

JCSD Elementary School
Parent/Student Handbook Addendum
2020-21



Due to the Covid-19 Global Pandemic, the Johnston Community School District is working to insure the safety of students, staff members and all in the Johnston community. Some traditional practices will be suspended or changed until guidance by public health officials indicates it is safe to resume these practices. JCSD will utilize guidance from the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

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.

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

These are the procedures at the time this handbook was written. Schedule changes in response to Covid-19 could change the arrival and dismissal procedures for each school. Communication from each school building will be shared if this is the case.

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 8:25 a.m. Parents are asked not to drop students off prior to 8:25 a.m. and students will be held in common areas until 8:30 a.m. at which time they are allowed to go to classrooms. 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. Refer to more detailed directions from each elementary school.

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 September 30, November 4, January 20, February 17, March 10, and April 21

Three-hour Early Dismissal Schedule

12:35 p.m. Student Dismissal

Thursday, November 12 and Thursday, February 25

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. If calling earlier than 8:00, please leave a message indicating the following:
1) **Your Name** 2) **Your Child's Name** 3) **Classroom Number or Teacher's Name** 4) **Reason for the Absence or Tardiness**
2. 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 that all information in Infinite Campus is updated, including phone numbers, email addresses and emergency contact information. This information will need to be updated throughout the school year if there are any phone number, contact or address changes.

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 (this would apply in a coronavirus situation). 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 notify the office by email, phone call or written note. The notification should state the reason for the change in the student's routine and be directed 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 of school, 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

Recesses at school could be impacted due to public health guidance and directives, including the frequency, duration and location of recesses.

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) the temperature has a wind chill factor of 5 degrees or heat index of 95 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. It is recommended that students younger than second grade should not ride bicycles 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

Students are expected to adhere to standards of cleanliness and dress that are compatible with the requirements of a nurturing and respectful learning environment. The standards will be those generally acceptable to the community as appropriate in a school setting.

The board expects students to be clean and well-groomed and wear clothes in good repair and appropriate for the time, place and occasion. Clothing or other apparel promoting products illegal for use by minors and clothing displaying obscene material, profanity, or reference to prohibited conduct are disallowed. While the primary responsibility for students' personal appearance lies with the students and their parents, appearance disruptive to the education program will not be tolerated. Any student may be required to make modifications of their appearance or mode of dress when, in the judgment of a principal, a student's appearance or mode of dress either: presents an unreasonable risk of causing a material and substantial disruption of the educational process or of the orderly operation of the school and school activities; is a form of bullying or harassment of others; constitutes a threat to health or safety; or otherwise violates this policy. For example, student apparel depicting the confederate battle flag or a swastika should be considered a form of bullying and harassment and should be considered an unreasonable risk of causing a material and substantial disruption. (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, smartwatches, 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). The school is not responsible for loss of or damage to personal items. **Smart watches that are interrupting the learning environment, used for cheating or other inappropriate activities could be confiscated. A student will receive a warning if the phone or smart watch is being used inappropriately. The phone or smartwatch will be taken from the student and held in the office until a parent can pick it up. The school district does not assume liability for lost or stolen personal items brought to school.***

In addition to personal items, the sending of balloons, flowers, or other gifts to students while at school is not allowed due to the disruption in the learning environment. These items will not be allowed to be delivered to school offices.

H. Homework Expectations

Homework may be assigned in your child's classroom. It is our belief that homework is independent practice of the current instruction in the classroom. Typical homework assignments consist of independent reading (or being read to) and/or math practice. In addition to the independent practice, families will have the opportunity to read with or practice with their child.

I. Parent-Teacher Conferences

Due to Covid-19, it is possible Parent Teacher conferences may be offered in an online format.

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 close to 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

Due to Covid-19, field trips are suspended for the time being. Once field trips are allowed again, the following procedures will be followed.

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. 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

Due to Covid 19, school parties will be suspended for the 2020-21 school year. Birthday treats will not be allowed for student birthday celebrations due to health and safety concerns. Student birthdays will be acknowledged at school, but items should not be sent from home for student birthdays. 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.

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

Due to Covid-19, visitors will not be allowed to school facilities at the start of the 2020-21 school year. If/when visitors are allowed, the procedures outlined below will be followed.

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- of 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)

Due to Covid-19, PTO meetings could be held online instead of in the school buildings

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

Due to Covid-19, volunteers will not be allowed to school facilities at the start of the 2020-21 school year. If/when volunteers are allowed, the procedures outlined below will be followed.

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 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

Due to Covid-19, safety drill practices could be different for the 2020-21 school year.

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.

N. Academic Integrity Guidelines

The Johnston Community School District strives to produce graduates who will be responsible and productive members of society. Our Portrait of a Learner attributes include the demonstration of inquiry, communication, collaboration, creativity and respect for ourselves, the school, and the community. JCSD's objective is to achieve these learner outcomes through honesty, trust, and integrity

PK - 5 Guidelines for Academic Integrity

- Students are encouraged to utilize supports for daily skills practice. Ie - using classroom resources, asking a friend, parent or teacher for help.
- Students must follow all written and/or verbal instructions when showing evidence of proficiency of standards. Ie. Everyday Math assessments, PLTW module assessments, reading assessments.

Ways to Use Supports

- Review teacher instructions (video, document)
- Use a graphic organizer (make a visual)
- Ask a friend/adult to:

- Rephrase a question
 - Break the problem into smaller pieces
 - Demonstrate how to complete the task
 - Check your work
- Use manipulatives
- Use online resources
- Ask your teacher