

JCSD Elementary School  
Parent/Student Handbook Addendum  
2018-19



## **WELCOME!**

We are happy to present our unified Johnston Elementary School Parent/Student Handbook Addendum. Inside we have provided useful information about our district's requirements and expectations, as well as some helpful guides about some of the common procedures we use in our five elementary schools. Each attendance center will also supply families with additional information specific to the school you attend.

Johnston has a strong elementary staff. We teach from a common curriculum and as a team we are dedicated to the mission of creating challenging and nurturing school environments in which every student has a meaningful role to play. Our simple goal is that every child will be rewarded at the end of the year with the tremendous sense of accomplishment that comes with learning and growing.

Our primary focus is working in partnership with you to create the best possible school learning experience. We value effective communication with our families and community. Hopefully, the information contained in this handbook will be a good starting point for creating an understanding of how we can work together for our children.

For more information about any of our elementary buildings or the Johnston school district in general, look for us on the web at [www.johnstoncsd.org](http://www.johnstoncsd.org).

Thanks for your support, and have a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

Eric Toot, Beaver Creek Elementary Principal  
Lindsey Cornwell, Horizon Elementary Principal  
Thomas Bartello, Lawson Elementary Principal  
Kelley Harrison, Timber Ridge Elementary Principal  
Suzie Pearson, Wallace Elementary Principal

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## STUDENT PROCEDURES

### A. Arrival/Dismissal Schedule

8:30-8:40 a.m.	Student Arrival
8:40 a.m.	School Begins
11:35 a.m.	Morning Developmental Kindergarten Dismissal
3:35 p.m.	Student Dismissal

### ARRIVAL

Elementary students who are transported to or from school by means other than school bus should be dropped off at the parent drop-off area and arrive at school no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Parents are asked not to drop students off prior to 8:30 a.m. This is teacher planning and meeting time, and student supervision will not be provided outside the childcare program.

The tardy bell rings at 8:40 a.m. Students arriving after this bell will be counted tardy unless there are bus delays. Students arriving late or leaving early must be signed in/out by parent/guardian in the office.

### DISMISSAL

Please use the designated parent drop-off and pick-up area. Do not park in the drop-off/pick-up lane if you are meeting your child at the door. DO NOT park in these lanes; use the parent parking area. Drive slowly through this area and watch for students crossing the drive.

Students will be dismissed from their classrooms to designated areas and will be dismissed as their respective buses arrive for departure at 3:35 p.m. All students being picked up by parents will exit through the parent pick-up doors.

**Please do not park or drive in BUS LOADING ZONES when dropping off or picking up students.** It is critical that parents do not stop, park or wait in the bus loading areas during dismissal and arrival times. These areas are very congested; any other traffic poses a safety concern.

### B. Early Dismissal

On many Wednesdays, Johnston Schools have a one-hour early dismissal for teacher in-service training. Other early dismissals are marked on the school calendar for conferences or school vacations. These shortened school days provide time for staff training, planning, or parent conferences. On these days it may be convenient for parents to schedule dental or doctor appointments, reducing student time away from school. Parents that have children attending developmental kindergarten will receive information from their school office as to an early dismissal schedule for their child.

#### Wednesday One-hour Early Dismissal Schedule

2:35 p.m. Student Dismissal

*Please note full day of school on October 3, October 31, November 7, January 23, February 20 and February 27*

#### Three-hour Early Dismissal Schedule

12:35 p.m. Student Dismissal

*Thursday, November 8 and Thursday, February 28*

### C. Attendance Procedures

Regular attendance is very important for each child's school success. Both the home and the school share a joint responsibility for this attendance as well as ensuring the safety and well-being of your child. To best accomplish this, it is essential to maintain good home/school communications.

Occasionally, it becomes necessary for a child to be absent from school; therefore, we are requesting your continued help and full cooperation with our attendance policy. If a child is absent or tardy, the school will require the following:

1. Call your school to leave a message each day your child is absent or tardy.
2. For your convenience, we have installed a digital answering device on our telephones, which will allow you to call earlier than 8:00 a.m. regarding your child's absence. When our recording asks you to leave your message, please indicate the following:  
1) **Your Name**    2) **Your Child's Name**    3) **Classroom Number or Teacher's Name**    4) **Reason for the Absence or Tardiness**
3. If your child's teacher reports him/her absent or tardy, and the school has not received prior information or a phone call,

an attempt will be made to contact you to verify the reason for the absence. If parents don't call, and we cannot verify the absence, the student will be marked "unexcused."

Parents, NOT students, will be responsible for calling in the absence. In addition, to make this system work efficiently, it will be necessary for us to have on file for each child an **Elementary School Student Information Form (it is essential that all information in Infinite Campus is updated, including phone numbers, email addresses and emergency contact information.)**. If you have not completed this form, please obtain one from the office, complete and return it to the school as soon as possible. This information will need to be updated throughout the school year if there are any phone number changes (home number, work number, sitter, etc.).

