



Parent Overview

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A Message from the Leadership

We are overjoyed to welcome you into our community, or “village.” At Woodland Star, we are passionate about creating a story of inclusion, inspiration, and growth. We invite you into this story as parents and members of our vibrant and beautiful community. Your presence and your unique story play an important part in the greater narrative of Woodland Star, and we celebrate you.

Woodland Star is an environment in which diversity and individuality create a dynamic and powerful story of learning. We are a community that is rich in diverse cultural perspectives, beliefs and identities, and in which you, as parents, play important roles as guides, protectors and providers. As we connect as families of various backgrounds, the values of mutual respect, trust, and communication are crucial in building a foundation that will allow our village to grow and flourish.

While we are underway in crafting a comprehensive Parents Handbook, we see the need to outline basic information about Woodland Star. The purpose of this overview is to express what is expected of you as a parent in our school’s village until the release of the official handbook. To keep Woodland Star functioning optimally and progressing in unity, we need to communicate the specific structures, values, and policies that require parental awareness, acceptance, and action.

As you read through this overview, we hope that you feel a sense of belonging. We value your input, thoughts and questions, and appreciate the gifts you bring to this village. Without you, the story of Woodland Star would not be complete. Thank you for being a part of our story!

In keeping with our values of flexibility and non-conformity, we have decided to adopt a concept of “story-language” when describing ourselves and our story. As you read through this overview, you will most likely notice terms such as “village” and “School Producer.” We have chosen to use these terms not only to redefine traditional titles and rigid responsibilities, but also to recognize the foundation of our school as an unfolding story.

Village Rules

In order to thrive as a learning community, these “Village Rules” are in place to guide how we interact as parents, staff, and students:

- We agree that the Woodland Star story is first.
- We agree to doing our BEST every day.
- We agree to show Love and Respect in word and action.
- We agree to encourage one another to dream, create and innovate.
- We agree to celebrate the worth of each individual.
- We agree that positivity has great power.
- We agree to talk and listen to each other readily and openly.
- We agree to communicate through appropriate channels.
- We agree to consider every idea for ‘five minutes.’
- We agree to provide space for story sharing.
- We agree to honor each other’s time and work.
- We agree that we are all ambassadors of the rules and policies of Woodland Star.

We invite you to join us in honoring the Village Rules by striving to uphold and celebrate them.

Ethos

Woodland Star School’s mantra is “ad astra per aspera,” meaning “through hardships to the stars.” Located in the complex dynamics of a developing country, we especially recognize the great challenges that the world faces today. As a school, we have an incredible opportunity to empower children to see, to think, and to become. Woodland Star is a place of stability and mindful transformation, enabling children to reach beyond the limitations constructed around them. Through avant-garde education, exploration of identity, and a strong environmental focus, we offer a holistic experience that teaches children to discover their passions, analyze society, and value connectedness. Ultimately, we want to teach children how to take actions that lead to a better world through overcoming their own unique challenges - growing, through hardship, towards the stars.

Vision and Values

Vision

Woodland Star's vision is to develop lifelong learners who will live meaningful lives in a complex and changing world.

Core Values

Our values define our culture and are the principles that guide us. They are the values of passion, connectedness, innovation, respect, and environmental conservation.

Passion

Passion refers to many different aspects of life and learning. At Woodland Star, we are passionate about learning together as a community, about teaching children through enabling their passions, and passionate about pursuing excellence in education for our students and our school community.

Connectedness

At Woodland Star, we strive to connect with each other, the community, our environment, and the world. We believe that learning happens best when the "puzzle pieces" of information and ideas are connected; we teach with an integrated method, so concepts are interwoven and make sense to the student.

Innovation

We seek out innovative ways to empower every student to succeed in life and learning. We strive to teach children in the ways that they learn best; we will utilize innovative curriculum to relate lessons to the learner. We believe that all people have passion, potential, and possibility. Learning needs to be exciting for every child.

