

September 2019

**Inside this Issue**

<b>1</b>	Principal Petralia's Page by Mrs. Petralia Dean of Students Early Dismissal
<b>2</b>	New Staff Members Transportation Attendance Attendance Policy Book Rental K and 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Request Gold Note Dismissal Reminder
<b>3</b>	Electronic Device Reminder A Plea to Parents Notices Sent Home Skyward Parent Access John Wood Pledge Upcoming Events
<b>4</b>	Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures Latest Scoop from the Kitchen USDA Regulations
<b>5</b>	Parent Volunteers Student Council Upcoming Events – Cont. MEF Walk-a-Thon
<b>6</b>	PTO Update Pop Tab Collection
<b>7</b>	Birthday Treat Reminder Summer Reading Informative Notes Important Information Abitibi Recycling
<b>8</b>	Coats for Kids Clothing Donation PBIS Attendance Rewards Message from the Nurse
<b>9</b>	Dismissal Procedure Numbers Reading Meeting Did you Remember?
<b>10</b>	The Art Loft Notes from the Music Room A Word from the Social Worker Purple Pirate Pride
<b>11</b>	The Fitness Forcast Facebook and Twitter The Book Nook
<b>12</b>	The Coaches' Corner
<b>13</b>	PBIS Behavior Matrix

John Wood Elementary School  
6100 E. 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
Merrillville, Indiana 46410  
(219) 650-5305  
<http://merrillville.schoolwires.net/wood>

# The John Wood Parent Newsletter



## Principal Petralia's Page

by Mrs. Petralia

Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! Our students have had a tremendous start to the year. We have reviewed our procedures and put them into play immediately. Coming to school on a daily basis is a great responsibility for our students. They learn how to follow directions, take turns, share, and complete tasks. While all of this is happening, their brains are filling with new information and they are getting smarter!

Please make sure to touch base with your child's teacher whenever you have questions or concerns. Our teachers create meaningful relationships with our students and spend so many hours with them each day. The teacher greets them each morning with a smile on his/her face and begins each day as a fresh start. Please communicate with your child's teacher if you have questions, something has changed at home, or if you need clarification on something.

Our first PTO meeting took place on Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>. If you weren't able to make it, you can still help out! The PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) meets monthly to discuss fundraisers, fun events, and ways to help our students. With more parents able to volunteer, we are able to have more fun events. Please consider attending one of our meetings to get more information.

Have a great month!

## Dean of Students

by Mrs. J. Fairbairn

Hello! My name is Jennifer Fairbairn and I am the Dean here at John Wood. I have been working in Merrillville for thirteen years. I started my career at John Wood and taught here for 6 years. I taught 4th grade, Kindergarten, and also served as an instructional coach. Then, I went to Salk where I taught 2nd grade, 3rd grade, 4th grade and also served as an instructional coach. While at Salk, I obtained my administrator's license. I am happy to be back "home" at Wood. I'm looking forward to a wonderful year filled with learning and fun!

## Early Dismissal

Every Thursday throughout the school year students will be dismissed one hour early at 1:25 p.m. so that the teachers can meet for Professional Development. Please watch the Monthly Activity Calendar for any changes.

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on Thursdays.**

## New Staff Members

We have many new staff members in our building this year as well as some who have changed positions, changed names, or returned to our building! Welcome to those who are new!

Dean of Students – Mrs. J. Fairbairn  
(Mrs. Fairbairn will also be our new Art teacher)  
3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher – Miss Farver is now Mrs. Busch  
3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher – Mrs. Cseke  
LRE aide – Mrs. Hoke is now in Mrs. Pace's class (formerly in Mrs. Scott's kindergarten class)  
Speech – Mrs. Cartee  
Speech – Mrs. Belko  
ED teacher (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade) – Ms. Villarreal  
ED para – Mr. Brooks  
ED para – Miss K. Moore  
ED para – Miss Fleming  
ED para – Miss Messler is now Mrs. Rak  
ESL aide – Mrs. C. Moore  
ECD teacher – Mrs. Straley (Miss Kim)  
ECD para – Miss Zellers is now Mrs. Shallow (Miss Amanda)  
Social Worker Intern – Mrs. Nugent

## Transportation

Please remember that school dismisses at 2:25 (1:25 Thursdays). Please make sure you make arrangements to pick your child up **on time** and/or be home to receive your child. Additionally, please note that we cannot make any changes to transportation after 1:00 (noon on Thursdays). Thank you!

## Attendance

***It is important to your child's education that he/she attends school every day. If your child will be absent, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school. If your child will be absent, you must call 650-5305 then press 2 by 9 a.m.***

## Attendance Policy

The Town of Merrillville has an ordinance affirming parental responsibility for school attendance of minor children. Parents may be held criminally responsible for their child not attending school. The Merrillville Town Court will attempt to provide an opportunity to address problems before criminal charges are filed. The school corporation has outlined a process for addressing students that have excessive absences and will now include interactions with Merrillville Town Court. The parent **MUST** make an appearance in court. The judge will advise of the process for answering the charge and correcting the problem. This may include a fine, court cost, community service, parenting classes or some other provision. If a second referral is made, criminal charges will be filed.

Attendance is essential to the success of our students. When a student misses class time, they miss important instruction time that cannot be made up.

## Book Rental

All book rental is due on the first day of school. Payments can be made online through Skyward, or in our office. We do not have a formal payment plan, but partial payments are acceptable until the obligation is met.

Any balance remaining after the end of the first trimester (November 8<sup>th</sup>) will be turned over for collection. Checks must be made out to "John Wood School" and must include your driver's license number on the check.

ECD Fees - \$75  
Kindergarten - \$125.31  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade - \$118.38  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade - \$118.47  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - \$121.68  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade - \$128.73

Thank you to all of the parents who have already paid their child's book rental.

## Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Request

Occasionally our young students have "accidents". We try to provide clean, dry clothing for the child so that he/she can get back to class quickly. Unfortunately, our supply of "spare" clothing is limited.

Please consider sending a complete change of clothing (including underwear) for your child in a labeled gallon-sized Ziploc bag. The nurse will store it in her office in case your child needs a change. Anything that does not get used will be sent home at the end of the school year.

When selecting clothing for young children to wear to school, please be mindful of buttons or buckles that are sometimes difficult for little fingers to undo. Many "accidents" result from the child not being able to undo their clothing quickly enough.

## Gold Note Dismissal Reminder

A **signed and dated "Gold Note"** is needed from the parent if:

- your child is going anywhere other than their regular after-school destination.
- your child is going home with another student. (We will also need a note from that parent).
- your child will be picked up instead of riding the bus.

Remember that transportation changes cannot be made after 1:00. Things get hectic at the end of the day and verbal messages are not always received on short notice.

**If there is no note, students will go home on the bus as usual.**

*Remember that all toys as well as MP3 players, Game Boys, iPods, and other electronic toys and devices are prohibited at school. These items are expensive and we do not want them lost, broken, or stolen. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items. If a child MUST bring a cell phone, it MUST remain in the backpack and turned off during the school day.*

## A Plea to Parents from All Teachers

More and more children are coming to school with their shoes untied or carelessly tied and we are continually surprised at how many students don't know how to tie their shoes. Tying shoes is a skill that is no longer taught in kindergarten and needs to be taught at home.

Practice, practice, practice tying shoes. Please assist your child in making sure they tie their shoes every day! A double knot helps assure the shoe stays tied throughout the day.

## Notices Sent Home

Some notes are no longer being sent home with your child, but are emailed to the address you provided in Skyward. In addition, you may have noticed that the school-wide notes that we do still send home have been coming home with only the YOUNGEST child in the household. This not only conserves paper for us, but also keeps you from getting unnecessary extra copies at your home.

Occasionally, you may still receive flyers with every child. Usually these are notes that only pertain to a certain grade level or notes/forms that need to be filled out for every student (Parent-Teacher Conference, Picture Day).

Please make sure that you check backpacks daily so that you are kept informed. THANK YOU!

## Skyward Parent Access

Skyward is a student information system that Merrillville uses to store and share information. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this beneficial tool of communication. By logging onto your child's account, you will have access to a wealth of information. Grades, attendance, discipline, and test scores are among some of the information available. You can also use this system to add money to your child's lunch account and pay book rental.

**Please do not change your phone number in the Skyward system to "unlisted" or "confidential".** When you do, you will not receive important automated calls including emergency closings. It may also cause a delay in reaching you in case of an emergency.

If you do not have access to a computer and/or Internet service, the Lake County Public Library on Rt. 30 has Internet available on public use computers.

## John Wood School **BEST** Pledge

John Wood is the **BEST** of schools, Spell out **BEST** you'll know the rules,

First is **B**, that's the way.

**B**e responsible every day.

Next is **E**, that's correct.

**E**veryone deserves respect.

Third is **S**. This is cool.

**S**afety counts when you're at school.

Finally, it's letter **T**.

We will **T**alk appropriately.

## Upcoming Events

September 19  
Early Dismissal  
1:25 p.m.

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

September 20  
**Box Tops/Coke Rewards Contest Ends**  
Today is the last day to turn in box tops and Coke codes for our first competition of the school year. The top classes in each grade level will receive a special treat.

September 20  
**Reading Meeting**  
9:00 a.m. OR 1:00 p.m.  
See the article on page 9 of this newsletter for more information.

September 20  
**End of the 1<sup>st</sup> grading period**  
Because much of the beginning of the school year is evaluating what the children know and review, there will not be a mid-term progress report for the first trimester. Please check your child's grades online at any time through our Skyward system.

September 24  
**Picture Day**  
SMILE! All students will have their picture taken. If you wish to purchase photos, you **must** remember to send in your envelope with the order filled out and the payment enclosed this morning **before** your child's picture is taken. Packages can also be pre-ordered online. See the flyer that came home with your child for more information about online ordering.

September 26  
Early Dismissal  
1:25 p.m.  
**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

October 2  
**PTO Meeting, Cafeteria**  
2:30 p.m.  
All parents/guardians are welcome to attend. Come help plan activities for our students and families for the upcoming school year.

October 3  
**Wear Blue for Buddy Blue Day**  
Each month we have a day that we ask the students and staff to wear blue to remind us to be a buddy. Everyone needs a buddy!

October 3  
Early Dismissal  
1:25 p.m.  
**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

October 10  
Early Dismissal  
1:25 p.m.  
**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

Continued on page 5

## Important Reminder Regarding Parent Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Our arrival and dismissal procedures have changed this year. Please use the following procedures for arrival and dismissal at school if your child is a car rider. We want to make sure that everyone is safe and things go smoothly and efficiently.

### Arrival

- If you are an ECD parent, please park in the spaces in the LOT in front of the building and wait with your child until the teacher or aide opens Entrance B at 7:40 a.m.
- If you are a Grade K-4 parent, **DO NOT GET OUT OF YOUR VEHICLE**. Please pull all the way to the yellow painted line on the curb. **Children must get out of the vehicle on the passenger side only and step onto the sidewalk**. Driver **MUST** remain in the vehicle while dropping off at the curb.
- Do not drop off your child in the middle of the lane. We do not want the children to cut through any cars.
- Do not attempt to go around cars in line. Please wait your turn.
- If for any reason you need to get out of your vehicle, you will need to park and walk your child to the sidewalk.
- **NEVER** drop off ANY student before 7:35 when the staff member will open the door.
- Students not in the building before the 7:55 bell will be marked tardy and a parent will need to come in with the child.