Throughout the school year, student vacation and recess days are scheduled. Parents are encouraged to use only these scheduled days for opportunities to take trips or plan special events. It is important that our students are in attendance at school every day, outside of absences for illness or emergencies. Students who are absent and/or tardy six or more times from school will receive a letter and/or contact from the principal. Exceptions are only for a critical illness/injury. Unexcused and excused absences will be subject to the Student Attendance Regulations (Board Policy 501.10R1).

Students planning to leave school early, arrive late, miss any portion of the school day, or miss entire days of school for any reason must bring a signed note from the parent in advance. The note should state the reason for the change in the student's routine and be given to the homeroom teacher and/or office. Without proper notification, regular procedures will be followed.

Each day of school, including the first and last weeks, the days prior to and following conferences, winter recess and spring break are essential learning days. Please help your child understand the importance of school and regular attendance habits by making daily school attendance a top priority. We want all of our students in school everyday, but they should not attend if they are ill. **A student must be in attendance the half day (pm) immediately preceding an extracurricular activity (band, concerts etc) to be eligible to participate.**

#### **D. Recess** **Recess Outside**

Students need the opportunity to be outside for fresh air and exercise each day, weather and health permitting. With the large number of students outside for recess each day, it is necessary to have guidelines, which help minimize problems and accidents on the playground.

Students will be expected to go outside for recess each day unless there are individually approved circumstances or inclement weather conditions. If the student has returned after a lengthy illness, he/she will be held in from recess for no more than two days without a doctor's note. During the wintertime, we use the local weather service report, and the students are not permitted to go outside for recess if the WIND CHILL INDEX drops to 5 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

#### **Guidelines For Indoor/Outdoor Recess**

Recess will be held indoors when: (a) temperature combined with wind reaches a wind chill factor of 5 degrees; (b) precipitation would cause outdoor activities to be uncomfortable (heavy snow, sleet, rain); (c) when extreme wind and/or humidity factors make outdoor recess extremely uncomfortable. Students will be expected to be prepared to go outdoors for recess on all other days. If the students are indoors for a recess they will be involved with quieter activities in their classroom.

#### **D. Bicycles/Skateboards/Bats/Balls/Scooters/Skate Shoes**

Please consider carefully your child's ability to handle and maneuver a bicycle before allowing your child to ride to school. Bicycle racks are provided, however, the school district is not responsible for students riding to and from school and assumes no responsibility for bicycles on the school grounds. Bicycles are acceptable at all elementary schools.

Students are not permitted to bring scooters, skateboards, rollerblades, skate shoes, bats, and/or balls to school. Playground equipment is provided for recess. Personal items are not normally considered essential to a student's educational needs and therefore should not be brought to school. All other items brought to school should be inside a backpack or bag. Due to safety concerns and restricted space on school buses, parents are encouraged to limit students to one (1) carry-on. Carry-on and musical instruments that cannot be held on a student's lap or placed beneath their seat should not be transported inside the passenger compartment of the school bus.

#### **E. Appropriate School Clothing**

Dress and grooming are personal matters and should be appropriate for the occasion. Proper hygiene is expected at all times. Any type of attire, which attracts undue attention to the wearer, and thus causes a disturbance in the school, is not acceptable. Among attire considered unacceptable are halter/midriff tops and short shorts. Hats, caps, bandanas worn by boys or girls are not acceptable in the building.

Do not wear clothing that displays alcoholic beverages, tobacco, any controlled substance, profanity, obscene pictures, vulgarity, lewd sayings, etc. (Board Policy 502.1)

For outdoor dress:

1. Coat, jacket or snow suit in cool/cold weather.
2. Boots and snow pants when snow has accumulated and stayed on the ground for more than a day, or on wet, muddy days. (Students who do not have boots will stay on the blacktop)

#### **G. Personal Items**

Video games, toys, baseball cards, radios, headphones, cell phones, smart phones, smart watches, iPods/MP3 players, electronic devices such as e-readers, itouch/ipad and other personal items are not appropriate in school as they frequently interrupt the learning environment. Personal property should be left at home unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher. If a parent has given permission for a student to have a phone at school, it is to remain in the student's backpack in silent mode or off until the child is off school grounds. Electronic devices may be taken from a student for inappropriate use. (Board Policy 502.10R) H The school is not responsible for loss of or damage to personal items.

In addition to personal items, the sending of balloons, flowers, or other gifts to students while at school is discouraged due to the disruption in the learning environment. These items will be held in the office until the end of the school day for pickup and these items will not be allowed on school buses.

#### **H. Homework Expectations Rationale**

Homework is an integral and relevant part of every student's instructional program and should be used consistently throughout the grades and classes. Homework is defined to be the extra-class activities and assignments, which may properly be considered as extensions and enrichment of the regular classroom instructional program.

