

5. When a behavior is not health-threatening WYN may ignore it and place focus on positive behaviors;
6. WYN builds a strong sense of community by allowing for positive peer role models, counseling, reflection, modeling, suggestion, etc.
7. One-on-one time between child/youth and staff is allowed so that strong relationships can be built
8. Creative approaches to behavior challenges will be instilled whenever possible. Assignments are not punitive and have a logical correlation to the behavior that is in question.
9. Time may be offered separate from the group for an escalated child/youth to regroup and calm down and prepare to return to the group in a positive and effective manner.

Further, WYN children/youth have the right to:

1. Expect that, as human beings, they will be treated respectfully, fairly, courteously, consistently, and with dignity and without prejudice, bias or discrimination based on their race, age, religion, national origin, color, creed, gender, ancestry, sexual orientation or disability.
2. Freedom from punishment by other youth.
3. Enjoy freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
4. Freedom of speech when discussing their opinions as long as they are not verbally abusive.
5. Have opinions heard and be included, to the greatest extent possible, when any decisions are being made affecting their life and service they are to receive.
6. Freedom to submit and discuss grievances without fear of reprisal.

7. Access and receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support, and supervision on a regular and emergency basis.

B. Western Youth Network prohibits the use of the above-stated restrictive interventions. Other interventions that are prohibited (either directly administered or contracted) include:

1. Any disrespectful, intolerant, or harmful interactions between adults and child that would otherwise be determined as verbal, emotional, or psychological abuse;
2. Punishments that are degrading and break down self confidence;
3. Forced physical activity solely for the purpose of extinguishing a negative behavior;
4. Painful body contact;
5. Substances administered to cause painful bodily reaction;
6. Feeding a child unpleasant food;
7. Contingent exposure to noxious stimuli such as but not limited to: noise, adverse smells, splashing with water;
8. Any potentially painful procedure or stimuli that is administered to the child/youth for the purpose of reducing the frequency or intensity of a behavior, excluding prescribed injections;
9. Abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of a child/youth;
10. Any intervention which would be considered corporal punishment under B.S. 122C-59;
11. Any withholding nutrition, hydration or other basic necessities;

12. Medications will not be administered without written consent.

Western Youth Network respects each child/youth's right to receive the services they need in a manner consistent with our policies and procedures. Please direct any grievance or complaint to:

Jennifer Grubb
Executive Director
Western Youth Network, Inc.
Boone, NC 28607
828-264-5174
grubbj@westernyouthnetwork.org

You also reserve the right to contact the Governor's Advocacy Council for Persons with Disabilities if they feel their rights have been violated.

Governor's Advocacy Council
1314 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1314
Phone: (919) 733-9250
Fax: (919) 733-9173

FILING A GRIEVANCE

There may be a time during your involvement with WYN that you or your child have a serious disagreement with the staff; you think you are being treated unfairly; or you may have an idea that no one will listen to you. We hope that this does not happen, but if it does, what do you do?

The first thing to do is talk to the staff member that you are having a problem with and/or their supervisor. Almost every problem you will encounter can be resolved by talking to the person. The staff member will work with youth and/or parents/legal guardians to

CHILD/YOUTH RIGHTS

It is the policy of WYN to actively promote respect for all individuals and families to whom services are being provided. Employees will protect children/youth from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. WYN will maintain legal mandate to report abuse and neglect. WYN will only release child/youth to parent or approved adult who is operating under their full faculties.

Physical or manual restraint, mechanical restraint, or seclusion **will never be used.**

Staff shall use only the degree of force necessary to repel or secure a violent child/youth. Degree of force depends upon individual characteristics such as age, size, physical and mental health, and the degree of aggressiveness displayed by the child/youth.

- A. **Our behavior management plan is derived from a relationship-driven model.** To manage behaviors with positive interventions we will embrace the Love and Logic philosophy. Positive interventions include, but are not limited to:
 1. Helping de-escalate situations by meeting kids where they are;
 2. Re-direction and/or distraction;
 3. Gentle teaching methods unique to each child to ensure a strong relationship. WYN never gives up on a child and always finds a place for each child;
 4. WYN will recognize that each child is unique and reinforce this in a positive manner;
 5. WYN uses innovative and creative environmental manipulations;

decrease emotional distress. WYN's prevention program will not operate on days that Watauga County Schools do not operate. Please contact Ronald Holste, Brian Kreher, or Nicole Hiegl of the Prevention and Community Education Program, for more information or to refer a child to this program.