Respect

Respect focuses on how we treat ourselves, each other, our school, our community, and our world. We believe each individual has great worth and a role to play in our community. Together, with our diverse viewpoints, beliefs, and gifts, we can impact the world and help make it a better place. This begins with a courteous environment in which students are well-mannered, confident, polite and respectful of peers, teachers, staff, parents and visitors to the school.

Environmental Conservation

Underlying our ethos at Woodland Star is the understanding that we are all a part of this ecosystem that we call the world. It is everyone's responsibility to craft new ways of positive interaction with our environment for our combined sustainability. As a school, we must show children awareness in choosing actions that benefit our local and global community.

Security

OBJECTIVE

For Woodland Star School to be a safe campus for all to learn and thrive.



ACTIONS

Woodland Star expects you, as parents, to:

- Drive vehicles at the appropriate designated speed around Brackenhurst.
- Understand that the school will periodically rehearse emergency procedures in the event of a natural disaster, fire, or lockdown. (Please alert the school if your child is uncomfortable with this.)
- Sign consent forms for children to attend ASA swimming lessons, as well as field trips.
- Provide a signed note or other form of communication to the school in order for your child to leave the campus with an adult other than their parent or personal driver.
- Encourage your children to remain on the school grounds and not wander over to the conference area, including the café, during school hours.

In addition, we would like parents to join the staff of Woodland Star School in ensuring that our children are safe from all forms of abuse. In alignment with our security policy, all suspected cases of abuse will be reported to the administration to be thoroughly investigated by the school under the guidance of the Kenyan law. We

value each and every voice in our community, and take the establishment of trust, security, and peace very seriously.

Keeping Woodland Star a safe and unique environment is the responsibility of the entire Woodland Star community. The school will continually seek ways to ensure the safety of the children and to improve the security of its grounds. Woodland Star is in a unique situation as the school campus is within a wider conference center, adding to the resources and diversity of the school. It is imperative that students and parents are aware that children cannot be monitored if they leave the school grounds. Therefore, for the duration of the school hours, children are to remain on the school campus unless accompanied by one of the members of staff. Educating our children on safe interactions will be addressed further in the school curriculum.

Health Policy



OBJECTIVE

To protect and nurture the physical health of every child at Woodland Star.

ACTIONS

Woodland Star expects you, as parents, to:

- Provide accurate and current medical information about your child at the beginning of every school year, and to update that information as necessary if there are any changes between terms (e.g. if a child has a new allergy or diagnosis).
- Keep your child at home if:
 - He or she has had a fever of at least 100 °F or 38 °C during the last 24 hours.
 - He or she has a sore throat or swollen glands.
 - He or she has an undiagnosed rash or a diagnosed rash that is contagious.
 - He or she has been vomiting or has had diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
 - He or she has untreated head lice.
- Promptly collect your child from the school when requested by our clinical officer due to sickness (e.g. vomiting, diarrhea, unrelieved headache, fever, rash, or head lice) or due to injury.
- Give all medication to their child's class teacher with clear instructions of its purpose and how it is to be administered.. At no time should a student be carrying his or her own medication.
- Inform the school if your child needs any inhalers or allergy injections.
- Accept that pain relievers and first aid to minor cuts or scrapes will be administered to the student after parents have signed an initial consent on the student health record.

Drop-offs and Pick-ups

OBJECTIVE

To ensure the safe arrival to and departure from the school campus each day.



ACTIONS

Woodland Star School expects you, as parents, to:

- Drop off PY2, PY3, and MY students at the lower school building (the first school building on the right as you drive onto campus).
- Drop off EY and PY1 students at the upper school buildings.
- Ensure that vehicles are driven slowly on the Brackenhurst campus.
- Be aware that a security guard is posted on the road during school hours to provide direction and student safety.
- Inform the class teacher of anyone, other than yourself, authorized to collect your child.

Homework Policy

OBJECTIVE

For parents to be fully invested in the homework philosophy of the school.