Homework may be assigned in your child's classroom. The work should be independent practice of the current instruction in the classroom. Typical homework assignments consist of independent reading (or being read to) or a math practice page. It is our belief that homework should reinforce school learning as well as promote communication between home and school

#### **I. Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Conferences to discuss student progress are scheduled twice during the school year near the close of the first and second trimesters. Parents are offered the opportunity to meet with the teachers at these times as well as to request other conferences throughout the school year. Please feel free to contact teachers for a conference at any time. Communication between home and school is an essential element in making your child's school experience successful. Please make every effort to attend your child's conference.

#### **J. Individual Progress Reports**

The elementary schools are on a trimester system in which the year is divided into three twelve-week periods. Progress reports will be issued at the conclusion of each trimester and parent/teacher conferences will be held at the conclusion of the first and second trimester. Progress reports and parent/teacher conferences offer an opportunity for parents and teachers to respond positively to student progress and discuss constructive ways to strengthen areas of concern.

Questions regarding progress reports should be directed to the homeroom teacher.

#### **K. Vision Screening**

Vision Screening will begin each fall for students in grades 1, 3, and 5. Please notify the nurse if you do not wish your child to participate. Students who do not pass this screening will be re-checked and you will be notified only if they do not pass the screening. This is a screening process only and does not identify all vision or eye problems.

#### **L. Hearing Screening**

Heartland AEA 11 will conduct its annual Hearing Conservation Program during the upcoming school year. Students who attend class in the elementary schools will receive hearing screenings.

Students who do not pass this screening receive a repeat screening and may receive individual hearing testing by the audiologist and consultation with school personnel. Parents will be notified about the results of the hearing tests **if their child does not pass the test**. This is a screening process only, and does not identify all hearing or ear problems. If your child has had hearing or ear problems recently, feel free to send this information to the school nurse for the audiologist.

**If you do not want your child to participate in the screening program** and follow-up assessments by the school audiologist, please **notify the school**. If there are any questions about the hearing testing program, please contact your school nurse or principal.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### **A. Field Trip Letter/Permission Form**

During the course of the school year, your child will have an opportunity to participate in supervised class excursions off the school premises. These trips, referred to as “Field Trips,” are well-planned educational experiences which correlate with units of work in the curriculum. The children may walk if their destination is near the school, or they may ride a school bus to more distant places, including some out of the school district.

To maintain close communication between the home and school relative to the welfare of each child, a parental permission slip to participate in each field trip is required. Prior to each field trip the participating students will be asked to take home a permission slip and return it, with a parent’s signature, to their teacher. Each child’s signed permission slip covers that specific field trip and is kept on file. Failure to return the signed permission slip will mean that the student will not be allowed to go on that field trip. Students not attending a field trip scheduled for their class will remain in school and be required to work on their studies.

Each time a class takes a field trip the teacher will send home a note with each member of the class prior to the trip, explaining where and when the class is going. It will be the individual student’s responsibility to get this information note/permission slip home, obtain a parent’s signature, and return it to the teacher.

If, for some reason, you do not wish your child to go on a particular field trip, please send a note or contact your child’s teacher.

#### Sample Permission Slip for Field Trip

(Student’s Name)

Has my permission to attend the following field trip:

Destination:

Date:

Departure:

Return:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Phone Number (in case of an emergency):

Who is at this emergency number?

## **B. School Parties and Birthday Parties**

Elementary students have two scheduled school parties per year; scheduled at the discretion of each elementary school. Please refer to communications from your child's school for details. Homeroom parents and other school volunteers are contacted to provide assistance and healthy treats for these parties. Other celebrations occur throughout the year, which are tied into various curricular areas or special projects. **Each elementary school has the discretion to allow or not allow birthday treats sent from home for student birthdays or other celebrations. Refer to communication from each school regarding their practices.** **Invitations** to birthday parties or other celebrations outside of school **will not be distributed** at school no matter if they are for a select number of students or for the entire classroom. Treats brought in for any occasion should follow the treats/snacks guidelines found on page 14 of the Parent Student Handbook.

## **C. Money**

Students should not carry extra money to school. Lunch/milk money should be carried in a safe place. Parental direction regarding money with their child should be an important part of home instruction as well as a concern at school.

Parents should also be concerned if their child arrives home with extra money or other items obtained at school. **STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO SELL OR TRADE ITEMS OF ANY KIND AT SCHOOL**; this includes sports cards (baseball, etc.).

## **D. Lost And Found**

There is a lost and found area in each building. **Please assist your child and us by properly and clearly labeling all articles of student clothing and other possessions, which may get lost or mixed up.** If students find money at school, they should turn it in to the office. The office secretary will keep the money, along with the student's name and room number, for one week (5 days). If no one reports losing the money, the student who found it may return to the office and claim the money. The only exception would be an unusually large amount of money.

