



# WEST JEFFERSON HILLS

## SCHOOL DISTRICT



## ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK 2025-2026



### **Jefferson Hills Intermediate School**

875 Old Clairton Road  
Jefferson Hills, PA 15025  
Phone: 412-655-4163

**Principal:** Mr. Christopher Very  
**Associate Principal:** Dr. Melissa McCauley



### **Gill Hall Elementary School**

829 Gill Hall Road  
Jefferson Hills, PA 15025  
Phone: 412-655-4732

**Principal:** Mr. Adam Zunic



### **McClellan Elementary School**

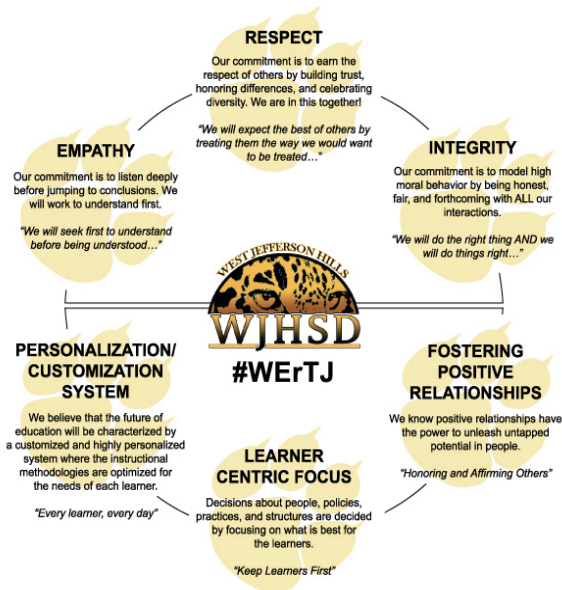
360 School Lane  
Pittsburgh, PA 15236  
Phone: 412-655-2700

**Principal:** Mr. Justin Liberatore

**Building Information**  
**ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**  
 830 Old Clairton Road  
 Jefferson Hills, PA 15025-3131  
 412-655-8450 Fax: 412-655-9544  
[www.wjhdsd.net](http://www.wjhdsd.net)

Superintendent .....Dr. Janet Sardon  
 Assistant Superintendent .....Dr. Bill Henderson  
 Supervisor Special Ed./Pupil Services.....Dr. Cassandra Bozek  
 Director of Curriculum.....Dr. Erikka Kuhse  
 Director of Finance/Transportation .....Mrs. Tracy Harris  
 Director of Facilities ..... Mr. Mark Mariani

**Personal Core Values**



**District Core Values**

## **Mission Statement**

*Students are the primary focus of the West Jefferson Hills School District where, in partnership with families and community, the mission is to educate and prepare all students to become responsible and active contributing members of society by providing a challenging, innovative educational program guided by an exceptional staff in a safe, positive, caring environment, all of which promote excellence.*

## **Vision Statement**

*Where innovation meets excellence to create opportunities for lifelong learners.*

## **Foreword**

*This booklet is intended to provide you with information that will be helpful to you as your child progresses throughout the year. It will acquaint you with our programs, school regulations, and general information concerning the Elementary Program in the West Jefferson Hills School District.*

*In addition to making use of this booklet to familiarize yourself with the Elementary Program, we sincerely hope that you will take every opportunity to become acquainted with your child's teacher and other professional staff members in the school. Please feel free to contact your child's school principal at any time if you have questions about the program or your child's progress.*

## **Anti-Discrimination Policy**

*It is the policy of the West Jefferson Hills School District not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, age, race, color, and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 504 and Title VI. For information concerning services, activities, programs, and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons or about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Superintendent at 412-655-8450, Extension 2225.*

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Please visit the District’s website at [www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net) for the most current version of the Board Policies referenced in this Handbook.

## **The School Day**

Homeroom period begins at 8:20 a.m. Students are considered tardy when arriving after 8:30 a.m. and should report to the office upon arrival.

## **Elementary Schedule**

<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Schedule</u></b>
8:05 a.m.	Student Arrival Begins
8:31 a.m.	Late/Tardy Report to Office
3:15 p.m.	Student Dismissal Begins

## **Before and After School Care**

Little Kids Playcare provides a before-and-after-school program for students enrolled in the West Jefferson Hills School District's elementary and intermediate schools. This program will be hosted at Gill Hall Elementary for all students. Parents/guardians who choose to enroll their students into this program are responsible for all associated costs. For more information on the before-and-after-school program, call 412-650-9020.

## **Emergency Closing of School**

Barring unforeseen situations or emergencies, the school calendar is fixed for the term. To close any or all of the schools due to weather conditions, or for other reasons, announcements will be made over Television stations *KDKA (1020 AM)*, *WTAE (1250 AM)*, and *WPXI-TV (Channel 11)* as early as possible. Announcements will also be made through *SchoolMessenger*, the school district's automated alert system, via e-mail, phone call and SMS text messages, and be posted on our *WJHSD website at [www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net)*. See *Notification System section*.

## **Student Supervision Outside of Normal School Hours**

Upon arrival at school, all students should go to areas within their school as designated by their school principal. No adult supervision of playground areas is provided before or after school, and students are expected to leave school grounds immediately following dismissal.

