

COUNSELOR CONNECTION

Dru Klein, Janet Goldstein, Jayna Dash

Harry Brown



Meet your IMS Counseling Team

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year. We are excited to be back and are looking forward to a great year together. We wanted to start out the year by letting you know a bit about us personally and what we do professionally. We have three school based Counselors at IMS, and all students are assigned to one of us based on their last name (see the breakdown below). In addition, we also have the amazing Harry Brown on our team, who is a therapist with Mercer Island Youth and Family Services. Harry will be with us part time, beginning in October. His role is to support any and all students, as well as to partner with us to support individual students and to enhance the programming our team provides throughout the year.

We plan to push out one newsletter per trimester, with meaningful and timely content. Please let us know if you have any ideas for topics you'd like to see us include. Our team prides itself on being available to students, families, teachers and our administrative team, so please don't hesitate to reach out to us at any time!

A bit about us & our contact information

Dru: This is my 13th year at IMS. My son will be starting in 2nd grade this year. As a family, we love watching and playing sports together. I also enjoy watching movies with my family, finding new restaurants to try and exploring new and old places in my neighborhood.

Janet: This is my 9th year at IMS. I have 2 daughters; one is in High School and one in Middle School. I enjoy playing games with my family, traveling and reading.

Jayna: This is my 10th year at IMS. I have 2 kiddos at home, and my oldest is starting Kindergarten this year. In my free time, I enjoy running, hiking, reading and being with my family.

Harry: This is my 21st year at IMS. I have two grown children, one of whom just got married this summer. Outside of school, you can find me hiking or skiing in the mountains, or playing with my dog, Astro.



(Janet, Jayna, Harry & Dru)

Counselor Name	Caseload	Email	Phone number
Dru Klein	Last names A-G	dru.klein@mercerislandschools.org	206-230-6153
Janet Goldstein	Last names H-O	janet.goldstein@mercerislandschools.org	206-275-5958
Jayna Dash	Last names P-Z	jayna.dash@mercerislandschools.org	206-230-6098
Harry Brown	MIYFS Counselor	harry.brown@mercerislandschools.org	206-230-6154

What do School Counselors do?

Middle School is an exciting, yet challenging time for students and their parents. Fortunately, the IMS counselors are here to help and support all students and their families! Some of the concerns we can help with include what is listed below, but please know that this is far from an exhaustive list.

Academic Support

- Counselors help students work with their teachers when there is an issue or concern, of any type.
- Counselors meet with students to problem solve when students are struggling to turn in assignments, to take assessments without excessive stress and/or to connect with their teacher(s).
- Counselors schedule meetings with parents to offer support. They also organize parent/teacher conferences and facilitate constructive discussion between teachers, students and parents in the meetings.
- Counselors help students and families with executive functioning (aka organizational) skills support.
- Counselors help students learn to manage their test anxiety.
- Counselors track attendance and help support students and their families with any issues that may arise as barriers from participating in school.



Social Emotional Support

- Counselors meet 1:1 with students for any reason. Counselors support students with issues of stress, anxiety, depression, friendship concerns, family issues etc.
- Counselors run small groups covering many different topics and issues, varying from year to year.
- Counselor partner with teachers to teach classroom lessons that are timely and related to content.
- Counselors meet with students and families and make referrals to resources and counseling outside of IMS.

*****Do not hesitate to let us know if there is anything we can do to help support and advocate for your student*****

Some tips to help you start the year off right!

Attendance Attending school is really important for every student's academics and emotional wellbeing. If you start to see your student struggling emotionally and wanting to stay home often, please reach out to their assigned counselor. Sometimes this can also present itself as chronic absences due to not feeling well. We want to partner with you to support any needs your student might have and help prioritize them being at school.

Stress Management Coming back and getting into the school routines can be overwhelming for students. It's helpful to talk with your kids about how we *all* experience stress. We can help ourselves by creating a "toolbox" of coping skills to utilize in those hard moments. For example: *When I am stressed I will: go for a walk, listen to music, talk to a friend, practice a breathing exercise, journal, etc.* Make this list personalized to what your student finds the most helpful.

Organization Help your student develop organizational routines. Middle school is a great time to start having students track their school to-dos and their outside of school commitments. Starting to use a planner is a good first step. In addition, as parents you can check in now and again about how the backpack is looking- does your student need a weekly backpack dump or binder overhaul?

Screen Time As the new school year starts, this could be the perfect time to sit down as a family and talk about screen time limits. Some ideas to consider are having times when the devices are off limits (like meals), reviewing rules like no devices in the bedroom after a certain time in the evening (we recommend students do not have devices while they should be sleeping), talk about time limits per day and also think about family time when the devices are not "invited" to join.