## **E. Telephone Messages**

The school telephone is a business phone and students should not receive or make phone calls at school except in emergency situations. If it is necessary, call the office and a message will be delivered to the student. Students will not be permitted to use the telephone unless approved by the teacher and/or office staff. Telephones are available in each classroom; however, **instructional time will not be interrupted by phone calls.**

## **F. School Pictures**

Arrangements are made each year to enlist a picture company to photograph our students for class composite pictures and to offer for sale various picture packet options. Specific information is sent home from school.

## **G. Visiting School**

We **welcome** and **encourage** you to visit your child's school. If possible, let your child's teacher know in advance when you are planning to visit. It is not a good idea to visit during the first or last weeks of school or during a special activity such as testing. We ask that you limit your visitation to 30 minutes or less. Unique visitation circumstances may be approved through the building principal. **CHILDREN UNACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT ARE NOT PERMITTED TO VISIT SCHOOL.**

In compliance with the Raptor Visitor Management Software, all visitors (including parents) should report to the main office to sign/check-in. If it is your first time in your child's school, provide the office staff with your valid state-issued ID (driver's license). The bar code on the driver's license will be scanned and run through the Raptor system for a possible match on the sex offenders list. All visitors will then be issued a date-sensitive visitor badge containing their identification information that must be worn while on school grounds. Minors that do not have a valid state-issued ID will be allowed to visit, as long as they are accompanied by an adult that has checked in with our procedures. Once you have registered within our electronic sign-in procedure, you will not need to provide an ID each time you visit. However, you will still need to check-in at the office to receive a visitor badge containing your personal information. All visitors will be required to check-out through the main office when you leave the school. This helps staff and students identify adults in our environment. If you are in the building for just a few minutes for pick-up or drop-off and are remaining in the office, a visitor badge is not necessary.

Parents are asked to use good judgment when preschool age children accompany them to school for a visit. If the preschooler becomes restless or overly active, the class may be distracted. Please plan your visits with that in mind.

## **H. Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)**

A volunteer Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) enhances the educational program of Johnston's elementary schools. Activities include fund-raising events, which support a variety of projects in the schools, homeroom parents, kindergarten bus safety presentations, roller skating parties, book fairs, and completion of an all-school directory. The PTO meets monthly. This outstanding organization deserves your active support and involvement. Membership information is available at the elementary schools.



**I. Adult Volunteers**

We encourage adults within our community to volunteer their time in the schools. A variety of volunteer activities are available which range from making bulletin board activities to serving as an outside resource speaker on a special topic. If you have at least thirty minutes a week to spare, or a special area of interest to share, please contact the PTO or school and volunteer your time. It is a rewarding experience for students and volunteers alike. Volunteers should be unaccompanied by younger children. **Please be aware that volunteers who will be working with students without direct supervision will need to complete a background check before working with students. This background check will be done at the school district's expense.**

**J. School Newsletter**

Each school will provide a newsletter periodically, which is sent out electronically and also available on the school's website and district website. The newsletter will provide you with information about upcoming events, student activities, monthly school menus, and may feature examples of student work. Please take time to read the newsletter with your child.

**K. Parent Input For Next Year**

Careful attention is given to the process of determining class sections. Johnston has attempted in the past to provide reasonable class sizes. However, other considerations are given to this process. The number one priority is to create class sections which will best fit the needs of the individual students involved.

Many factors are considered in balancing of classroom assignments. For example, classes may be balanced in terms of the number of students, boys/girls, personality, students with special needs, and ability (reading or academic). Occasionally the separation of students has a part of the process. Relatives, close friends, and personality clashes are factors considered when separating students from one another. The intent is to create a classroom setting that is beneficial to the students and does not inhibit teaching staff from doing the best possible job. The public must be aware that the placement of students is a task that is not taken lightly. There is considerable time and effort put into the process.

With this in mind, the school does not accept requests for specific teachers; however, parents may provide the school with input into their child's learning needs. They should put their concerns in writing and address it to the attention of the building principal before April 15th. The principal has the authority to make the final decision regarding the membership of any given class.

**L. Pets (Board Policy 606.3)**

Due to health and safety reasons, students and families are discouraged from bringing pets to school. No pets or animals may will be allowed in the school without specific permission from the principal.

**M. Evacuation, Shelter-In-Place, Clear the Halls, and Lockdown/Lockout Drills and Procedures.**

Procedures for building evacuation and tornado shelter have been prepared for each building. A minimum of two Evacuation (fire) and two Shelter-In-Place (tornado) drills are held each semester so that students may become familiar with proper procedures. Procedures for Clear the Halls and Lockdown/Lockout, including action steps necessary to secure the building and individual classrooms, are reviewed with the elementary staff and a response drill is held each semester with students.