## **Attendance Requirements**

Children in grades K-5 are covered by the compulsory attendance laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The following list outlines those absences which **are** and **are not** excused, as per school board policy:

1. Illness (parent or doctor note -- doctor's notes do not count toward the 10-day maximum per year)
2. Quarantine (parent or doctor note -- doctor's notes do not count toward the 10-day maximum per year)
3. Recovery from accident (parent or doctor note)
4. Death in family (counts as a parent note and toward the 10-day maximum per year)
5. Family educational travel, with **prior approval** on an Educational Vacation form as found on Skyward (counts as a parent note and toward the 10-day maximum per year)

6. Religious absences (up to 36 hours per school year--counts as a parent note and toward the 10-day maximum per year)
7. **Approved** family emergencies. Family emergencies **must** be approved by a Principal or Administrator (counts as a parent note and toward the 10-day maximum per year). Otherwise, the excuse will remain unexcused. If you write “family emergency”, you will be contacted by the Principal to verify.
8. The following are considered examples of unexcused absences:
  - a. Family visiting from out of town, or visiting family out of town
  - b. Birthday or a family birthday
  - c. Slept in
  - d. Missed the bus
  - e. Vague notifications such as “my child will be absent today.” The state of PA requires a specific reason.

Upon return to school, a signed excuse written by a parent/guardian must be sent to the homeroom teacher stating the reason and date(s) of absence. If a written statement is not presented within three (3) days of the student’s return to school, the absence will be considered an unexcused absence. A doctor’s statement may be required for extended illness, stating the reason for being absent. A student who accumulates ten (10) days of absence accompanied by a parent’s written excuse will be required to have a doctor’s excuse for each subsequent absence, in accordance with board policy. Prolonged absences must have a written doctor’s excuse. If a student has reached their 10-day limit and is required to present a doctor’s excuse, any absence for any other reason will be marked unexcused - including Educational Trip requests.

If a child accumulates a total of 18 (excused & unexcused) absences, the child will be prohibited from participating in certain fun activities at the school (such as Field Trips and Field Day).

## **Make-Up Work**

Students with legal absences may have the opportunity to complete any missed assignments upon returning to school. Students will have the same number of days to submit their work or make up any tests as the number of days they missed (i.e. if a child misses 2 days of school, he/she will have 2 days after they return to school for make-up privileges).

## **Tardy/Early Dismissal**

If a student arrives after 8:30 a.m., they are late and considered tardy. Students must report to the office to check in before going to class. Students should present a note for why they were late. If the student was at an appointment, they should bring an excuse from the doctor's office.

If a student must leave for an appointment during the school day, parents must send a note to the homeroom teacher stating the reason and time of the necessary dismissal. The teacher will send the child to the office at the time indicated. Parents must meet their child in the school office at the time indicated. Parents are encouraged to make all appointments before or after regular school hours.

Students in grades K-5 who report to school after 12:00 p.m.. will be marked absent for one-half (½) of the day. Elementary school students dismissed before 12:00 p.m.. will be marked P.M. absent.

*Extra-curricular activities (i.e., music, tennis, dance, organized sports lessons/games) must be scheduled before or after school hours.*

## **Homebound Instruction**

Students who are unable to attend regular school classes due to illness may qualify for homebound instruction. If a child is absent from school for an extended period of time, and if a physician recommends

homebound instruction, the school will employ a homebound teacher. This involves up to five hours of instruction per week in the home. Parents should contact the principal when this service is warranted.

### **Attendance and Health**

Your child should attend school each day they are well. Every absence, even part of a school day, interferes with your child's progress at school. In order to be ready for new steps in learning, your child must have mastered the previous steps and be sufficiently ready for the new material.

For the protection of your child and others, please do not send your child to school with symptoms of any of the following:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher in the last 24 hours
- Vomiting in the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea
- Persistent cough
- Sore throat with swollen glands
- Earache
- Widespread body rash
- Contagious illness, eye or skin infection until treated by your physician and released for school attendance

If your child does not feel well before coming to school, keep the child at home under supervision. Communicable diseases such as colds, strep throat, pneumonia or influenza frequently begin with symptoms such as fever, vomiting, sore throat, or skin rash.

According to the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), children are excluded from school for the following communicable diseases **until properly treated and cleared by a physician:**

<i>Chicken Pox</i>	<i>Conjunctivitis</i>	<i>Fifth Disease</i>
<i>Hand, Foot &amp; Mouth</i>	<i>Head Lice<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Impetigo</i>
<i>Infectious Hepatitis</i>	<i>Measles</i>	<i>Mononucleosis</i>
<i>MRSA<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Mumps</i>	<i>Ringworm</i>
<i>Rubella</i>	<i>Scabies</i>	<i>Scarlet Fever</i>
<i>Strep Throat</i>	<i>Whooping Cough</i>	

<sup>1</sup> *Head Lice*- Exclude from school until immediately after first treatment, and until nits (eggs) have been removed. Re-admitted to school after the nurse does a head/nit check. Head re-examined by nurse after 7 to 10 days for infestation.

<sup>2</sup> *MRSA- Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus*

Children may only be excused from physical education classes and recess with a physician's excuse. A physician's excuse is needed when physical education classes and recess are ceased and resumed due to an injury or illness.