### Dismissal

**(please note that this has recently changed again)**

- Gold Notes are necessary for pick-up. You may write one note for the year if you are going to be picking them up every day. Whenever a Gold Note is written, please be specific about who is authorized to pick up the child.
- To avoid blocking traffic from both directions on 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave., please try to enter the East lot from the East. If you are coming from the West, you can turn around in the church parking lot next door to our school.
- As you pull in, stay to the right in a single file line. The first car should pull all the way up to the sign. Students will be coming out Entrance F.
- Make sure your school-issued number is in the windshield on the passenger side and is clearly visible from the building. Be prepared to show it if the staff member motions that she cannot see it.
- **DO NOT GET OUT OF YOUR VEHICLE**. Your child will be brought out to you by one of our staff. The child must get into the back seat from the passenger side.
- If you are picking up a child and do NOT have a school-issued number, you will need to park in the front lot (not the circle drive) and come inside to the office to show your ID.
- Transportation changes cannot be made after 1:00 p.m. (Noon on Early Release Thursdays)

In the morning, the East lot is **FOR BUSES ONLY**. All students (except ECD) must be dropped off using Entrance A. In the afternoon, the circle drive in front of Entrance A is **FOR BUSES ONLY**. Students being picked up with a number must be picked up at Entrance F. This is for the safety of all our students. Thank you for your cooperation.

School bus transportation is available for students. If you need more information about this service, please call the office at 219-650-5305 or the Transportation Department at 219-650-5311.

## The Latest Scoop from the Kitchen

The MCSC uses a food service point of sale system. Parents can make deposits to the student's lunch account using your Skyward Parent Access and a credit or debit card. With this system, you are able to make deposits, view what your child is eating, and keep track of their balance.

We strongly encourage parents to use the online deposit system. This dramatically reduces the time required to serve lunch as well as eliminates your child's need to carry cash. This is fast and easy. Once a parent makes the online deposit the money is in the student's lunch account within 15 minutes!

Of course, the cafeteria will continue to accept cash or checks as well. Please make checks payable to MCSC Food Service and include your driver's license number on the check. **When you are sending cash or a check to be put on the account, please place the payment in a sealed envelope and write LUNCH MONEY, the child's name, teacher's name, and amount on the outside of the envelope.**

This year we will be enforcing our Meal Charge Policy. A flyer with details was in your child's purple folder that you received at Open House or on the first day of school. If there is an unpaid balance of \$8 or more on your child's meal account, the following procedures will apply immediately:

- Your child will not be eligible to participate in the breakfast or lunch program if he/she does not bring money to buy his/her breakfast or lunch.
- Your child will receive a soy butter and jelly sandwich and milk for lunch for which you will be charged .60¢ per day.
- Your child will not be allowed to buy ala carte items.
- Once full payment is received on your child's meal account, he/she will be able to participate in the breakfast and lunch program and will receive a hot lunch.

If you are experiencing financial difficulty and you think you may qualify for our free or reduced meal program, please visit the Food Service website at [www.mvsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us) and fill out an online application. The application is also available in the school office.

Unpaid meal account balances of \$20 or more will be sent to a collection agency. If you do not know what the balance on your child's account is or if you have any questions, please call the Food Service Department at 219-650-5300.

## USDA Regulations

Due to USDA and Wellness regulations, **NO** restaurant foods may be brought into the school for breakfast or lunch.

## Parent Volunteers

We welcome the use of parent volunteers to enhance the learning environment. Many times parent volunteers provide assistance to students in our classrooms, help chaperone field trips, or work on our playground, in the cafeteria or at school events.

All parents who volunteer must complete a criminal background check before they can participate. This is a corporation-wide policy that is in place for the protection of our children. Our school has the capability to conduct these checks at no charge to you.

Please return the criminal background check form that was in your child's purple folder on the first day of school if you would like to be included. **If you submitted a form last year and were approved, you still need to send in a new form this year.** Extra forms are available in the school office if you have misplaced the form that was sent home, or you need an additional copy for a spouse.

## Student Council

Mrs. Gates

A new student council has been selected for the 2019-2020 school year. The student council has many responsibilities throughout the school year. Students are involved in a variety of service activities. In past years they have served as greeters at the VIP Event (Grandparents' Day), organized collections for Riley Hospital and other causes, sponsored Food Drives, assisted with Red Ribbon Week and Spirit Days, and helped decorate the school for festivities and events.

Each student council member will be assigned to be an ambassador to a classroom. Occasionally, student council members will assist their "Ambassador Class" with special projects.

This year's student council members are:

### Miss Jongsma

Yassmin Aboelezz, Erica Byers,  
Daisy Huizar, Fiona Mick,  
David Mihal, Tithi Prajapati,  
Landon Trama

### Miss Vlassopoulos

Salma Alsamawi, Gabriela Cabrera,  
Katie Hurst, Natalie Nelson,  
Marissa Ronning, Jori Terpstra,  
Emmanuel Turner

## Upcoming Events – Cont.

Continued from page 3

**October 12**

**MEF Walk-a-Thon**

**Merrillville High School, 8:00 a.m.**

See the article on page 5 for more information about this Merrillville Education Foundation fundraiser.

**October 14-18**

**Book Fair**

Watch for more information to come home as we get closer to this date.

**October 16**

**Family Activity Night**

**5:45 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

Watch for a flyer to come home with more information as we near this date.

**October 17**

**Early Dismissal**

**1:25 p.m.**

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

**October 17**

**VIP Event (Grandparents' Day)**

**3:30-5:30 p.m.**

We understand that some students may not have a grandparent who lives close enough to visit or have grandparents that work. So that all students will have the opportunity to participate, students will be able to invite either their grandparents OR a special person (VIP) in their life. This will be an after-school event. The book fair will be open during this event.

