failure to report the absence on the day of the absence or obtain prior approval may result in a permanent indication of unexcused absence. Parents/ guardians are responsible for reporting all-day absences, late log-ins, early releases, family trips, or other attendance information. The absence must be reported through the Absentee Form. Emails will not be accepted. Reports by students are unacceptable.

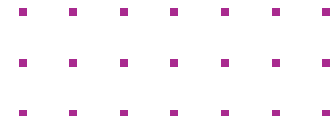
If an absentee report has not been made to the school by 11:00 a.m. on the day of a student's absence, your student's advocate or teacher(s) may call to inquire why the student is not at school.

West40 Remote School Absentee Form Link:
<https://forms.gle/D3i7aNtyAQKFJN6X7>

**Any parent/guardian appealing the categorization of a student absence must fill out an Attendance Appeal Form, which can be obtained by request to your advocate or administration. Appeal forms will be reviewed and decided upon by West40 Remote School administration.*



Attendance Policy



Parent/Guardian Expectations & Responsibilities

Parents/ guardians have a significant responsibility to see that their students attend school on a regular basis. West40 Remote School is committed to forming a partnership with parents/guardians to improve student attendance and prepare students for work, college, and careers. In forming collaborative partnerships with the school, parents/guardians can promote the positive practice of responsibility and reliability in his/her student. Parents, guardians, and students are reminded that Article 26, Section 1, of the School code of Illinois, requires that all children between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) attend school. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure their child attends classes regularly. Parents are asked to cooperate to the fullest in seeing to it that their child attends class daily. If students are not logging into Zoom sessions, it is the parent's responsibility to assist our school in connecting with your student.

Parent / Caregiver Expectations



Establishing a strong partnership between parents, students, and the West40 Staff is crucial for students to excel in virtual learning. Regular communication between our staff and parents is vital, making it essential to keep contact information up-to-date. The following responsibilities are expected from parents, and meeting these expectations is necessary for a child to participate in remote learning through West40 Remote School.

- Parents are expected to make arrangements to pick up needed devices, supplies, and resources from the West40 Main Office. Parents agree to maintain these devices, supplies, and resources and return to the West40 Main office upon transition back to home school.
- Parents are expected to provide reliable home internet for students to access learning daily.
- Parents are expected to set up a dedicated learning space in the home - free from distractions and interruptions (pets, siblings, television, etc.).
- Parents are expected to set up and maintain a daily work schedule for the student, including participating in all synchronous virtual class meetings via Zoom.
- Parents are expected to check Pearson for assignments and grades at least weekly.
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student follows the West40 dress code.
- Ensure that the student follows the established classroom rules and expectations for virtual learning.
- Maintain positive and open lines of communication (phone and email) with teachers and advocates.
- Ensure that the student communicates appropriately with teachers, advocates, and classmates (email, chat feature, etc.).
- Communicate with the teachers and be a point of contact during the day for communication as needed.
- Parents are expected to support academic integrity by allowing students to work independently and by monitoring the resources used.
- Parents are expected to ensure that students submit assignments by due dates in Pearson.
- Parents are expected to promptly communicate any issues or questions to the teacher or advocate.
- Parents are expected to follow federal and state laws regarding student privacy and FERPA. This includes not recording lessons or sessions and not posting photos and videos on social media.
- Parents should NOT engage with the teacher or advocate during live student sessions. If a meeting is desired, please schedule private time with the staff member.



Contact Information



Melissa Hoskins
Director of Remote Learning
West40 Remote School Principal

 **+708-921-9914**

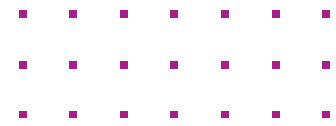
 **mhoskins@west40.org**

 **www.west40remoteschool.com**

First Name	Last Name	Role	Email Address
Megan	Mathis	Lead Teacher/ Science Teacher	mmathis@west40.org
Charley (Theresa)	Cook	Math Teacher	tcook@west40.org
Kelsey	Febos	Elementary Teacher	kfebos@west40.org
Taylor	Newman	English Teacher	tnewman@west40.org
James	Totton	Social Studies Teacher	jtotton@west40.org
Carley	VanHoy	Science/ Electives Teacher	cvanhoy@west40.org
Kasia	Mazur	Lead Advocate	kmazur@west40.org
Denise	Alcauter	Advocate	dalcauter@west40.org
Nathalie	Alvarez	Advocate	nalvarez@west40.org
Francesca	Walker	Advocate	fwalker@west40.org
Jack	Lee	Advocate	jlee@west40.org
Libni	Torres	Director's Admin Assistant	ltorres@west40.org



24-Hour Emergency Phone Numbers



PLEASE LIVE (LIST OF HOTLINES)
<https://www.pleaselive.org/hotlines/>

National Runaway Safeline - This hotline is a referral service for youths in personal crises.
1-800-RUN-AWAY (786-2929)

Child Abuse Hotline-Illinois
(Department of Child and Family Services)
1-800-25ABUSE (252-2873)

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
988 call or text

Cocaine National Hotline
1-800-COCAINE (262-2463)

National Youth Crisis Hotline
1-800-HIT-HOME (448-4663)

National Child Abuse Hotline
1-800-4ACHILD (422-4453)

Elder Abuse Hotline
1-800-252-8966

Between Friends
1-800-603-HELP (603-4357)

Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline
877-863-6338

Alcoholics Anonymous Greater Chicagoland - Chicago, Illinois
1-800-371-1475

Narcotics Anonymous - 24-Hour Helpline (Chicago, Illinois)
708-848-4884

Homelessness 24-hour Hotline
1-800-654-8595

Homeless Information: Illinois
(Suburban Cook County)
1-877-426-6515 (8:30 am - 4:30 pm, M-F)

American Family Housing (Homeless)
1-888-600-4357

Warm Line/Parenting Resource Network/Illinois
847-675-3555

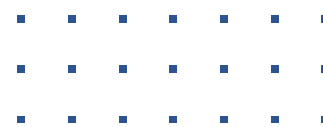
Gang Hotline/Illinois
312-746-GANG (746-4264)

Prevent Child Abuse America located in Chicago
312 663-3520

National Sexual Assault hotline
1 800-656-4673



Non-Discrimination Policy



West40 Remote School complies with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, including all U.S. Department of Education requirements.

It is the policy of West40 Remote School that no person based on race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, gender identity (including gender expression), economic or social condition, physical and/or mental disability, status as homeless, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation should be discriminated against, excluded from participation, denied benefits or otherwise be subjected to unlawful discrimination in any program.