### **Homework Requests**

Requests for homework due to absences, must be made by contacting the school's main office prior to 9:00 a.m. Homework can be picked up in the office after 2:00 p.m. the day of the request. At the request of the parent, homework may be sent home with another student.

### **Birthday/Classroom Treats**

Many families like to celebrate their child's birthday, or other special occasions, with classmates by sending in treats. However, no food items may be brought to school to be passed out in the classroom/cafeteria. Acceptable substitutes may be pencils, stickers, or any other non-edible item.

If your child would like to invite classmates to a birthday party, they will only be permitted to pass out invitations if all of the students in a class are invited. The only exception is if a boy invites only all of the boys or if a girl invites only all of the girls.

### **Bus Schedule**

Bussing information will be posted in *Skyward* in early August. This will include the **estimated** time of pickup and/or drop off, location of stop, and bus number. If you notice discrepancies in the transportation arrangements in *Skyward*, please notify Matthew's Bus Company before August 18, 2025. Please be advised that no bus transportation changes will be made during the first week of school.

Please be at your designated bus stop at least five minutes prior to pick up and drop off. Please make every effort to have your child ride the bus to school. If it is necessary to drop off or pick up your child, please do not park in front of the school building or around the school's driveway circles. This creates a safety hazard for the children. Please see the transportation procedures for your child's building for more details. If a school bus does not arrive to pick up a student, **first** call Matthews Bus Company at 412-384-8810. If you are unable to reach the bus company, please contact the school office (see Page 1) or the Administration Building at 412-655-8450 x2221.

### **Bus Stop Locations**

Students are picked up and dropped off at a bus stop location as close to the student's home as possible. Bus stop locations will generally be located at intersections and not a student's home. Bus stop locations are generally located no closer than .3 miles except on hazardous routes as defined by the Department of Transportation.

### **Day Care/Child Care Transportation**

Students may be picked up or dropped off at a licensed day care facility provided that:

1. Parent submits a written request
2. Location is on an appropriate run with an existing bus stop
3. There is available seating on the vehicle
4. The request is for a long-term arrangement

### **Bus Transportation Guidelines**

Students must ride the bus that is assigned to them. Students are not permitted to change buses. Please do not ask to have your child ride another bus other than the one that is assigned. We cannot honor these requests. Bus transportation arrangements must remain consistent from day-to-day. Any permanent changes to this information may be made after the first week of school by calling Matthew's Transportation. Maintaining consistent transportation arrangements helps school staff and bus drivers safely deliver students to and from school while maintaining an efficient transportation system.

### **Bus Regulations**

The youngest students are to be seated at the front of the bus.

Students must obey bus drivers promptly as they are in full charge of buses and pupils while in transit.

Students must be on time at the designated bus stop.

Students must stay off the roadway at all times while waiting for the bus.

Students must cross in front of the bus when crossing a highway.

Students must wait until the bus comes to a stop before attempting to enter or leave the bus.

Students must keep their arms and heads inside the bus at all times.

Students must remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.

Any damage to the bus should be reported to the driver at once.

Students will be picked up and discharged only at designated stops.

Smoking is not permitted on the bus.

Students must not cause disturbances on the bus. This is a serious matter which endangers the safety of the driver and all passengers on the bus and will not be tolerated.

Students vandalizing buses will be subject to disciplinary action and may be held responsible for damages which they cause.

Audio-Video recording equipment may be utilized on the school buses for the purposes of safety and security.

Students who do not comply with the above regulations will be subject to disciplinary action and may have their riding privileges suspended by the school principal.

### **Surveillance Cameras**

Please be advised that the West Jefferson Hills School District utilizes surveillance cameras throughout the elementary school campuses. The surveillance cameras will provide safety for our students, staff and property of the School District.

### **Emergency Drills**

Fire Drills are conducted once each month. Lock-Down/Evacuation Drills are conducted at least twice annually. Bus Evacuation Drills are conducted twice annually, and Weather Drills are conducted once a year. Detailed escape plans are posted inside the doors of each classroom.

### **Lunch/Breakfast Program**

Lunch is available for purchase to all students during the 2025-2026 school year. Menus are available on-line through the West Jefferson Hills School District website ([www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net)/***Food Services*** tab) on a monthly basis. There is no cost for Breakfast for the 2025-2026 school year. Breakfast will be FREE to all students courtesy of the State of Pennsylvania!. A complete breakfast must be selected in order for

breakfast to be free. Breakfast items selected that don't make a complete breakfast will be charged ala carte.

The cost for a basic lunch is \$3.20 per lunch. Students may purchase milk or snacks as well.

Lunches are purchased using the PrimeroEdge Point-of-Sale software. Each student is assigned an account number. The student's account number is keyed in for each lunch they purchase. THE ACCOUNT IS A DEBIT ACCOUNT. The parent provides the school district with a sum of money at the beginning of the week, month, or school year and each lunch purchase is deducted from that sum of money. **PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: WJHSD CAFETERIA FUND.** You will be notified when your child's account balance is low. Accounts may also be monitored by logging on to [www.SchoolCafe.com](http://www.SchoolCafe.com). Please remember, this is a debit account and not a credit account. We cannot carry a negative balance. Parents who do not want their child to be able to charge snacks on PrimeroEdge may write a letter stating so to the cafeteria manager, or by choosing those options through SchoolCafe ([www.SchoolCafe.com](http://www.SchoolCafe.com)).

