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WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Tradition of Excellence



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AT A GLANCE

Parent Reference Guide

At a Glance is a reference guide for some of the frequently asked questions regarding Jefferson School's procedures. If your questions are not answered after reviewing this handout, please call our main office and we will be happy to assist you. Please know that the official [Westfield Student-Parent Handbook](#) is located on our district website. It has much detailed information regarding some standard procedures, expectations and programs.

Mission Statement

The Jefferson School community fosters a nurturing and secure learning environment. We strive to empower students to reach their full potential and become lifelong problem solvers and community participants. Jefferson students work hard in a climate that promotes intellectual stimulation, creativity, resilience and social and emotional growth. Together, we demonstrate kindness, respect, integrity, and appreciation for ourselves and others.

As our school community works towards fulfilling our mission, all students are to abide by the Westfield Public School's student discipline and code of conduct. Please visit our website: Board Policy [5500 Code of Conduct](#) and [5600 Student Discipline](#). Our student behavior expectations are outlined in the Jefferson [Code of Conduct](#), which is a child friendly version. Please review this with your child in early September and as needed throughout the year to serve as a reminder for appropriate behavior and expectations.

School Hours

Arrival 8:30am (Morning supervision starts at 8:30am)
Morning Attendance and Session begins 8:45am
School Day ends 3:10pm

Reporting Your Child's Absence

Please log into the [Genesis Parent Portal](#) to report your child's absence. If you cannot access Genesis, please call or email us promptly.

What to Tell Us When You Call to Report Your Child's Absence

When leaving an absence message for the main office, please call 789-4491 and clearly state the following:

- Child's first and last name – please say it twice slowly and spell out the last name
- Child's teacher
- Child's date(s) of absence
- Reason for absence - If your child is out due to illness, please state diagnosis or symptoms as we are required to report illnesses per NJ State regulations.

When emailing us to report your child's absence: Email both our secretaries, Mrs. Carly Porciello at cporciello@westfieldnj12.org and Mrs. Jill Niemczyk at jniemczyk@westfieldnj.com, and copy the homeroom teacher to report your child's absence. Please do so before 9:00am.

Knowing Your Child Arrived Safely... Early Alert Protocol

Jefferson's early alert protocol provides an absentee verification service for parents to help ensure a safe arrival at school each day. Parents are to inform the school by reporting it through the Genesis Parent Portal at any time (day or night) when their child is going to be absent. If a child is absent and we have not received your information through Genesis or another form of communication from a family member, we will then attempt to contact the parents. For safety reasons, we need to be sure everyone is accounted for each school day.

Health and Safety

Please see our [Health Services Webpage](#) to review the Administrative Guidelines. *Students who become ill at school must go home and be picked up within 30 minutes of being notified by the nurse or secretary.*

Clean and Sanitize Hands Frequently

Let's work together to keep our students healthy! Please be sure to emphasize the importance of washing hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer frequently. Students and staff are encouraged to sanitize their hands before eating.

Student Absence and Tardiness

Students are expected to be at school when school is in session unless they are ill or excused as per the [Attendance Policy](#). We appreciate promptness to school as a student's tardiness disrupts the daily routine and class instruction. In addition to absences, tardy days are also reported on a pupil's attendance record. Students with excessive absences and/or tardiness will receive notification from the school. Parents are encouraged to check the Genesis Parent Portal to view student attendance.

Student Arrival

All students are to report to their assigned entry door (See [Arrival Diagram](#)). Morning Supervisors are on supervision at 8:30am so students can begin to line up when they arrive on school grounds. Students should not be using the play areas before school. Grade 1-2 students will enter and proceed to the gym to wait for their teacher.

Grade 3-5 students are to line up between 8:30-8:40am and wait for their teacher. Homeroom teachers will escort the students into the building and travel to their classroom together. Arrival doors are closed and locked at 8:45am after the last class has entered so teachers can begin instruction.

Please say a quick “good-bye” and encourage your child’s independence as he/she waits on line for the teacher. During inclement weather, students should wait in their vehicle until it is time for them to enter the building. Rain jackets are recommended.

For safety and security reasons, all external school doors are locked. Once students have entered, the Morning Supervisors will close the door. Students arriving after 8:45am are to go to the main entrance. The accompanying adult should escort the child to the main entrance and buzz in.

For parents who are driving, please follow all traffic be sure to review the parking map to avoid

Student Dismissal

Dismissal is at 3:10pm. First and second grade students need to be picked up by a parent or caretaker. Most students are dismissed at the same door they entered in the morning. Teachers will inform students and families of their exit door if it is not the same as arrival. Parents or caretakers are to wait by the sidewalk or at least 30 feet away from the exit door so students can leave in a safe manner. For families with multiple children, once the older siblings are dismissed outside, they can make their way to their younger sibling’s exit door. Due to our high pupil population, students are not to travel within the building to meet with younger siblings. The only exception is in the event of unsafe inclement weather at the time of dismissal.