**October 24**

**Early Dismissal – 1:25 p.m.**

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

**October 25-28**

**No School – Fall Break**

No school for all students.

**October 31**

**Early Dismissal – 1:25 p.m.**

**Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.**

## Merrillville Education Foundation "Better Health, Better Minds" Walk-a-Thon

The Merrillville Education Foundation invites you to participate in their 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual MEF Walk-a-Thon fundraiser on Saturday, October 12, 2019! Participants in the "Better Health, Better Minds" event will be walking at Merrillville High School to raise funds for MEF teacher grants.

MEF Walk-a-Thon details:

- Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. and walking will begin at 9:00 a.m.
- Location of the walk will be at the MHS Soccer/Track & Field Area (east of the football stadium). In case of rain, the walk will relocate to the MHS Field House.
- Minimum participation donation is \$10 for ages 5 and up. Families can participate as a group for a single fee of \$30.
- Every participant must submit a signed event disclaimer in order to walk in the event.
- Participants are asked to walk one mile, but can choose to walk more if they wish.
- T-shirts for ages 5 and older will be given to each participant who raises at least \$20 in sponsorship donations and submits the registration form and donations to our school's office by Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Participants will receive one raffle ticket for every \$10 in donations to be used toward prize draws on the event day.
- This is a family-friendly event open to EVERYONE in the community. Please join us! However, if you are unable to participate, please consider making a donation to MEF.

More details are available on the MEF website at <https://merrillvilleeducationfoundation.org>.

# PTO Update

All parents are welcome to attend our next PTO meeting on Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2:30 p.m. in our school cafeteria.

The role of our PTO is to enhance the educational experiences of our children through the commitment of teachers and parents like you! With your continued help and support, we can continue to provide programs and activities for our children, as well as the materials and equipment to enhance our educational settings. All of the money we collect during the school year benefits our school and our children!

We have just concluded our fall fundraiser. This is one of many ways we raise money throughout the school year. In the past, our PTO has used money from fundraisers to sponsor activities such as assemblies, field trips, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Symphony, and classroom parties. The PTO also pays for Scholastic News for students and purchases books for the library and classrooms.

The PTO sponsors several family events throughout the school year. Some of the activities we've done in the past include BINGO night, Book Fair, VIP Event (Grandparents' Day), Valentine Dance, Spirit Wear Sales, and Fun Fair.

These activities and events enrich our children's school experience, provide family entertainment, and promote friendship and a sense of community!

We are in need of parents to step up and take a leadership role with our PTO. We will not be able to do some of these family-fun evening events unless someone is willing to take charge and plan them.

Please consider joining our PTO team.

## **Box Tops/Coke Rewards**

The Box Tops/Coke Rewards program is off to a slow start. Remember, one man's trash is our treasure! This year we are continuing to collect Box Tops for Education and Coke Rewards. Box Tops for Education is in the process

of changing the way we "clip" box tops. You may notice that some products now have a "No More Clipping" logo. Those products need to have the receipt scanned using the Box Tops for Education app (free at Google Play or the Apple App Store). As they gradually change over to all digital, you will see less and less products with the old "clips". Please continue sending in the old "clips" if you see them. Many times, we will receive credit (giving us double credit) if you scan the receipt on those products as well. Some stores are also giving bonus points in an effort to get people to use the new app. Check the app to see who is offering bonuses!

Please be patient if you are having problems with the app as this is a brand new app and they are still working out the bugs. If you have a problem, feel free to contact BTFE. They will be happy to help resolve your problem.

We earn 10¢ for each Box Top and 5¢ for each Coke cap (more for 12- and 24-packs). Either at Open House or on the first day of school a purple folder went home with important papers. One of the items in that folder was a packet which includes lists of participating products. If you misplaced your list, extras are available in the office.

Our first contest will conclude on September 20<sup>th</sup>. BTFE has just released an update on the app. Once you update it, you will be able to assign submission to a specific child and/or teacher. I was even able to go back to a receipt I had already submitted and add who I wanted to get the credit. Once we learn how to access this feature online, we will be able to include digital donations in our contests!

Once again this year, we will keep track of box tops and Coke codes sent in throughout the school year and you will get credit for ALL year when we do our popular "Snowball Challenge" in January. If you sent in box tops at the end of last school year or before our first contest started, don't worry. Your box tops and Coke codes have been "banked"

and credit was given for the first contest.

We encourage you to visit [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com). On this site you can find more information about the new digital program, coupons and recipes, and frequently there are sweepstakes to earn our school extra Box Tops!

## Pop Tab Collection

To many, a pop tab is just a piece of aluminum with one purpose – to open a can. But to the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana, the pop tab is a valuable resource. Why? Collected pop tabs are recycled, generating much-needed funds to support the Ronald McDonald House and the nearly 1,500 families they serve each year.

In the years since the program began over one billion pop tabs have been donated generating about \$500,000 in pop tab revenue for the House.

Funds received from the recycling of tabs usually adds up to between \$30,000 and \$50,000 annually. All this money goes to the operating expenses of the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana and can cover the cost of operating three rooms in the House for an entire year.

How can you help? John Wood School is now collecting pop tabs for Ronald McDonald House. Simply remove the pop tab from the aluminum can and put them in your favorite collection container. When you are ready to send them to school, just put them in a Ziploc-type bag and send them with your child. There's no competition, no goal, no prizes...just the reward of doing a good deed. Last year we were pleased to be able to donate about 9 pounds of pop tabs to Ronald McDonald House of Indiana!

## Birthday Treat Reminder

The safety of our children is of the utmost importance. We have many students with a wide range of food allergies. In order to keep all of our students safe, the Merrillville Elementary Schools will be enforcing a more restrictive birthday treat policy this school year. First of all, we would prefer non-food items be sent to celebrate your child's birthday. These items could include:

- Pencils
- Stickers
- Erasers
- Donating a book to the library in honor of your child's birthday.