No food may be taken from the cafeteria.

Lunch aides are provided to help the children with their lunches, as well as to supervise their recreational time.

### **Medical Services**

The School Health Service Program is the area of education which maintains, protects, and promotes the optimal health, physical, mental, and social environment of the school-age student. Its prime objective is the promotion of good health habits as an adjunct to the home responsibility for health care. Besides performing the state mandated screening programs, the Health Service Department acts as a resource

and supports health education programs within the District.

Thorough screening is done on all new entrants to ensure that all students have had the required immunizations and are physically healthy, with no visual or hearing problems. Teaching children at an early age the importance of preventive health and safety habits is stressed.

The school nurse keeps a health record for each child. The parent must complete a health history, giving all information requested upon enrollment in the school district. The health record includes yearly height, weight, BMI notification, results of vision and hearing tests, and other important health information. It is very important to notify the office of any specific health problems such as allergies, seizure disorders, etc. that your child may have so that this may become part of the child's health file. This information is considered confidential and is only available to school personnel on a need-to-know basis.

If your child becomes ill or is injured at school, you may be notified. Parents are responsible for transportation of their children when they become ill or injured. If both parents work outside the home, it is important that the school be given the telephone number of both places of employment. The school should also have the telephone number of a relative or neighbor who may be contacted if we are unable to reach you. This information must be provided and updated by parents/guardians in *Skyward*.

If your child does not feel well before coming to school, keep the child home under observation. Communicable diseases such as colds, strep throat, pneumonia or influenza frequently begin with symptoms such as fever, vomiting, sore throat, or skin rash. Please call your school nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

## **Student Information/Emergency Card**

All student information including contact phone numbers for parents/guardians, emergency contact information and student health information will be provided through *Skyward*. If any of this information changes during the year, parents/guardians must log into *Skyward* and make the necessary changes.

Additionally, before the start of school, parents/guardians will complete an emergency procedure form through *Skyward*. This *Skyward* form replaces the paper emergency card typically distributed during the first days of school. Please make sure all the information is accurate.

Parents/Guardians will be required to verify and update this information periodically during the year. The persons listed should be available to pick up your child in case of an emergency. Make sure the contact person has been notified of this important detail.

This information may also be used in the event of an early dismissal. They are consulted only when that action is considered necessary to best provide for the safety of the students.

## **Medications**

Any medication to be given by school personnel requires a written prescription/order from your doctor and written permission by the parent/guardian. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medication (Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Tums, etc.) A medication form can be found on the WJHSD website ([www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net)) under Health Services/Forms.

The medication order must be completed annually, at the beginning of each new school year, and submitted to the Health Office.

All medication must be taken to the Health Office. Asthma inhalers, EpiPen or insulin are permitted to be self-carried only with a doctor's

order (per district policy.) Medication must be in the original labeled prescription bottle or over-the-counter bottle. Ask your Pharmacist about providing a split portion in a labeled bottle for the school. The parent/guardian is responsible for delivering the medication to the school. Never send medication to school with a child. Please call the school with any medication questions.

Remember, the weather delays will often disrupt medication times at home. The time for the school medication must be adjusted accordingly. For your child's safety, NO MEDICATION will be given to your child on a delay day unless you contact the school nurse, in writing, to indicate the time medication should be given.

### **Kindergarten Medical Services**

The following medical services are performed during your child's year in kindergarten:

Height, Weight, and Body Mass Index (BMI) are measured and recorded yearly. BMI is a standardized screening tool which helps to identify over or underweight conditions that may lead to health problems. A student who is overweight has an increased risk of developing serious conditions including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, and certain cancers. A student who is underweight has an increased risk for heart problems, loss of bone mass, anemia, or other medical conditions.

Height, weight, and BMI measurements will be sent to the parent/guardian.

Vision is tested for reading and far distances. The parent/guardian will be notified if their child fails the screening.

Hearing is tested by using an audiometer, an instrument which detects early defects long before a hearing loss can be noticed by parents. The parent/guardian will be notified if their child fails the screening.

Physical examinations may be done by the school doctor for those

children who have not been examined by a family doctor in the past year. The parent/guardian will be notified of the date and time and may be present if they wish. To schedule a school physical, the parent/guardian must sign and return the examination permission form to the nurse. Dental examinations may be done by the school dentist for children who have not been examined by a family dentist in the past year. The parent/guardian will be notified of the date and time and may be present if they wish. To schedule a school dental exam, the parent/ guardian must sign and return the examination permission form to the nurse.

### **Parent-Teacher Association**

All of the elementary schools have Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) which help in a supportive manner. Membership in these organizations is voluntary and you can join your school's PTA at any time throughout the year. Please contact your school for more information.

### **Program of Studies**

Students will receive instruction in various subjects including, but not limited to: reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, technology, library and physical education. The curriculum for each course aligns with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's regulations; as such, state and national standards will be addressed when applicable. Course duration and options vary by grade-level. For more information please visit the West Jefferson Hills School District website.