ACTIONS

Woodland Star School expects you, as parents, to:

- Understand and support the school's approach to homework (see below).
- Communicate openly any related concerns or questions directly to your child's class teacher and thereafter, if still necessary, to the management of the school.
- Encourage your child to work independently, unless otherwise stated in the homework.
- Assist with homework when needed (e.g. clarification of a question, practicing multiplication tables, etc.).
- Not correct every question in an assignment. Missed problems will indicate to the teacher which areas your child needs assistance.
- Have a desk or space in a quiet, well-lit area for your child to complete their homework in.
- Be available to listen to your child read, or to read to them.
- Engage with your child in a discussion about what they learned in school.

At Woodland Star School, we promote well-balanced, meaningful lives inside and outside of the classroom. Education, in its many forms, comes from a variety of sources. Involvement in a range of after-school activities such as dance, music, sports, and drama is encouraged. In addition, young developing minds need the opportunity to rest, explore, imagine, and wander. As a school, we recognize the value of family time in moral and character development, as well as other forms of enrichment.

Homework is widely discussed internationally. As research in this area continues, there are acknowledged educational guidelines that we support at Woodland Star

School. These recommendations vary depending on age. As a school, we recognize the benefits of the following after-school work: reading, discussion, unfinished class-work, working memory activities, projects, and ASAs.

Teachers will coordinate the days they assign homework in order to avoid overwhelming the student on a particular day. Should students have homework that requires more time (refer to “Amount and Frequency” below), conflicts with family activities or independent reading, or if certain homework frustrates your child, please communicate these concerns with your child’s teacher.

Early years students do not receive homework, apart from occasional, simple and fun activities. Assigning homework in the primary years is optional for the teacher. For the primary years, we support the notion that “less is more.”

Homework is an extension of the learning process that takes place in school for middle year students. Homework consists of literacy (reading and writing) and STEM assignments. After-school work may also include preparing for presentations and performances, collaborating with other students, researching topics, and working on projects. Homework tasks are designed to encourage students to develop good work habits, including time management and organization. They also seek to enhance working memory through practice.

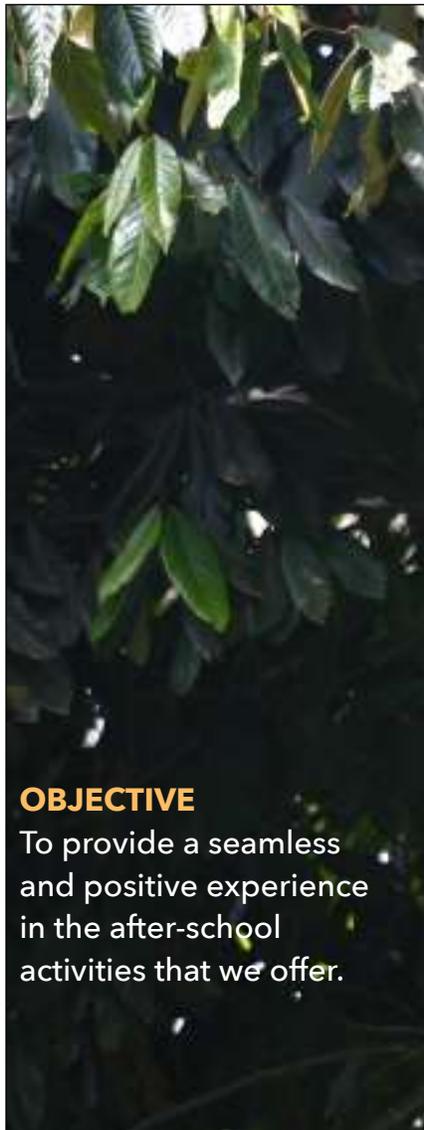
Amount and Frequency

The following chart stipulates the maximum homework time per grade level, not including reading. Based on research, Woodland Star School follows The “10-Minute Rule.” This guideline prescribes a maximum of 10 minutes of homework per grade level per night, for all subjects combined. Please note that this does not include reading or after school activities such as music and drama. The following chart is an adaptation of the rule for our village classrooms.