Out of School / Summer

WYN coordinates planned activities for youth to do on weekends, school breaks, and summer time. WYN sponsors a full five week SummerLife Day Camp for youth in 6th-9th grades. We use outdoor adventure, experiential education, service learning projects, and team building to strengthen self-awareness, leadership, and social skills. We also host several special events just for kids, including a Halloween Event and a Spring Break Trip. We love to have fun! WYN is geared towards helping kids discover their own unique talents, interests, and skills. By having a low staff to youth ratio, we are able to provide guidance, supervision, and modeling for the youth we serve on a more personal level. If you have any special area of expertise, suggestions, or questions about these programs, please contact Ronald Holste or Angela Grimes. We are wide open for suggestions of activities that your youth would enjoy!

STANDARDS FOR GETTING ALONG

WYN embraces and invites diversity. WYN encourages its staff and youth to appropriately express and celebrate all types of people in an attempt to foster a community of acceptance and support. In accordance with this value, the following behaviors and/or personal conduct are expected from the youth we serve:

- Respectful behavior
- Modest dress
- No vulgar or profane language
- No physical or verbal aggressiveness towards self or others
- No weapons, tobacco products, alcohol, or any other illegal substances

WYN programs encourage participants to establish norms for the group. We always strive to create a supportive and nurturing environment for youth and families.

resolve the issue in a timely manner. However, if they are unable to resolve the issue, you may choose to file a grievance. You may do so in writing by using the "Consumer Grievance" forms that are available at the WYN office. Filling out a grievance form is not complicated and you can do so at anytime that you feel that you have not been treated with fairness and respect. If you need help filling out a grievance, any WYN staff member can help you. We are required to help you fill it out should you need assistance. We will work closely with you to resolve the issue. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, the Executive Director will meet with you within 10 days of the initial written complaint. All efforts will be made to come to a resolution. Remember, the child/youth and/or parent/legal guardian reserves the right *at any time* during the grievance process to contact the Governor's Advocacy Council if you feel that your rights have been violated.

MEDICATION POLICY

The staff of WYN may not dispense over-the-counter or prescribed medications. However, a WYN staff member may safely store and *witness the self-administering* of medications by youth with prior written consent from the child/youth's parent or guardian. Please talk to a WYN staff member if your child must take medication while involved with a WYN program. **YOUTH MAY NOT HAVE OVER-THE-COUNTER OR PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS ON THEIR PERSON AT ANY TIME** (special accommodations will be made for certain conditions, i.e. diabetics, anaphylactic reactions, etc.). *Any youth that are seen with medication in their possession may be subject to search by WYN staff.*

All WYN staff are certified in First Aid and CPR. There are first aid kits located at each WYN site and/or with a staff member while away from main sites. If a child/youth has a medical emergency while participating in a WYN activity, please tell a staff person immediately. WYN staff will notify parents/guardian immediately if emergency warrants advanced medical attention.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE POLICY

WYN strives to maintain and support the privacy of the people we serve at all times. Searches may be conducted only when there is a reasonable suspicion that there is possession of the following:

- Alcohol, tobacco, illegal substances, potentially harmful chemicals or contraband
- Weapons such as knives, guns, heavy blunt or sharp objects
- Stolen property
- Medications
- Dangerous articles or substances not otherwise noted

A history of or reputation for engaging in such behaviors does not warrant a search without reasonable suspicion attached to a specific occurrence.

WYN employees will notify youth if there is a need for a search of his or her person or his or her personal property and explain why it is necessary *prior to conducting the search*.

WYN staff will provide the youth with the opportunity to participate in the search by requesting them to empty pockets, surrender item(s) in question, etc. The Sheriff's Department of the county in which the search took place will dispose of any illicit non-prescription drugs and stolen property. Other articles will be turned over to the youth's parent or guardian by WYN staff.

Youth can help us avoid searches by never bringing in something that doesn't belong and by letting a staff member know when someone has something that they shouldn't. Remember, it is always better to have nothing to hide.

two sites in Watauga County. **The Western Site**, serving Bethel, Cove Creek, Mabel and Valle Crucis, is located at the Western Watauga Community Center and the Old Cove Creek gymnasium. **The Eastern Site**, serving Blowing Rock, Green Valley, Hardin Park, Parkway, and Two Rivers Community School is located at the Boone United Methodist Church. WYN staff picks up students from school and transports them to the appropriate site. WYN staff provide evening transportation home for families that need it on a case-by-case basis. Please talk to Angela Grimes, After School Program Director, for more information.