### **Homeroom Assignments**

Students are placed into homeroom classes using a heterogeneous grouping approach, meaning each class is intentionally designed to reflect a balanced mix of learners. When creating class rosters, we consider a variety of factors, including equal class sizes, a balanced boy/girl ratio, teacher input, and student performance data (such as DIBELS and MAP assessments). It is important to note that during our small group instruction block—known as W.I.N. (What I Need)—students may be regrouped across classes for reading and math based on their specific learning needs. To ensure students receive the most effective support, some developing readers may be placed with homeroom teachers who specialize in reading intervention. We take great care in making homeroom placements and invest significant time and thought into creating the best possible learning environment for all students. For this reason, we are unable to honor parent requests for specific teachers or for students to be placed with particular friends.

### **Flexible Instruction Day**

Approved by the PA State Department of Education, students will be expected to log into their Canvas accounts or use course packets to complete all assigned work. Students not logging in or completing the packets will be marked absent for the day, and an excuse will be required for it to be an Excused absence.

### **Cyber School Program**

The WJHSD Cyber Academy is designed for students who require mobility and flexibility during the school day due to out-of-school extra-curricular activities, medical issues, or unforeseen circumstances. All requests for cyber courses will need approval by the cyber coordinator, school administration, and parent(s). Cyber School students who violate school rules during school hours or on school issued devices will be subject to the established discipline matrix.

## **Bullying**

The West Jefferson Hills School District is committed to providing a safe, positive and caring learning environment for district students.

Bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, bullying is prohibited

**Bullying** means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following: 1. Substantially interfering with a student's education. 2. Creating a threatening environment. 3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

**Bullying**, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

**School setting** means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school

The District has adopted the Second Step Social/Emotional Learning curriculum with the Bullying Prevention Unit. Specific instruction is provided to students with regard to bullying prevention.

## **Discipline**

The school team is guided by a belief that part of a child's development is to gain an understanding of acceptable behaviors. The district's personal core values of Respect, Integrity, and Empathy guide the discipline process. Understanding what motivates a child's behavior is critical in knowing how to teach appropriate replacement behaviors. Age-appropriate consequences will be delivered in a manner that is consistent with Board Policy and applicable Discipline Matrixes.

[Click here](#) to access the Discipline Matrix for Jefferson Hills Intermediate School.

### **Dress Code**

The West Jefferson Hills School District promotes learning and growth through education. Dress guidelines have been formulated with this concept in mind. While we accept changes in fashion, we also expect our students to use good judgment when choosing clothing to be worn to school. Clothing worn should promote, not hinder, the orderly process of education. The following clothing is inappropriate for school use:

- Apparel which may be considered destructive to school property or generally unsafe for the health and wellbeing of other students is prohibited.
- Shorts and skirts must be of modest length. Apparel which reveals the student's bare midriff, cleavage, or bra cups is prohibited. See-through shirts lacking appropriate coverage or showing visible undergarments are prohibited.
- Outdoor headwear, including sunglasses, is prohibited in the building. Additionally, hoodies are not to cover the head while inside the building.
- Pants and shorts/skirts must be worn at or above the hips in a manner that does not expose undergarments. Bandanas, chains, and any apparel promoting drugs, alcohol, sex, or violence are prohibited.
- Clothing that is not within the dress code's policy, as deemed by administration, which disrupts the orderly operation of the school or presents a clear and present danger to the health and welfare of the school community is prohibited.
- Children should wear comfortable and weather-appropriate clothing to school. Open-toed or strapless sandals and

“flip-flops” are not considered appropriate footwear and should not be worn to school. Students are physically active throughout the school day, especially during recess and going up and down the stairs. Wearing sensible and supportive shoes helps to keep your child safe in school.

- Students may not wear costume apparel unless related to a school-related project and pre-approved.

Students will be required to comply with the dress code’s standards and policies. Any student reporting to school inappropriately dressed will be required to call home for a change of clothing or will be provided school apparel to wear for the remainder of the day. Additional consequences may be assigned.

**Student Services**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Hearing Support</li> <li>*Vision Support</li> <li>*Learning Support/Tier 3</li> <li>*Speech/Language Support</li> <li>*Educational Interpreter, Audiological Services, Orientation and Mobility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Gifted Support</li> <li>*Social Work/School Counselor</li> <li>*Occupational/Physical Therapy</li> <li>*English as a Second Language (ESL) Program</li> <li>*MTSS/SAP</li> <li>*School Based Mental Health</li> <li>*AHN CHILL Project</li> </ul>
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## **Child Find**

District procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating students who may be eligible for special education, medically-necessary support services, and/or gifted support services can be found on the West Jefferson Hills School District website [www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net) under Student Services-Special Education.

## **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Process**

The MTSS Process is a positive, problem-solving, team-based process that uses instruction and intervention strategies to support student achievement and to help all students achieve success in the general education classroom.

The Tier 1, 2, and 3 meetings may include the child's classroom teacher, the school principal, school nurse, school social worker, and school psychologist. Depending on the needs of the student, the speech therapist, intervention specialist(s), and representatives from community agencies may also participate in the process.

The process involves these steps:

1. Providing appropriate instruction to all students
2. Identifying students for academic and/or behavior support that are not responding to instruction
3. Determining research-based strategies needed to assist students
4. Implementing intervention strategies through a continuum of services

After reviewing students' academic and/or behavioral needs, the team recommends strategies and determines types of support to help students achieve success in the regular classroom; parents will be contacted by the

school if their child is involved in this process. These strategies are implemented and monitored then evaluated by the team. If teachers report a positive change, the strategies are continued. If there isn't a positive change, more intensive interventions are implemented and progress is monitored.