Maximum Homework Time Per School Night

PY1	10 min
PY2	20 min
PY3	30 min
PY4	40 min
MY	50 min

After-school Activities (ASAs)



OBJECTIVE

To provide a seamless and positive experience in the after-school activities that we offer.

ACTIONS

Woodland Star School expects you, as parents, to:

- Complete the appropriate ASA form for each child.
- Be aware that the majority of ASAs are conducted by third parties who are not employed by Woodland Star School.
- Make payments directly to third party providers.
- Ensure that all payments are made in the first week of ASAs each term in order for your child to continue the activity. Fees may be paid via cheque (made out to instructors), cash, or MPESA payments.
- Be aware that unless stated otherwise, all ASAs take place during the hour immediately after the end of the school day. Music and dance lessons will be held during the day at snack, lunch, or Sports Class. If the child is not in an overlapping ASA, he or she will have music lessons after-school.
- Collect your child promptly at the end of ASAs. Third parties are not obliged to remain with children beyond the end of a lesson, and Woodland Star cannot accept responsibility in the event that parents or drivers are late for collection.

Your feedback on the quality of our after-school activities is very important to us. Diverse and engaging after-school activities help to enrich and supplement our curriculum, and we want to ensure that each activity we facilitate is worth your, and your child's, investment in time and money. As our ASAs tend to fluctuate term by term, generally based off of levels of interest and participants, we are open to suggestions for new after-school activities. Positive feedback is also greatly appreciated!

Children who are not in ASAs are to wait in the library after school until they are picked up.

School Leadership

OBJECTIVE

For parents to have clarity on the leadership structure, roles, and communication channels of the school.

ACTIONS

Woodland Star School expects you, as parents, to:

- Understand the school governance structure and roles of school staff (see below).
- Communicate openly and readily via the appropriate channels as follows:
 - With your child's classroom teacher first for any classroom or learning-related issues.
 - With the school's "Production Secretary" for any administration-related issues.
 - With the "Early Years Producer" (where applicable) for unresolved matters in the above categories.
 - With the "School Producer" for any unresolved matters in the above categories or school-wide related issues.
 - With the relevant "Director" for any unresolved matters in the above points.
 - With the board for any unresolved matters in the above points or policy issues.

Leadership Roles

Directors

John McKelvey serves as the Director of Finances and Facilities and can be contacted directly for any question or query regarding school fees and invoicing.

Sean Anderson fulfills the role of Operations Director of the school and can be contacted directly for board and policy related matters.

School Producer

Timo Lehmann will be serving as School Producer and is responsible for the general management of the school, its teaching and administrative staff, as well as the implementation of its vision.

Early Years Producer

In addition to her teaching role, Mira Boxer leads the passionate team of teachers responsible for the Early Years through PY1 classes. She can be contacted directly for matters related to this sphere of the school, unless they can be addressed by the relevant classroom teacher.

Production Manager

Kristen Chege serves as the Production Manager, working in administration and coordination of the school's needs. Until the arrival of Timo Lehmann, she will be upholding some of his responsibilities, and is contactable for any matters needing attention on this level. After his arrival, she will continue to work in the management of the school.