WYN After School will not operate on days that Watauga County Schools do not operate, or when schools release early due to inclement weather. **WYN After School will operate on scheduled early release days.**

Mentoring

WYN's mentoring initiative matches 6 – 17 year old youth with compassionate adults who serve as positive role models. To participate in this program, family members, teachers, the court system, or law enforcement may refer youth. Activities can include one-on-one relationship building, trips to baseball games together, bowling, having lunch with youth at school, sports, shopping, group monthly activities, and just hanging out. All of our mentors must be a minimum of 18 years old and attend training before they can be matched with a child. All mentors must pass criminal background checks. Please talk to Angela McMann, Mentoring Director, for more information or to refer a child to this program.

At School

WYN delivers important information and life skills training to middle graders at every school in Watauga, Ashe, & Avery Counties. WYN Prevention Specialists partner with Watauga County Schools to coordinate services in our area schools. WYN staff teaches prevention curricula to school or parent referred students during exploratory classes one time per week. The goals of WYN's prevention programming is to build strong personal commitments, improve school performance, decrease drug involvement and

WESTERN YOUTH NETWORK

Welcome to the Western Youth Network (WYN). We are so happy that you have decided to become part of our family! WYN was established over 20 years ago to address the gaps in service for youth and families in Watauga County. WYN primarily serves middle school youth in Ashe, Avery, and Watauga Counties with an array of programs and services, with additional service for youth ages 6-17 in our Mentoring Program.

WYN embraces a relationship-driven model of working with children and families. We strive to meet people where they are, always working with each individual to encourage growth and opportunities. WYN is a place for every child to belong. We support self-exploration and awareness, creativity, and acceptance of others as our values in working with youth during these pivotal years.

WYN's office hours are from 9:00 am –5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Activities on and off site are also scheduled for evening and weekend hours. Contact numbers will always be made available to parents and/or guardians for activities that occur outside of the normal business hours of WYN and/or off site. Please never hesitate to contact us for any reason.

WYN can provide transportation for youth who would not otherwise be able to attend WYN programs. Please talk to a WYN staff member about this service.

After School

WYN provides the only community based middle school after school program for middle-graders in Watauga County. Highly skilled staff and trained volunteers provide homework assistance, skill building, recreation and community service opportunities in a safe, supportive environment. WYN focuses on fun and accountability during the critical after school hours.

WYN After School operates Monday – Friday from 2:30 – 5:30 pm. at

DRESS CODE

WYN respects individuality and creativity of all people. In order to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for all kids, we ask that you not wear clothing that may be offensive to others. We require all staff, volunteers, and youth to adhere to the dress code of Watauga County Schools while participating in WYN programs. Attire may be regulated on a case-by-case basis by WYN staff. A copy of Watauga County Schools Dress Code Policy is available upon request.

WYN sometimes has extra clothing on hand for youth and their families. Please talk to a staff member for assistance.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information that Western Youth Network collects about youth and/or families is protected. Staff, volunteers, and interns receive confidentiality training when they start working with WYN. Sometimes we may need to work with other professionals outside of WYN in order to provide you with the best possible service. We encourage and support collaboration with other youth serving agencies such as the school system, New River Behavioral Healthcare and other local mental health providers such as, Blue Mountain Center for the Healing Arts, Mentor Behavioral Health Services, McKinney and Associates, Children's Council, Juvenile Court, Mountain Alliance, Department of Social Services, and others. Your written consent will be requested before information is shared outside of our agency. In the event of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a person confidentiality will be broken. A certain amount of record keeping is necessary and a staff member is available to explain just what type of information is recorded. Such records are guarded very carefully.

This handbook has been prepared to give you information about our services and to answer some questions that you may have.

We hope that it is helpful.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Western Youth Network
155 WYN Way
Boone, NC
28607

Phone: 828-264-5174
Fax: 828-264-0838

Emergencies regarding After School Students contact Angela Grimes @ 828-773-2565

Emergencies regarding Mentoring contact Angela McMann @ 828-773-3721

www.westernyouthnetwork.org

STAFF LIST

Jennifer Grubb	Executive Director	
Angela McMann	Mentoring Director	828-773-3721
Janet Shook	Mentoring Specialist	828-773-2567
Angela Grimes	After School Dir.	828-773-2565
Ronny Holste	Prevention Director	
Nicole Hiegl	Project Venture Coord.	828-773-4269
Brian Kreher	Curriculum Coordinator	
Grace Fortune	ASP West & Prevention	828-773-9866
Jordan Arnold	After School West	828-773-2566
Stephen "Ritchie"	After School East	828-773-9867
Eddie Byers	After School East	828-773-9867



WESTERN YOUTH NETWORK (WYN) PARENT/YOUTH HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Western Youth Network!