### **Use of Phones**

Students are not permitted to use the school phone to make personal arrangements such as to visit a friend after school. The office will accept only emergency-type messages to relay to students. Cell phones, if brought to school, are to be turned off and left in the student's locker/backpack. At times, students may be permitted to use cell phones for teacher approved classroom activities. Students will return cell phones to their lockers/backpacks once the activity is complete or the class period ends. If a student is caught using a cell phone without prior approval it will be confiscated and a parent is responsible for coming to the office to pick up the phone. Appropriate disciplinary action may also be taken.

### **Reporting to Parents**

#### **Skyward**

*Skyward* software has been designed to provide an opportunity for improved communication with the school administration, counselors, and teachers. A parent/guardian is able to view his or her child's school assignments, upcoming events, grades, attendance, and course selections. *In Kindergarten, parents/guardians can only view Skyward for attendance and transportation purposes.* A link to this URL will be listed on the WJHSD website at [www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net). If you are having trouble accessing *Skyward*, please contact your school's main office and speak to the secretary.

## **Report Cards**

Report cards are available to parents via the Skyward portal at the end of each nine-week period. Notification is provided via Skyward when report cards are finalized and ready for access. Parents can view grades in *Skyward* to monitor student progress/grades prior to the posting of report cards. If a paper report card is needed, please contact your child's school office.

## **Notification System**

*SchoolMessenger* is a community notification system used by the District. *SchoolMessenger* has the ability to send alerts, warnings and announcements at the district, school, and special group levels. These messages can be delivered via voice, e-mail, and SMS text messaging. *SchoolMessenger* is also integrated with *Skyward* to warn parents and guardians of unscheduled student absences. *SchoolMessenger* will be used in addition to announcements on television and the District's website, especially during weather-related situations. If you receive a call from the district via *SchoolMessenger*, please listen to the message. Do not contact the school prior to listening to the content of the message. For assistance, please contact your child's school.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences can be initiated by the parent or the teacher. Parents who desire a conference can call the teacher for an appointment, or write a note/send email requesting an appointment to see the teacher. At least 24 hours of advanced notice in scheduling appointments must be provided. Conferences can only be scheduled before school, after school and at limited times during the instructional day. Conferences will also be held on Parent-Teacher Conference Day following the first nine-week reporting period.

## **Open House**

Open House is an excellent time for parents to visit the school, meet the teachers, and learn about the curriculum and classroom procedures.

Parents will have the opportunity to learn about other matters related to the school environment. Our Encore teachers and support staff will be available to visit as well.

Open House is not the appropriate time to discuss individual student issues. This can be done at Parent-Teacher Conference Days or by appointments scheduled with the teacher. This will ensure a more confidential surrounding in which to discuss any concerns.

Refer to the District calendar for dates/times of all Open House events.

## **Requirements for Admission**

The board will establish age requirements for the admission of beginners which are consistent with statute and sound educational practice and which ensure the equitable treatment of all eligible children.

Admission to **kindergarten** in the West Jefferson Hills School District shall be limited to resident children who have attained the age of five (5) years on or before September 1.

Students who do not enter into kindergarten may enter the lowest grade of the primary school above the kindergarten level. They shall be admitted to school only during the first two weeks of the annual school term, with the exception that a child who is eight (8) years of age may begin school at any time during the school year. A beginner is eligible for admission to the lowest grade of the primary school above the kindergarten level if she/he has attained the age of six (6) years on or before September 1.

A birth certificate, completed immunization record, health history documentation of required lead testing for enrolling Kindergarten

students, and proof of residency (2) must be presented when your child first enters the West Jefferson Hills Schools.

**Immunizations**

**Oral Polio Vaccine** – Four doses, the fourth dose on or after 4th birthday **and** at least 6 months after the previous dose given.

**Measles, Mumps, Rubella Vaccine** - Two doses, the first dose given on or after the 1st birthday

**Hepatitis B Vaccine** - Three properly spaced doses

**Diphtheria, Acellular Pertussis & Tetanus Vaccine** - Four doses, one dose on or after the 4th birthday.

**Varicella Vaccine** - Two doses, on or after the 1st birthday. Serologic proof of immunity, or written document of disease from a physician/designee (month and year of disease are preferred documentation).

**Universal Blood Lead Level Testing-** A completed Allegheny County Health Department Lead Testing Record form must be completed and signed for by a healthcare professional and submitted to the school nurse.

**Exemption for Immunization**

*Medical Exemption* - Children need not be immunized if a physician or his/her designee provides a written statement that immunization may be detrimental to the health of the child. When the physician determines that immunization is no longer detrimental to the health of the child, the child shall be immunized according to this subchapter.

*Religious Exemption* - Children need not be immunized if the parent, guardian, or emancipated child objects in writing to the immunization on religious grounds or on the basis of a strong moral or ethical conviction similar to a religious belief.

## **Visitors**

To ensure the safety of all children in the building, all visitors are required to first report to the main office to present a valid form of identification, sign in, state purpose of visit, and wear a “visitor” pass before going to other areas in the school.