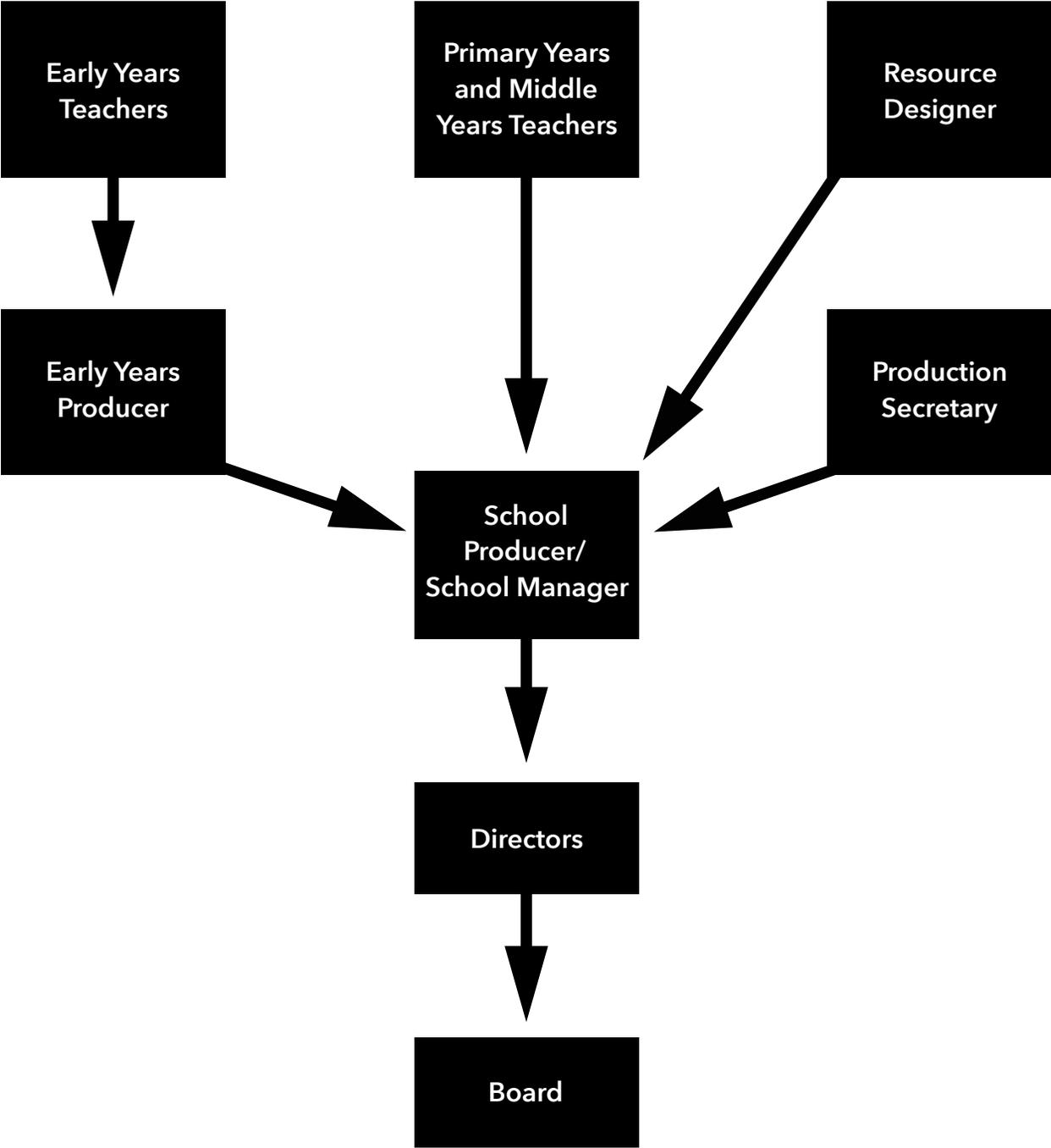
Resource Designer

As well as teaching literacy in the Middle Years class, Amy McKelvey also fulfills a role of researching and gathering resources and curriculum tools for implementation by the team of teachers. Part of this role includes networking and managing key partnerships for the enrichment of Woodland Star School.

Production Secretary

Gillian Kemunto covers the daily administration needs for the school, as well as teaching Swahili and French in the afternoons. We request that, as much as possible, administration issues are addressed to Gillian over email or in person between 8 am and 10 am from Monday to Friday.

Organogram of School Roles



School Board

The school board of the 2016/2017 school year is comprised of John McKelvey, Sean Anderson, Esther Njogu, Amanda Fielder and Kelvin Massingham.