However, if you choose to send a food treat for your child's birthday, the treats must be pre-packaged, store bought, individually wrapped and include a list of ingredients on the package. Examples of acceptable items include:

- Little Debbie treats
- Individual small bags of chips
- Individual fruit snacks
- Small candy bars

Store bought cupcakes, cakes, cookies, and homemade food items are NOT ALLOWED. These are not individually wrapped and packaged.

**Treats that do not follow our guidelines will not be passed out and will be sent back home.**

We appreciate your support and understanding as we continue to reflect on how to provide all students with a safe learning environment.

### **Birthday Treats available through our Merrillville Community School Food Service Program:**

- Cookie, individually packaged (50¢ each)
- Cupcake, individually packaged (75¢ each)
- Brownie, individually packaged (85¢ each)

Birthday Treats are available by contacting Sherrie in our food service department at 650-5300, ext. 6008.

**Orders must be placed one week in advance and they will be delivered to the school.**

## Summer Reading

Last June all students in K-3 (currently in 1-4) received a summer reading challenge in their end-of-year packet. Students who returned the completed paper in August will be receiving a reward! We are happy to see that these students continued reading during the summer months!

Congratulations to the following students:

Yassmin Aboelezz, Kaylee Shooltz

## Informative Notes

When writing notes to either the teacher or the office, please make sure you include the following information:

- ✓ Date note is written
- ✓ Teacher's name
- ✓ Student's name (first and last)
- ✓ Date/day you are writing about
- ✓ Reason
- ✓ Signature

Remember that Gold Notes must be sent in to change the way a child is going home or for an early pickup.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

## Important Information

Sometimes things happen unexpectedly and it may be necessary to have an unscheduled school closing. When we do, it is vital that we have your current phone number on file in our office. We have an automated system that is used when we need to notify you quickly with important information. If we have an incorrect or disconnected number, you may not get the notice. Please note, you will only receive one call from the automated system, and that call will only go to the number you designated as your "home" number.

**Please do not change your "home" number in the Skyward system to "unlisted" or "confidential" or block our school phone number or you will not receive important notifications.**

## Abitibi Recycling

Have you noticed the large yellow and green paper recycling bin in the front parking lot? We promote recycling in our classrooms and the office. Abitibi Paper Retriever<sup>®</sup> is a free, community-based program, with thousands of collection points, including schools, places of worship, non-profit organizations, libraries, and small businesses. Abitibi Bowater pays these organizations for their paper recycling efforts. Over the years, these organizations have earned over \$4,000,000, while diverting millions of tons of paper from North American landfills. Our recycling bin is accessible 24 hours a day. Tell your friends and neighbors about our program so we can earn even more money for our school.

### **We want ALL your:**

Newspapers  
Magazines  
Office & School Papers  
Shopping Catalogs  
Mail

### **Please do NOT include:**

Cardboard  
Phone Books  
Plastic  
Glass  
Metal  
Trash



## Coats for Kids (and families)

Each year the Merrillville schools participate in a community-wide effort to provide coats for people facing economic hardship.

As you begin to put away summer clothing and bring out cool-weather clothing, keep this project in mind. If you find out-grown winter coats that are still in good condition, consider saving them for our collection in October. You don't even need to wash them. They have a team of volunteers who are willing to clean all the coats before the give-away in November.

Watch for a flyer to come home soon about this community service project.

## Clothing Donations

As your children outgrow their clothing, please consider donating them to our office. Occasionally children have "accidents" or slip and fall into mud or water. We don't want the children to miss valuable class time, so we try to have an assortment of clothing on hand so that they can get back to class quickly.

Think about donating outgrown:

- Sweatpants (more forgiving in sizes than jeans)
- Leggings (again, will fit a variety of sizes)
- Jeans
- T-shirts
- Sweatshirts
- New, unused underwear (especially in younger sizes)

## Attendance Rewards

Each month we have a fun monthly reward for the class with the best attendance. The class with the highest percentage of attendance for the month receives the "Beary" Attendance Trophy at our Pirate Power meeting along with a small treat. The class totals are also posted in the showcase in the main hallway.

Remember, part of perfect attendance includes being at school on time! Keep making an effort to be at school on time and stay healthy and in school!

## PBIS

John Wood uses a curriculum program called **P**ositive **B**ehavior **I**nterventions and **S**upport Program or PBIS for short. PBIS is a school-wide systems approach to discipline that emphasizes prevention.

There are several tools we use to help reinforce good behavior. The students may have heard the John Wood Pledge during the announcements each Friday. A copy of that pledge can be found on page three of this newsletter. On the last page of this newsletter is a Behavior Matrix. This shows you the actual expectations for various locations throughout our school building.

Students can earn BEST Treasure Tickets each day. Any staff member can hand out a ticket to a student. Tickets are rewarded when students follow the John Wood Code and demonstrate good behavior. Tickets can be used to purchase small items from the Treasure Chest Cart, or for special activities like extra recesses at the end of the school year.

We urge you to discuss this program with your child. Please encourage them to follow the school rules, not only to earn tickets, but because it will make school more enjoyable and safe for them and all students. Help us motivate and reinforce the positive behavior your child is demonstrating at school. You may even want to use the same approach at home! Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

## A Message from the Nurse

### Just a reminder regarding medication at school.

Only those medications that are necessary to maintain the child in school and those ordered by a physician during school hours will be administered.

1. A physician's written order and signed parent note are required for any medication (prescription or over-the-counter) that is kept at school or carried by the student. Medication forms are available in the nurse's office. Notes written by the physician on a script pad are also accepted.
2. All medications must be brought to the nurse's office by the parent. No student should have medication (including cough drops) in his/her possession, unless the physician has ordered the medication to be carried by the student.
3. Prescription medication must be in the original prescription bottle, labeled with:
  - Student's Name
  - Name of Medication
  - Correct Dosage
  - Time to be given
4. Over-the-counter medication must be:
  - In the original bottle
  - Labeled with the student's name
5. A parent note must be sent to the nurse in the event a medication is discontinued at school before its expected time.
6. **Medication orders must be renewed every school year.**
7. According to state law, medication received at school in grades K-8 cannot be sent home with the student.