## **Car Riders**

In order to ensure the safest and most efficient methods for student dismissal, the West Jefferson Hills School District implements a car tagging system at Gill Hall, McClellan and Jefferson for those students being picked up at the end of the school day. This system utilizes car tags and backpack tags to identify students and ensure that they are released only to drivers who are authorized to pick them up. You do not need to have a car tag to drop off students in the morning.

Each car-riding family will be issued two car tags with a number associated with each family. Car tags may be purchased for a fee of \$5.00 payable by check to the West Jefferson Hills School District. Each student will receive a backpack tag with their family number. Please encourage your children to memorize this number.

Car tags must be clearly displayed when entering the designated car rider pick up area at each building. If you do not have your assigned car tag, you will be required to park in the lot and present identification to the office in order to pick up the requested student(s). At that time, staff will confirm that you have permission to pick up the student(s) before allowing them to leave with you. If anyone else is picking up your child, you must give them your tag to present upon arrival. They will not need to provide any additional identification.

Please help us keep everyone safe by doing the following:

- Register as a car rider even if students will be regular bus riders and only *occasional* car riders. Send in a note to your child’s teacher on car riding days.

- Prepare for children to enter/exit the vehicle on the passenger side only.
- Refrain from smoking on school property at all times.
- Leave family pets at home in order to ensure the safety of personnel opening your door and the children passing by your vehicle.
- Refrain from using a hand-held electronic device while in the parking lot.
- Remain alert at all times for children, other vehicles and our personnel.
- Properly display your car tag from the rear view mirror.
- Ensure that your child's car rider number is always displayed on their back pack or another prominent area.
- When dropping your child off in the morning, drop off the passenger side only and remain in your vehicle.

## **Drop-Off and Pick-Up Times/Locations**

### ***Drop Off:***

Gill Hall Elementary School - 8:05 a.m. -8:20 a.m.

- Drop off in the car-riding zone located behind the school. Please use the car rider entrance. Do not use the main entrance for drop off or pick up during the times above.

McClellan Elementary School - 8:05 a.m. - 8:20 a.m.

- Drop off at the front loop.
- Times strictly enforced to avoid bus arrival in the loop.

Jefferson Hills Intermediate School - 8:05 a.m. - 8:20 a.m.

- Drop off in the car riding zone located near the rear of the building by the softball/baseball field.

### ***Pick Up:***

Gill Hall Elementary School - 3:20 p.m.

- Pick up is in the car riding zone, behind the school. Display your tag and remain in your vehicle as the line will be moving. Your child will be escorted to your vehicle.

McClellan Elementary School - 3:30 p.m.

- Line up on McClellan Drive and keep the lane open for bus traffic.
- Once all buses have left, staff will direct you into the loop in front of the school for student pick up. Display your tag and remain in your vehicle as the line will be moving. Your child will be escorted to your vehicle.

Jefferson Hills Intermediate School - 3:20 p.m.

- Pick up in the car riding zone located near the rear of the building by the baseball field.
- Remain in your vehicle for student pick up. Staff will direct you through the designated traffic pattern.

*\*\*\*If you have children at Jefferson and Gill Hall or McClellan, drop off your K-2 student first (before school) and pick them up last (after school). This will help expedite the process for you and for others.*

### **Homeless Students**

Under McKinney Vento all school districts are responsible for identifying students experiencing homelessness and connecting them with the resources needed to ensure academic success.

**Who is considered homeless**—Children or youth living in a shelter, transitional housing, hotel/motel, vehicle, campground, on the street or doubled up with friends or family due to a lack of alternate resources are considered homeless. An unaccompanied homeless youth is a child or youth that is not in the care of their parent or legal guardian and meets the definition of homeless under McKinney Vento.

**Where can students experiencing homelessness attend school?**—The law indicates that homeless students have the right to remain in their school origin (the school they attended at the time of the homeless episode or last school attended) through the end of the school year in which they find permanent housing, provided it is in the child/youth's best interest.

If through consultation between the school and the family and/or unaccompanied youth it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest, then the student has the right to immediately enroll in the school that non-homeless students living in the attendance area in which the child/youth is actually living are eligible to attend, even if they do not have all of the required documentation. Additionally, unaccompanied homeless youth have the right to immediately enroll in school, even if they do not have a legal guardian present.

**What supports can school districts provide to homeless students?**—Homeless students are eligible for supports and services to remove barriers to educational success. This may include transportation to the school of origin, free meals, referrals to physical/mental health providers, clothing to meet school requirements, access to school supplies and resources, assistance with credit recovery, tutoring supports, expedited evaluations and assistance to participate in school activities including parent engagement opportunities, sports, club, etc.

**Homeless Dispute Process**—If at any time there is a disagreement about homeless status or best interest for school placement, the district will notify the family in writing of their determination that the family/unaccompanied youth is ineligible for McKinney Vento services. At this time, the district will provide the family/unaccompanied youth with the ability to dispute their determination. Throughout the dispute process, the child/youth, including unaccompanied youth, will continue to be educated in the school of origin or immediately enrolled in the school they are seeking enrollment in until the dispute process is finalized. Transportation will continue throughout the dispute process. All disputes will be sent to the ECYEH Regional Coordinator who will issue a determination. If any party is unhappy with the determination, they can elevate the dispute to the state coordinator.