The board is chosen on the basis of aligned values with WSS and a diversity of skills and experience to contribute towards the shaping of the school. All board members are asked to fulfill their role not on the basis of representing any particular stakeholder in the WSS community, but rather to consistently act in the best interest of the school as a whole.

The role of the school board is to:

- Set the overarching vision for the school.
- Support and empower teaching and administrative staff.
- Define and protect the underlying values of the school.
- Lead structure and policy creation.
- Define and monitor annual budgets.
- Make high-level decisions.

Our Ownership

Woodland Star School is owned by ACTS, an organization with a heritage and foundation in the Christian faith. However, this background of faith is never imposed on any student, staff member, or parent. We are resolute that learning about contrasting faiths, theories, and world-views is a critical part of children's education. Woodland Star is proud to celebrate a community of diversity that finds common ground in our school's shared values. Our story is one of many different identities coming together in acceptance, inclusion, and unity.

Key Contact Information

School Mobile: 0790-498-956

John McKelvey
Email: johnm@woodlandstarkenya.com
Mobile: 0792 154 740

Sean Anderson
Email: sean@woodlandstarkenya.com
Mobile: 0720 016 546

Timo Lehmann
Email: timol@woodlandstarkenya.com

Kristen Chege
Email: hello@woodlandstarkenya.com
Mobile: 0731 866 108

Mira Boxer
Email: mirab@woodlandstarkenya.com
Mobile: 0731 999 527

Amy McKelvey
Email: amym@woodlandstarkenya.com
Mobile: 0712 861 081

Gillian Kemunto
Email: gilliank@woodlandstarkenya.com
Mobile: 0720 496 706

Calendar



August 16						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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September 16						
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October 16						
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February 17						
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March 17						
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May 17						
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June 17						
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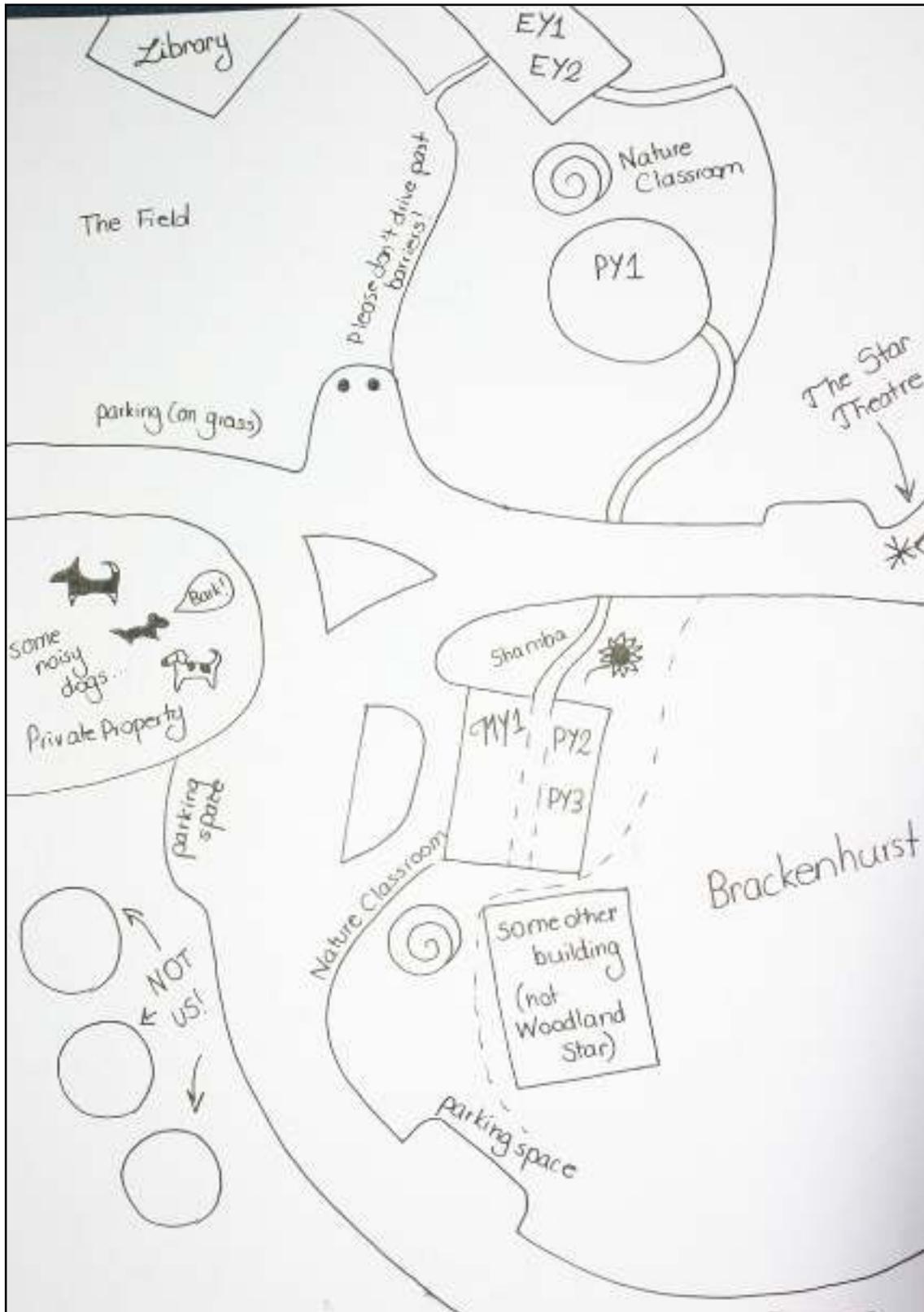
