

MFA - Letter to Parents on MFA Policy

Last Modified on 10/09/2025 1:55 pm PDT

Dear Harvard-Westlake Parents,

We hope your child's school year is off to a great start! To enhance the security of student accounts and school-related services, Harvard-Westlake is implementing **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)** for all students beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

What is MFA and Why Does It Matter?

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is a security method that requires users to verify their identity using two or more factors—typically something they know (like a password) and something they have (like a key fob, phone, or other device). This extra step greatly reduces the risk of unauthorized access to student accounts, even if login credentials are compromised.

When Will MFA Be Required?

Students will only be prompted for MFA when accessing school services from off campus—such as from home, a friend's house, or any location outside of the school network.

While on the campus network, students will not be required to complete MFA.

MFA Options for Students

Students may choose one of the following methods:

1. Okta FastPass
 - o A desktop-based option that allows students to verify their identity using their laptop via device-based login (e.g., Face ID, fingerprint, or PIN). This is the preferred option for most students.
2. Okta Verify (**recommended for students and parents with phones**)
 - o A mobile app that sends a secure push notification to a smartphone for quick approval.
3. SMS Text
 - o A one-time passcode is sent via text message to a mobile phone.
4. Security Token (Fob)
 - o A physical device that displays a rotating 6-digit code. Provided by the school if a student does not have access to a phone or cannot use FastPass. If the school-provided device is lost or broken, a replacement can be purchased from the campus bookstore.

Parent Backup Access (Highly Recommended)

We strongly encourage parents to enroll in MFA using Okta Verify (**recommended**) or SMS text as a backup method. In situations where a student does not have access to their primary device (lost, forgotten, battery dead, etc.), the parent would receive the MFA prompt and can approve access on the student's behalf. Please keep in mind that technical support may not be readily available outside of normal school hours. While we'll do our best to assist promptly, responses may be delayed in the evenings and on weekends. Additionally, teachers will not accept MFA-related issues as an excuse for missed assignments.

Setup Instructions

Step-by-step instructions for each MFA method are attached to this email. Please review them with your student and assist with setup as needed.

If your student does not have a cell phone and requires a security token or has any technical limitations, please contact our support team at ithelp@hw.com so we can ensure they are properly equipped.

We appreciate your support as we continue to prioritize security, privacy, and a safe digital learning environment for all students.