Thank you for your cooperation regarding medication.



## New Dismissal Procedure Numbers

Did you request and receive a Dismissal Procedure number from our office? Here's a couple of "tips" we've heard about and would like to share:

- Put your number in a page protector to help keep it from getting mangled throughout the year. You can sometimes find small packages of page protectors at the dollar store!
- We heard about someone who uses a plastic pant or skirt hanger (the kind with clips) and uses it to hang the number from the rear view mirror. While this is not exactly where we ask you to display the number, as long as it is visible from the building, we're good!
- We've also heard about someone using binder clips and clipping it to the passenger side visor so they can just flip it down when they are picking up. Again, as long as we can clearly see it from the building, we don't have a problem.
- We put reminders on the back of the number so if you share the extra number with grandma, babysitter, etc, they have all the info they need about dismissal procedures. Please change the reminders to state that children need to be picked up at Entrance F, as we have changed the procedures after the numbers were sent out.

Remember, if you don't have your number with you when you are picking up a student after school, you will need to park in the front lot (not the circle drive) and come in to show an ID at the office, delaying in the release of the student. If you misplace your number or need extras, please let the office know and we will get you additional numbers.

Please be patient with the staff and other drivers as this is still a new procedure for all of us and we may still be working out any "bugs".

## Reading Meeting

You are invited to hear about the wonderful things that are happening in our school and learn more about our enrichment programs. Here are the dates and times:

**Date: Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Times: 9:00-10:00 a.m. OR 1:00-2:00 p.m.**

**Location: John Wood Elementary School**

**Childcare will also be provided for pre-school age children if necessary.**

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Learn about the goals and purposes of the school's enrichment programs.
- Learn about the standards, curriculum, and the types of tests used to measure student progress and goals students are expected to meet.
- Provide suggestions and ask questions regarding policies, programs, and activities.

Your child should have brought home a note about this meeting. If you are interested in attending, please fill out the form at the bottom of the note and return it by **September 19<sup>th</sup>**. Extra copies of the form are available in the school office. If you cannot attend the meeting, an alternate evening meeting will be held at **Merrillville High School on Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>** from 6:00-7:00 p.m. Please use entrance "J" located on the east side of the building.

## Did you Remember?

Either at Open House Night or on the first day of school, you received a purple folder filled with information. There were several items that needed to be filled out and returned to the school. While most have been turned in, there are still some who haven't returned these important papers. If you have misplaced these, extras are available from your child's teacher or the school office.

Please send these in ASAP:

- ✓ Emergency Card
- ✓ Yellow Emergency School Closing – This info will be used in event that there is an emergency closing **after** school has already started (bad weather, power failure, loss of water, etc)
- ✓ Attendance Policy/Letter from Merrillville Town Court
- ✓ Technology Responsible Use Policy – found on page 40 in the green Student Handbook.

The following are optional:

- ✓ Free and Reduced Lunch Application
- ✓ Background Check – new background check is necessary every year if you are planning to volunteer anywhere in the school.
- ✓ Student Accident Insurance

## Updates from the Staff

You already get regular updates in the form of notes and newsletters from your child's classroom teacher, but what about other staff members your child may see? In this section, you will get updates each trimester from various staff members in an effort to keep you informed about what is happening throughout the school.

### The Art Loft

Mrs. J. Fairbairn

My name is Jennifer Fairbairn and I am the new Art teacher this year. I taught Art as my very first job teaching in Merrillville 14 years ago!

This trimester in Art, we will be doing a variety of projects including celebrating Dot Day by coloring a dot, painting rocks to decorate our courtyard, and many other fun activities.

Students do receive a grade on their report card for Art. They will receive an E for Excellent, S for Satisfactory, and N for Needs Improvement. They receive their grade based on in-class participation as well as from the projects that they complete.

### Notes from the Music Room

Mrs. Timmerman

All students in grades K through 4 have music twice a week for 30 minutes. We sing, move, dance, and play percussion instruments. In music, we develop age appropriate skills that help students become musical people. Musical people are able to sing in tune with expression, to think tunes, to move to the beat of music, and to respond to the artistic qualities in music.

Kindergarten and first grade students follow the First Steps in Music Curriculum. I have taken specialized training on this program, and I am a certified First Steps teacher. Students do a musical workout each week that helps them become "tuneful, beatful, and artful." We focus intensely on matching singing pitch, moving to the beat, and responding to the artful part of music.

Second, third, and fourth graders work from a series called Conversational Solfege, which covers rhythm and pitch reading, and from an

online program called MusicPlay. They learn songs, rhythmic pieces and games that lead them through rhythms and pitch patterns of increasing difficulty. Fourth graders will soon be working on reading notes by letter from the music staff.

Fourth graders will take our annual field trip to see the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra's student concert on Thursday, October 10. This trip helps us learn about the instruments and about concert etiquette. This year's concert is called "One Small Step" and will commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first manned lunar landing. Look for permission slips to come home soon.

*Notice to Parents/Guardians:* Our Indiana music standards include singing and playing music for special occasions and holidays. If your child is not permitted to sing a song for a specific holiday or for all holidays due to religious or other reasons, you need to send me that information *in writing*. Please be specific about what is not allowed.

Donations of Kleenex and hand sanitizer for the music room are always needed and appreciated. Thank you in advance.

