



# WOODLAND STAR KENYA

September 2016



Welcome to the sixth year of Woodland Star School! We are so excited to welcome new and returning students, staff, and parents to our flourishing community. As a small school in Tigoni, we are dependent on the well-being and growth of our community. With the stability we now feel from five years of community building, Woodland Star is no longer just an alternative to the large, busy schools in the centre of Nairobi. We are becoming much more: an environmentally focused, avant-garde, and globally-aware establishment of excellence. We are so proud of how far we've come, and we're even more enthusiastic about the direction we're heading.

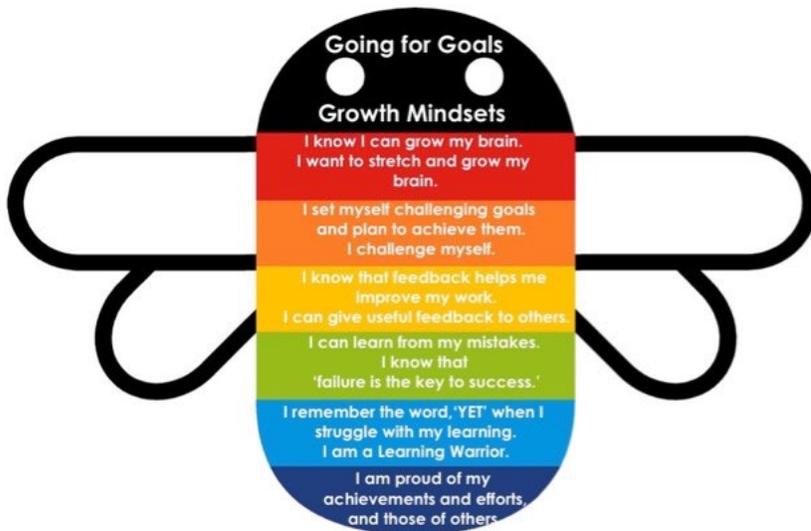


# Connectedness, Belonging, and Village Rules

Woodland Star has always been a small school, and we want to stay a connected school throughout periods of growth. According to the District Administration Magazine, small schools enforce connectedness and unity in the student body. With greater connectedness, a school not only offers more security, but empowers students to realize and activate their innate passions.

Adding to this, the American Psychological Association states that small schools offer a place of belonging to students of minority, students who ask difficult questions of identity, and students who are “at risk for feeling alienated or isolated from others.” Based on global trends alone, small schools seem optimal for third culture children.

As we welcome more members to our community each year, Woodland Star will stay a connected school by continuing to implement our philosophy of community. In alignment with our philosophy, we are establishing Village Rules (see attached) to shape all relationships at Woodland Star School, on educational, social, and administrative levels. We want our students to realize the value of community in the importance of environmental conservation, peaceful conflict resolution, and individual success.



## Growth Mindset

While we have Village Rules for the community, we are actively incorporating “growth” mindset in our classrooms to teach the importance of self-value. As opposed to “fixed” mindset, which only recognizes weakness, “growth” mindset recognizes vulnerability and the potential for change. Mindset Works, a website dedicated to research initiated by Dr. Carol Dweck, says that “those who believe their abilities are malleable are more likely to embrace challenges and persist despite failure.” For example, six years ago, we could have told ourselves that a small school in Tigoni would never work. We probably wouldn’t be where we are now if we had that mindset.

## Holistic Education and the Power of Story

Besides a growth mindset, we are focusing on child-centered education, allowing us to provide holistic education through integrative curriculum and multi-age classrooms. Scholar Base defines holistic education as academic, social, and emotional growth through studying subjects that reflect the connectedness of themes in the world. Scholar Base also states that holistic education is “attuned to each child’s individual persona and learning style” due to the flexibility it generates. At Woodland Star, we believe in providing children with a range of subjects in which to find their passion, from sports to mathematics to performing arts. As partners of the Anne Frank Project, we not only believe that every one of our students has innate passion, but also a beautiful story of realizing his or her passion. This year, we will continue to develop our arts department, providing students with greater vehicles of expression to enable the powerful sharing of story.



## Awareness of our Global Presence

We want our students to be aware of the world around us, and learn how to engage with it creatively and sustainably. Students will study Peace Heroes, a highly effective curriculum in East Jerusalem that teaches the urgency and value of peaceful change through a medium of history and geography. Woodland Star is experiencing connectivity with other parts of the world, developing partnerships from East Jerusalem to Buffalo, New York. This little school in Tigoni is now truly a part of the global educational community, and it’s due to our unity and



# NEWS AND EVENTS

## Wild Wednesdays

Our first two Wild Wednesday Assemblies were wild, and we hope the trend continues!

So far, we've introduced two awards available to our student body: the Green Giant Award and the Peace Hero Award. The Green Giant Award goes to one student who shows outstanding initiative and creativity in making Woodland Star a greener, more environmentally-conscious school. Every week, the Peace Hero Award is given to one student from each class level who demonstrates notable effort to keep a peaceful dynamic at our school.



On our second Wild Wednesday, we were privileged to have Stratton Hatfield come from Naboisho Conservancy to talk about his work with martial eagles. Who knew that tracking software is detailed enough to figure out if an eagle is eating something?

We're aiming for Wild Wednesdays to be community events, meaning that parents are most definitely invited to participate in the assemblies from 2:00 to 2:30 pm. We're working on a solution for more comfortable seating.

## Harvest Festival and Open House



This year's Harvest Festival is coming up on October 29!

A budding tradition, this festival is a huge event for the Woodland Star community. While children (and adults, if you like) can go on hayrides or get face-painted, there is also live music and an organic vegetable market. Many vendors will be selling health products and other goods mainly sourced in Kenya. It's a fabulous time to discover local food, talent, and businesses while connecting to the Woodland Star community.

Simultaneously, Woodland Star School has an Open House during which prospective parents and festival attendees are invited to get information on the school. If you know of anyone who is interested in Woodland Star, the Harvest Festival is an opportune time to introduce them to Woodland Star and our wonderful community.

The festival begins at 11:00 am and ends at 5:00 pm on the Brackenhurst campus. It costs 200 shillings per child and 350 per adult.

## Parental Permission for Photographs

In order to share photographs of our students on social media, it is necessary for us to have parental permission to post pictures of each child. All of our photographs arise completely from the intention to capture the atmosphere and spirit of Woodland Star. We are protective of our media; all of our documents stay within the Woodland Star system, unless a parent requests to be sent a copy of a photograph of his or her child. Permission forms will be going out at the end of September in conjunction with our Child Protection Policy. We kindly ask for punctuality in the return of this form. Until then, we will be asking permission via email. We understand sensitivity in this area, and our priority will always be safe regulation of media.



### Here's to another month of connectedness and growth!

We love watching the day-to-day growth of our school. The small victories of every day and the memories of each month reflect everything that makes our school so special. They are proof of just how genuine and dynamic our community is. These are the moments, however little they may be, that motivate us to work harder, to never give up learning, and to achieve more than we ever thought possible. These are the moments that drive us to excellence.



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