



WILLIAMSBURG
JAMES CITY COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EST. 1955

2021-22 Middle School Student Handbook

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Dear WJCC Families:

On behalf of the entire faculty and staff of each of our middle schools, we welcome you to your middle school. Your success is important and we look forward to partnering with you in the best interest of all students to foster lifelong learners, independent thinkers, and responsible citizens.

The handbook will provide school information, policies, procedures, and expectations for students for the coming year. The expectation is that you will familiarize yourself with the contents and keep it in a convenient location.

The Student Discipline Guide and all opening day forms are provided separately. Please take time to review this pertinent information with your student. Once you have reviewed the Student Discipline Guide and all opening day information, **you must complete and sign the mandatory forms and have your student return them to their school.** Your understanding of the Student Discipline Rules and related School board Policies will greatly increase the probability of success for all of our students.

We believe that a successful school year is grounded in a strong connection between home and school. Families are encouraged to be actively involved in their school by attending athletic events, school productions, concerts, and joining the PTSA just to name a few.

Should you have any questions or concerns, we encourage you to contact teachers, counselors, or one of the administrators. In addition, your school website can be a great resource to stay informed. You can be sure that each of us is committed to helping make your student's middle school experience a success.

Once again, we welcome you to the new school year!

Best regards,

Panagiotis Tsigaridas

Panagiotis Tsigaridas
Principal
Berkeley Middle School

Crystal Haskins, Ph.D.

Crystal Haskins
Principal
James Blair Middle School

Jessica Ellison, Ph.D

Jessica Ellison
Principal
Lois S. Hornsby Middle School

Tracey Jones

Tracey Jones
Principal
Toano Middle School

WJCC Mission Statement

WJCC is committed to providing an **excellent** education, in partnership with families and community, so that each and every student is prepared for lifelong learning, independent thinking, and responsible citizenship.

WJCC Vision

Pursuing excellence and championing the success of all students.

Academics

Monitoring Academic Progress

The success of a student is based on the partnership between home and school. We encourage and welcome active involvement in your child's academics. As questions arise throughout the year regarding academic performance, parents and students should first seek advice from the teacher or refer to their course syllabus provided at the beginning of the year. In addition, WJCCVUE is an online resource for students and parents as well as the official gradebook. Teachers use VUE to post student grades, assignments, course syllabus and other course materials and resources.

Additional communication options:

- School Voicemail
- Note to the teacher via email in VUE
- Request a Conference through the teacher or counseling office
- Email through division's web site: www.wjccschool.org

Students and parents are encouraged to check their ParentVUE and StudentVUE accounts regularly. Contact your school if you need an access code for VUE or if you have questions about your account.

Numeric Grading Scale

Nine week and final exam grades will be recorded in teacher grade books in accordance with a 0-100-point numerical scale and converted to a letter grade on the report card.

97 - 100	A+	87 - 89	B+	77 - 79	C+	67 - 69	D+	< 59 = F
93 - 96	A	83 - 86	B	73 - 76	C	63 - 66	D	
90 - 92	A-	80 - 82	B-	70 - 72	C-	60 - 62	D-	
4.0 pts		3.0 pts		2.0 pts		1.0 pt.		

Report Cards and Progress Reports

WJCC schools operate on a nine-week reporting system. Interim reports are available the fifth week. Report cards are available at the end of each grading period.

Cheating

The Student Discipline Code for WJCC Schools contains the following definitions:

Cheating includes the actual giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid or assistance, or the actual giving or receiving of any form of academic work.

Plagiarism includes the copying of the language, structure, idea, and/or thought of another representing it as one's own original work.

Incidents of cheating and/or plagiarism threaten the integrity of instruction and compromise the character of the individual. Examples of cheating may include but are not limited to: permitting another student to copy work or assignments, giving or receiving answers, plagiarizing, and improperly using the internet and web materials to complete papers or assignments.

The faculty and staff encourage students to take pride in their own success and support and guide students to achieve success through their own initiative and perseverance. If a student has cheated, it will be regarded as a serious matter and appropriate consequences will be administered.

Attendance

Regular attendance in school is essential for a quality education. Daily attendance helps students feel more connected with their classmates and improves their educational progress. The time missed from class results in loss of valuable educational experiences. Make 100% attendance a goal for this year. We want students to come to school every day.

Attendance on a daily basis is a mandatory requirement for all students. Virginia Code §22.1-254 requires that all children who have reached their fifth birthday on or before September 30th and who have not yet reached their eighteenth birthday must attend school. This requirement does not apply to any child who has obtained a high school diploma, its equivalent, or a certificate of completion or who is exempted pursuant to the provisions of the law.

School attendance is critical to academic achievement and preparing students for the world of work and personal success. Each parent or guardian having charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age shall be responsible for the child's regular and punctual attendance at school as required under provisions of state law. For students age 18 or over, the requirements of this policy will apply to the student rather than the parent or guardian. Every teacher in every Williamsburg-James City County Schools shall keep an accurate daily or class record of attendance of all children assigned.

Absences

Students are expected to be in school every day; however, when a student must be absent from school, parents are expected to contact their child's school on the day of the child's absence to inform the school of that absence. A form of written communication (note or email) providing the dates of and reasons for the child's absence is required from the parent the day of the child's return to school. The purpose of this note is to determine whether or not the student's absence is excused or unexcused.

Absence Notification

Parents/Guardians should call the attendance associate on the morning of an absence. Excused absences include: illness, death in one's family, quarantine, pre-arranged family trips, power outage, natural disasters, school sanctioned field trips, and court appearances. It is the responsibility of the student to present evidence of an excused absence on the day the student returns to school. It is the student's responsibility to obtain make-up work from teachers on the day of return. Typically, makeup work can be found in VUE.