**What if I think that I am eligible for services under McKinney Vento?**—Please contact the West Jefferson Hills School District homeless liaison:

Dr. Cassandra Bozek  
412-655-8450  
cbozek@wjhsd.net

If you require further assistance, please contact Region 4 Coordinator:  
Nicole Anderson  
412-394-5894  
Nicole.anderson@aiu3.net

## **2025-2026 School Calendar**

Visit the West Jefferson Hills School District Website at:

[www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net)

Monthly and Yearly District Calendars may be viewed under the information tab.



### **Why Kindergarten?**

The aim of kindergarten is to provide a basic foundation for your child's education. It is a program geared to make the transition from home to school as smooth as possible, and to make each child's first experience with school a successful and happy one.

The full day kindergarten program in the West Jefferson Hills School District is designed to help stimulate a good self-concept, providing each child with many experiences of achievement. Kindergarten children will work and create independently and learn to cooperate with others in a group. The program will provide opportunities for social and emotional development, inspire language development, and expand physical and mental growth.

### **Child Growth and Development**

Children are alike in many ways. Each goes through the same stages of growth, yet the time at which each child reaches those same stages may be different. In most instances, kindergarten children start school on the

basis of their age. However, all five-year-old children have not reached the same level of development.

Some children may not progress sufficiently in kindergarten to allow them a chance for success in first grade. In these cases, the teacher and principal may suggest that a child will benefit from additional or extended kindergarten experiences. The question, “What is best for this child?” should always be the primary concern.

### **Language Development**

In kindergarten, great emphasis is placed on listening activities and language development. The first part of the year is devoted to helping the children recognize sounds in the environment. Beginning with discrimination of vastly different sounds, the program then works with sounds of animals and human voices, and finally, with the discrimination of speech sounds.

The development of speech is a continual process. Speech sounds are acquired slowly and perfection in speech develops gradually.

Sounds most four-year-olds can make are:

p, b, m, h, w, n, k, g, and f

Sounds most five-year-olds can make are:

v, t, d, ng, and y

Sounds most six-year-olds can make are:

j, sh, ch, and l

Sounds most seven-year-olds can make are:

r, wh, and th

Sounds most eight-year-olds can make are:

s, z, tr, and sl

Children are able to understand language before they can speak. Then they first learn to communicate with a single word or idea and, through

increased experience, they learn to communicate at more complex levels. Through language, children learn to try out their own ideas, express their concerns, their social attitudes, and to communicate with both adults and with their peers. The way others respond to the child will either reinforce language development or frustrate it.

In kindergarten, language skills include:

- Story orientation which involves both listening to and recalling stories, as well as creating original stories

- Organization which includes categorizing objects and learning to sequence events

- Picture orientation which involves determining the main subject of a story and noting the details about the story

- Picture-word relationships which illustrate the concept that words are descriptions of pictures

### **Cooperation between Home and School**

Cooperation between parents and teachers is very important during your child's first year at school. Both the parents and the school are joint partners in the total education of the child. Any concerns that may arise should be brought to the teacher's attention. If your child develops, or already has, a particular fear or dislike, it may be overcome more easily if both the parents and the school are informed and work together cooperatively.

If there is a change in routine at home or in the method of transportation, please send a note to the teacher to prevent confusion for both the child and the teacher.

### **How Parents Can Help**

Let your child share in home responsibilities, conversations, and activities.

Give your child duties around the house to develop self-confidence and

responsibility such as: putting away toys, taking out the trash, and setting the table.

Establish a regular pattern for sleep (10 hours), healthy meals (keep snacks to a minimum), and play.

Teach your child to get dressed independently (how to put on, take off, and hang up outer clothing.)

Be sure your child listens to others and follows directions (one at a time), and check to see that the directions are carried out.

Teach your child to help others.

Teach appropriate safety procedures.

Supervise viewing of television programs and video games.

### **Before School Begins**

Read and discuss nursery rhymes, poems, and stories with your child to stimulate a love of good books.

Talk to your child. Encourage your child to answer in complete sentences and discourage “baby talk.”

Discuss experiences your child has had and places he/she has been.

Provide opportunities to play and share with other children and make friends.

Teach your child his/her full name, parents’ names, address, and phone number. When learning to print his/her name, he/she should use both capital and lower-case letters (John, Mary.)

Teach your child to be independent about appropriate toilet habits.

Encourage your child to look forward to kindergarten as a happy, friendly place.

### **Once School Begins**

Make sure labels are on all personal belongings with both first and last names; for example: jackets, sweaters, boots, mittens, books, “Show and Tell” objects, etc.

Encourage regular attendance and punctuality.

If at all possible, put your child on the school bus starting with the first day of school. If you do bring your child to school the first day, your child's fears and tears will best be overcome if you do not linger.

Sometimes the first day of school is more difficult for the parents.

Show interest in all the work your child brings home to help develop a good self-concept. Encourage your child to explain and talk about their work.

When asking your child what happened during their day in kindergarten, ask what happened first, second, and after that. If you ask to have things listed in order, it will help to eliminate answers of "Nothing".

Recognize that each child is different and some develop faster than others.

All children become discouraged. Help your child to be happy in the activities they can do well and encourage them to not shed tears or give up when difficulties occur.

Remember, a good parent is the child's first and most important teacher.

## NOTES