*Grading:* I am occasionally asked about grading for music. Special area classes (art, music, and P.E.) use the grades: "E" for Excellent, "S" for Satisfactory, and "N" for Needs Improvement. These grades are rubric grades that describe the achievement level. Students who are performing as expected for the grade level earn an "S". Because we use the Skyward online grade book, the grades are entered as 3, 2, or 1. Sometimes when parents view this online, it appears as a percentage. (For example, if a child has an "S" it appears as 66% because it is 2 out of 3. Your child is NOT failing!) Disregard the percentage and consider the letter only.

### A Word from the Social Worker

Mrs. Robbins

Happy 2018/19 School Year

This school year has been off to a fabulous start. I am enjoying meeting new students and reuniting with those from last year. This year we will continue to build relationships utilizing Restorative Practices, but also with additional classes being introduced to PATHS (Positive Alternative THinking Strategies). This program will help students to identify and work through SEL (Social and Emotional Learning).

As I present to classrooms this year as I did with last year, notes will be sent home occasionally to let you know what your child (ren) are learning. Through SEL, students are able to not only verbalize their feelings, but work through emotions and challenging situations which often prevent them from focusing on their academics. I look forward to an incredible school year. Thank you in advance for your support.

### Purple Pirate Pride

In an effort to promote pride in our school community, we encourage students to wear purple on Fridays. Students who wear purple on Fridays will be included in a drawing each week for a small prize.

Students who are wearing ANYTHING "John Wood" (old Spirit Wear, Math Fact Shirts, etc) or "Merrillville" (Athletic Department Spirit Wear, Pop Warner shirts, etc) will also count for the drawing...even if it is not purple (sometimes spirit wear is on gray or black).

# The Fitness Forecast

Mr. Battista

Healthy kids make better students.  
Better students make healthy communities.

At John Wood Elementary the PHYSICAL FITNESS of your child is of the utmost importance. Every effort to promote your child's physical fitness is made with the implementation of the Indiana State Standards. The "I Can Statements" of our Physical Education (PE) program focuses on your child's striving to:

- Practice and master appropriate motor skills and movement.
- Develop and maintain lifelong, family-oriented, health related fitness.
- Be able to cooperate with others.
- Be nice.
- Be careful.
- Be respectful.
- Exhibit good sportsmanship qualities.

I am very fortunate to teach at John Wood Elementary and to provide quality physical education for every child.

Students go out for recess daily. We do pay special attention to weather conditions, heat and cold. In order for your child to participate to their fullest capability, please make sure he/she is wearing appropriate clothing for the weather, and tennis shoes or flat-soled shoes that enclose the whole foot. Names should be in coats. Please have girls wear shorts under their dresses.

The safety of our students is very important to us. Before each activity I will model the activity and discuss the rules and student expectations. Students participate during PE classes at their own skill level.

## Soccer for Life Long Fitness

The beginning of the first trimester the K-4<sup>th</sup> graders will be working on their soccer skills, they will focus on becoming proficient in eye-foot

coordination, dribbling a soccer ball and leg strength (kicking).

Teaching sport skills such as soccer is important in physical education because it gives the students an outlet to be active and develop lifelong fitness skills. Students have spent the last two weeks learning the skills. This week we incorporated the skills into a full class fitness lesson. This trimester we will be using class time to participate in games using modified rules to increase the success of every student.

Work out at home. Every hour-long TV show has about six commercial breaks that last 3 minutes each, so you can get a decent total body workout while you watch—no gym necessary. Just perform 10-15 repetitions of the following or add some of your own favorite exercises: jumping jacks, push-ups and sit-ups. For a more advanced workout, pick one movement per commercial and see how many repetitions you can do. Each time you do it, try to beat your last score.

## Our PTO has a Facebook page! Friend us at

[www.facebook.com/johnwood.pto](http://www.facebook.com/johnwood.pto)

We try to use this page to pass along important reminders from the school and also to inform you of upcoming PTO activities.

**We are now also on Twitter! Look for us at @PtoWood.**

# The Book Nook

Mrs. Echols

## Welcome back to the Book Nook!

The students are rapidly moving towards a good school year. The first week of school the students practiced the John Wood emergency drills (fire, tornado, earthquake, lockdown), and got acquainted with the library. The second week we implemented the importance of using good manners (please, thank you, kindness etc.) and the appropriate way to care for library books and other materials.

Second grade brought in their iPads and they practiced how to log into **Reading Counts** to take tests. Our fourth grade classes went on a scavenger hunt inside the library. The book used to conduct the scavenger hunt was, "The Library Ginger Bread Man," by Dotti Enderle.

I encourage you to ask your child(ren) questions about the books that were read during their time in the library such as:

- "Manners in the Library" by: Carrie Fin
- "Curious George in the Library" by Margret and H.A.Rey
- "What Happen to Marion's Book" by Brook Berg
- "The Library Pages" by Carlene Morton

## Follow our MCSC superintendent and our John Wood principal on Twitter!

Both Mr. Brown, our MCSC superintendent, and Mrs. Petralia, our John Wood principal are on Twitter!

Follow Mr. Brown at @MerrillvilleSu3.

Follow Mrs. Petralia at @PrinPetralia.

# The Coaches' Corner

Ms. Copeland, Mrs. Pozdzal,  
Mrs. Rassbach, Miss Zorich

## Insight to "Inquiry" Math from our Instructional Coaches

### So what is all this talk about "inquiry" math at John Wood Elementary?

Why is my child coming home with math that doesn't make sense to me? How do I help my child with math? These are some of the many questions parents/guardians have asked. Here are some answers to those questions that may give clarity to what is being taught in the classroom.

### Question: What is "inquiry" math?

**Answer:** "Inquiry" math is a fancy word for making math meaningful. It allows students to explore and discover math through real-world problems.

### Question: Why is John Wood using "inquiry" (meaningful) math?

**Answer:** The principals and teachers want students to gain a deeper understanding of math concepts. This goal is accomplished by giving students the opportunity to think.