Please be aware that there are days when a class may come out a bit late. We ask for everyone’s patience when this happens, as we are teaching the children independence and responsibility in gathering their own things and getting themselves out in a safe and orderly manner. Students are not permitted to return to school to pick up forgotten items once they have been dismissed as all doors are locked. If a parent or caretaker does not see their child at the designated exit door, please go to the main entrance, press the bell, and check with the secretaries.

Lunch

Students are to bring a nutritious lunch and beverage (no candy, soda or glass bottles/containers please) from home each day. Due to food allergies, students are not able to share food. We do not have a cafeteria at Jefferson, so our school lunches come from the district food service vendor, Chartwells, located at the high school. Please review the information on our website under “Food Service” regarding ordering details. Typically, the PTO offers lunch for purchase throughout the school year. PTO lunch orders are processed in September and January.

The lunch/recess hour is from 11:35-12:35. Grade 1 students eat in the classrooms and have their own lunch aide. Older students will eat in the gym and they are supervised by teachers, paraprofessionals, and lunch aides.

All students go outside (weather permitting) during the recess period every day. Students should dress appropriately for the weather. For any student who cannot go outside and participate in recess, a doctor’s note is required stating the number of days the child needs to be inside and the reason(s). Students who are exempt for physical education classes are also exempt for recess. In order for a student to resume regular physical activity without restrictions, a doctor’s note must be sent to the school nurse and approved by her.

Students are welcome to go home for lunch, but parents must notify the school of this arrangement in writing before the school day begins. This written notice (email or note) should be sent to both the homeroom teacher and the main office. For safety and management purposes, students must be picked up promptly at 11:35 a.m. and return between 12:30 p.m. and 12:35 p.m. They must be off

school grounds for the entire lunch and recess period. Returning students during the lunch hour is highly discouraged, as it is difficult to re-unite the students with their class when everyone is spread out across the playground or other areas of the school.

Snack & Water

When packing a snack for your child, limit it to one serving and be sure it can be easily opened by the student (practice at home first). Do not pack things requiring the use of utensils. Students are to bring their own reusable water bottle (be sure to label it) and can use the water dispensers closest to their classroom to refill.

The teachers will determine the time of the breaks. Please keep in mind that students only have a short time to have a snack. *For safety reasons, please do not send in any glass containers or bottles.* Due to food allergies, students are not to share food or ask for food. Please reiterate this with your children regularly as we will do the same.

Dress Appropriately and Safely

Students should come to school with appropriate attire for the various seasons and weather. For the fall and winter days, jackets and coats should be worn to school. Label all clothing items including jackets, hats, scarves and mittens/gloves. Children should dress in layers, as temperatures may vary in different areas of the building.

For the spring and summer days, students should be dressed in clothing which is comfortable, safe, and acceptable for a school setting. It is important to consider sensible footwear for the children. It is highly suggested that children wear closed shoes or sneakers for school each day. Sneakers are required for all Physical Education classes. Please refer to the [Code of Conduct](#).

“Specials”

Specials is a word used to refer to enrichment classes such as Art, Music, Physical Education “P.E.” and Library. Parents will receive a Specials schedule by Back to School Night. Students are expected to have their library books on their Library day and sneakers daily.

Parent and Teacher Organization “PTO”

We have a highly supportive and active [PTO](#). PTO meetings are held approximately once every other month. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. PTO meetings (at night and mostly virtual) are planned for adults, so young children should not attend. If any parents are interested in getting involved, please contact the PTO by doing any of the following: complete and return the PTO interest sheet via email, call or email any members on the PTO Executive Committee, or call the secretaries in the main office.

Newsletters and School Directory

We send out a weekly *Jefferson Update* at the end of the week so you can be well informed. Our PTO diligently also publishes the *Jefferson Journal* on a regular basis, in order to keep our parents abreast of upcoming events and activities. Thanks to our PTO, Jefferson has its own online school directory. The PTO will share the details at the beginning of the year.

Birthday Recognitions

At Jefferson, each teacher recognizes that a student’s birthday is a special event. Although we appreciate the parents’ thoughtfulness and generosity, food of any kind or goody bags are not to be distributed at school for birthday recognitions. However, parents may choose to purchase a book

through the PTO for the Birthday Book Club to recognize their child's birthday and donate it to the school or classroom library.