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August 17						
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September 17						
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Date	Event
	School Holidays
	Term Start/ End Dates
	Teacher Work Days / No School
	Religious and Public Holidays / No school
Aug 22	Teacher Orientation/Faculty Work Week
Aug 30	1st Day of School / Half Day
Oct 1	Community Fun Sports Day
Oct 14	1/2 Term Break Starts
Oct 20	Mashujaa (Heroes) Day
Oct 24	Back From 1/2 Term Break
Nov 25	Teacher Work Day - No School
Dec 5	Parent Conference / No School
Dec 9	Term 1 Ends/ Half Day
Dec 12	Jamburi Day
Dec 25	Christmas Day
Dec 26	Boxing Day
Jan 1	New Year's Day
Jan 10	Term 2 Starts / Half Day
Feb 15	1/2 Term Break Starts
Feb 20	Back from 1/2 Term Break
Mar 17	Parent Conference/No School
Mar 31	Term 2 Ends / Half Day
Apr 14	Good Friday
Apr 17	Easter Monday
Apr 18	Term 3 Starts / Half Day
May 1	Labour Day
May 20	International Day
May 31	1/2 Term Break Starts
Jun 1	Madaraka Day
Jun 5	Back From 1/2 Term Break
Jun 23	Parent Conference/No School
Jun 30	Last Day of School / Half Day
Aug 21	Teacher Orientation/Faculty Work Week
Aug 29	1st Day of School / Half Day

Map of Woodland Star School



Closing Remarks

In Rwanda, there is a commonly used Kinyarwanda word that translates as “I celebrate your presence.” This word, “muraho,” is a key expression in the story-language of our school. As our story unfolds, we want to embrace muraho in every step of it. The structures, values, and policies that shape Woodland Star help us found relationships based on the celebration of one another.

We hope that this overview provides you with some critical information about Woodland Star School and outlines the elemental role you are invited into as a parent in our village. Thank you for not only helping us to function as a school, but for the vibrancy of each and every one of your identities.

As we continue to grow, we are excited about the upcoming decisions and choices we face in our collective story. We value your feedback and your opinions about the direction of our school. Together, as a united village, we will take steps of connectedness, of empowerment, and of embrace.

From our leadership to you -