### Question: What does "inquiry" (meaningful) math look like in the classroom?

**Answer:**

- 1) Teachers focus on the many different strategies used to solve problems instead of just telling the class the answer. The class comes to a collective agreement on what the answer is to a problem.
- 2) Students are allowed to agree, disagree, or ask questions about other students' strategies. Class discussion is promoted throughout a math lesson.
- 3) Students discuss the most "efficient" way (the quickest way) to solve the problem.
- 4) Teachers do not begin lessons by giving students the correct steps to solve a problem (traditional math). Instead, students explore this on their own, so they can have a deeper understanding of math instead of just memorizing each step.

### Question: How can I help my child with math at home?

**Answer:** Instead of just checking homework to see if the child is right or wrong, parents and guardians should try to listen to how their child came up with the answer. It will give parents/guardians a deeper understanding of what their child understands in math.

**Important:** John Wood's goal is for their students to have a deeper understanding of mathematics and to not just memorize the correct steps to solve a problem. Therefore, if parents/guardians show their child a way to solve a math problem, the child must be able to explain the reasoning of that strategy. If the strategy can't be explained, then the strategy has no mathematical significance to that child.

## How to Read Nonfiction Text From Our Instructional Coaches

Adapted By: Reading Rockets

Many kids love to read about science and nature as well as real people, places, and events. Nonfiction books present information in engaging and interesting ways. However, most kids read a lot more fiction than non-fiction, so spend some extra time helping your reader learn how to navigate all the parts of a nonfiction book — from the table of contents to the diagrams, captions, glossary, and index.

### Talk about nonfiction

A nonfiction book means that the book will give us information that is true. The book will be organized around a specific topic or idea, and we may learn new facts through reading. Some kids even enjoy sorting their home libraries into fiction and nonfiction books. This simple categorization task helps your child understand the difference between fiction and nonfiction.

### Look at the parts

Most good nonfiction books will have helpful features that are not a part of most fiction books. These parts include a table of contents, an index, a

glossary, photographs and charts with captions, and a list of sources. Share the purpose of the features with your reader.

- **Table of Contents:** Located at the front of a book, the table of contents displays a list of the big ideas within the book and where to find them.
- **Index:** An index is an alphabetical list of almost everything covered within the book, with page numbers. Readers can use the index to look up specific terms or concepts and go right to the specific information they're looking for.
- **Glossary:** Located at the back of the book, a glossary contains key words that are related to the topic and their definitions. These definitions provide more information about new vocabulary words.
- **Captions:** Captions are usually right under photographs, figures, maps, and charts. Captions give a quick summary of what information is presented in the graphic.
- **Photos/Charts:** A lot of information can be found by "reading" the charts and photos found within nonfiction text. Readers will first need to figure out what information is presented. Then they'll need to discover how to navigate the information. Some charts use clear labels, others require more careful examination. Help your reader learn more about the different ways information can be displayed.

### Be the reading boss

Nonfiction books do not have to be read from cover to cover. Readers can use the table of contents and index to jump right to the information they are most interested in. In that way, they are the "reading boss" of that book! However, if your reader wants to read from cover to cover, encourage him to use the table of contents to understand how the book is organized. "First we will learn about the different types of frogs. Then we'll learn where they can live, what they eat, and how they survive." Passages from the book can be reread as often as necessary until your child understands what is written. You can refer to pictures, charts and tables over and over again.

## Behavioral Expectations Matrix - John Wood School

All Settings	Hallways	Playground	Cafeteria	Special Classes	Bus	Assemblies	Rest Rooms	Office
<b>Be responsible.</b>	Walk in a single line facing forward.  Follow the set procedures.	Use equipment properly.  Don't litter.  Tell an adult when someone is hurt or there is a conflict.	Take all needed belongings to lunch.  Clean up after yourself.  Keep your food on your tray.	Be prepared.  Bring supplies.  Stay on task.  Follow the directions of the teacher.	Be at the stop on time.  Remember your school materials.  Stay in your seat.	Listen attentively to the speaker.  Stay seated.  Follow adult directions.	Flush the toilet.  Wash and dry hands.  Keep the rest rooms dry and clean.	Introduce yourself.  Tell the staff your reason for coming to the office.
<b>Everyone deserves respect.</b>	Respect personal space.  Be courteous.  Be considerate of the other classes.	Take turns.  Include everyone.  Listen to the person in charge.	Use table manners.  Listen to the person in charge.	Raise your hand to ask questions.  No name calling.  Listen to the speaker.	Listen to the driver.  Respect personal space.	Clap at appropriate times.  Respect personal space.	Privacy, please.  Observe quiet zone.	Be polite.  Wait your turn.
<b>Safety counts.</b>	Keep feet, hands, and objects to yourself.  Walk on the right side away from the wall.	Keep feet, hands, and objects to yourself.  Use equipment properly.  When whistle is blown, stop, look, and listen.	Eat your own food.  Raise your hand before leaving your seat.  Walk.	Keep feet, hands, and objects to yourself.  Use equipment properly.  Dress appropriately.	Stay seated.  Get on and off the bus in single line.  Follow the bus rules.	Keep feet, hands, and objects to yourself.  Walk on the bleachers.	Use one pump of soap.  No school supplies in the rest room.  Report unsafe conditions.	Walk on the right side away from the wall when coming to and from the office.
<b>Talk appropriately.</b>	Observe quiet zone.	No put downs or name-calling.  Be quiet in line.  Use kind words.	Use an inside, restaurant voice—6" voice.  Be quiet in the serving line.	Use kind words.  Use the right voice for the activity.  Speak when called upon.	Talk softly.  Use inside, 6" voices.	Be quiet during the presentation.  Speak when called upon.	Observe quiet zone.	Quietly wait your turn.  Say please and thank you.