We recognize our students' birthdays by doing the following:

- Shout outs for a student's birthday are made during morning announcements.
- Students' names are displayed on the birthday board in the main hallway.
- The class sings "*Happy Birthday*" to the birthday boy or girl.
- Teachers may also give a small token birthday item (i.e. pencil, sticker, or bookmark) to the student.
- Summer birthdays are recognized during the month of June.

Personal Items

All personal items are to be kept in the student's backpack. Do not send anything valuable as the school is not responsible for damaged or missing items.

No Electronic Communication Devices such as Cell Phones and Smartwatches

We respect each family's decision to provide their child with electronic devices for communication and tracking. As per our [Electronic Communication Devices Policy](#), our *students are not permitted to use cell phones or other communication devices (including Smartwatches, Gizmos, etc.) in school and on school property*. Those who bring these devices to school at their own risk must keep them turned off and secured in their backpack during the school day; they may take them out after dismissal when they are off school grounds. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen items. For students who communicate online with others after school hours, parents are strongly encouraged to monitor their child's online communications, actions and behaviors daily.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found is located by Door C1 past the main office. If students are missing something, he/she may check this area. Since parents or visitors are not permitted without an appointment, we will be placing the Lost and Found rack outside at the main entrance occasionally for parents to check as needed. We highly recommend you label your child's clothing items (especially coats, jackets, scarves, mittens, hats, water bottles, etc.) so they can be returned to the rightful owner. All unclaimed items are donated to charity several times a year.

Report Cards

Students will receive a report card each trimester. Trimester dates for report card availability is through the [Genesis Parent Portal](#) and noted on the school calendar.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

The annual parent-teacher conference for each student is scheduled during the month of November. The homeroom teacher will contact the parent for a mutually convenient date and time. Either the teacher or parent may request additional conferences at any time during the school year. Parents requesting a conference are to contact their child's teacher to make the request.

Parent-Teacher Communication

We believe close communication between home and school is critical to student success and their comfort in school. When parents have questions or concerns, they are encouraged to first reach out to the teachers or staff via email or phone call to the main office. The teacher will do his/her best to respond to the communication in a prompt manner. Please contact the teacher to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet or talk on the phone. If parents are not satisfied after meeting with the staff member, they are welcome to contact the principal. It is important that we work as a

team in the best interest of our students and programs. To contact a staff member via email, type the first initial of their first name followed by their last name and @westfieldnj12.org. For example, shung@westfieldnj12.org. You can also check our [Staff Directory](#) located on our school website for all staff emails and website information.

Visitors and Security

Our doors are closed and locked at all times. Parents who need to come into the building should schedule their appointment at least 24 hours in advance. Please be prepared to show your government issued photo ID before entering. Our district uses a visitor management system called *Visitor Aware*. All building visitors will be asked to check in at the visitor management kiosk outside our main entrance. Visitors will still be expected to have a pre-scheduled appointment with a member of the staff in order to enter the building. When visitors arrive, they need to press the button at the main entrance and state their name and the reason for their visit. Visitors will be prompted to follow the directions on the kiosk, which include scanning your government issued photo identification (driver's license or state identification card). Once the check-in is complete, visitors will be admitted into the building and asked to report to the main office. The office will provide visitor badges for all visitors to wear while they are in the building. Before visitors leave, they need to report to the main office and return their badge.

This visitor management system will take a few extra minutes if it is your first visit to the building. However, it is worth the extra time and patience to keep our staff and students safe. Please review the [Visitor Aware infographic](#) listing the steps needed to check in and this [FAQ link](#) will provide additional information about this system.

All visitors are to clearly wear the visitor's badge during their entire visit. For security reasons, please do not let anyone else, who is not part of the group, enter the building. Upon departure, they are to sign out at the main office and return the visitor's badge. Upon exiting the building, they should also log out at the kiosk.

School Closings and Delayed Opening Alerts

The Thrillshare System is the primary method for us to notify parents and staff regarding school closings or delayed openings. Please be sure your email and cell phone numbers are always current in Genesis. If it needs to be updated, contact our main office promptly. Parents can also listen to the radio station 101.5 FM, watch channel 36 or check the district website.

Jefferson School Website & Hub and WPS App

Teachers, staff and parents continue to work collaboratively throughout the year to provide helpful and current school, classroom and parent information on our website. Please be sure to visit our [school website](#) and teacher websites regularly at <https://www.westfieldnj12.org/o/jes>. Within our school website, you will also see the Jefferson Updates which are shared out each week as well as Live Feed. Please check them out once school has begun.

We also have the Westfield Public School "WPS" app so please go into the App store and download it. Thank you for taking time to read this information. We look forward to a productive and fun-filled school year. Thank you for your support!

Go Jaguars!

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