Excused Absences

WJCC defines the following conditions as the only acceptable reasons for a student's absence from school.

- Illness - When a student is unable to attend school due to an illness.
- Family Death or Emergency - For absences because of a death in the family or an emergency beyond the family's control.
- Religious Observances - Absences as a result of observances of religious holidays should be prearranged by the parent, who is responsible for notifying the child's school of the religious holiday(s) to be observed.
- Exclusions/Suspensions - For absences because of an exclusion or suspension, the parent will be notified of the suspension/exclusion and the date when the student will be expected to return to school. The student must return on the indicated date.
- Prearranged Absences - The principal may approve prearranged absences for situations in which an exemption from attendance appears to be in the best interests of the student and his/her family. The parent will document on this request the rationale for the absence and dates of absence. No more than five (5) days may be approved by the principal during a school year.

Extended Absences

If the student is planning to be absent 3 or more days, a request must be pre-approved by the principal. A note from the parent/guardian should be sent to the attendance associate in the main office two weeks prior to absence. It is the responsibility of the student to confer with all teachers following an absence to complete any work that has been missed.

Unexcused Absences

In compliance with Virginia Code §22.1-258, WJCC has established procedures that school division personnel are required to follow when a student fails to report to school and no indication has been received by school personnel that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the student's absence.

The following procedure will be implemented when notifying the parent of an unexcused absence:

The law mandates that whenever any student fails to report to school and no indication has been received by school personnel, a reasonable effort to notify the parent by telephone to obtain an explanation for the student's absences shall be made. This will be via the automated telephone system.

Whenever a student reaches a total of five (5) unexcused absences in the school year, the school principal/designee shall make a

reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent, whether in person or through telephone conversation to develop a Student Success Plan to resolve the nonattendance and to warn of the consequences of continued nonattendance.

If additional unexcused absences occur after the plan, the principal or designee(s) shall conference with the parent within ten (10) school days of the 10th absence to resolve the issues related to the student's nonattendance.

If the student continues to be absent as defined above, the school principal or his/her designee shall enforce the provisions of the law by either or both of the following:

- filing a complaint alleging the student is a child in need of supervision (CHINS Petition) or
- instituting court proceedings against the parent

Excessive Excused Absences

The principal/designee will also notify the parent of excessive absences, which is defined as 10% of total school days to date (i.e. 5 days absent out of 50 total days) or a pattern of absences that appear to be having an effect on the academic performance of a child. Efforts will be made to identify reasons for excess absences and a success plan will be developed with the parent to eliminate further absences.

If further excessive excused absences accrue, a referral to court may be pursued.

Parent Notification Procedures Excused and Unexcused Absences

For all absences, the school will contact the home on each day of the child's absence from school using the automated dialing system.

Student Arrival/Dismissal

Students will be welcomed into the building at 7:55 a.m. Teachers will be in their rooms ready to receive students at 7:55 a.m.

Students will begin dismissal at 2:55 p.m. Students are not permitted to leave school grounds during the school day, unless signed out by a parent/guardian.

School Tardiness

Students are expected to attend school daily and on time. A student is considered tardy at 8:05 a.m. and must report to the office before going to class. In order to be excused, the student must have a note. Car problems, oversleeping, and missing the bus are not acceptable excuses for tardiness. Repeated tardiness will be regarded as a serious problem requiring action involving the school administration, school social worker, and parents.

Student Pick-Up

If you wish to pick up your student prior to 2:55 p.m., arrive before 2:30 p.m. to sign your student out. After 2:30 p.m., you will need to wait until the 2:55 p.m. (regular dismissal) to retrieve your student.

Student Withdrawal & Information Changes

Parent/guardian must complete a withdrawal form prior to student's last day. The form may be obtained from the guidance registrar. Promptly report any changes in student address or contact information to the registrar.

Cafeteria

Students go to the cafeteria with their assigned class.

Students are expected to:

- Eat only in the cafeteria or other approved areas.
- Pay for their meals: no meal credits are given.
- Wait patiently in line.
- Keep the table areas clean by removing their trays and garbage to the dishwashing area.
- Conduct themselves appropriately at all times.
- **Non-Glass containers for water** (only) can be carried and used throughout the school day. No other drinks are allowed in the classroom. Students are not allowed to bring sodas, or energy drinks to school for consumption during lunch.

Lunch Assistance

Free and/or reduced-price meals are available to those who qualify. In order to receive free or reduced-price meals, students must meet eligibility requirements. The student's parent or guardian should complete an application form and have the form returned to the school.

The directions and application forms will be made available during the first week of school. If a student received free or reduced lunch last year, then he/she may continue to receive free/reduced lunch through the first 30 days of school. After that time, if a new application has not been submitted, free/reduced lunch will end.

Student Meal Accounts

Students are encouraged to use their meal accounts for meals at school. Students can pay into their accounts with cash, check (payable to your respective school cafeteria) or online via the WJCC website. For more information about account access, students should speak with the cafeteria manager

Parents Contacting Student

The staff is committed to providing the best learning environment in which all students receive opportunities to be successful. Interrupting the classroom creates disturbances in the educational environment that may jeopardize learning opportunities.

In order to protect instructional time, classes will not be interrupted to deliver phone messages, money, lunch, equipment, or other items to individual students unless there is an emergency. **Messages or items will be delivered between classes.** It is essential that family members plan ahead and communicate carefully with each other before school starts to avoid interruptions. The office staff will make every effort to assist families with emergencies.

General Behavior Expectations

Student Conduct Philosophy

Good discipline is important to create a school environment conducive to learning. Self-discipline is also important to prepare students for responsible adult citizenship by helping them to develop self-respect, positive regard for others, and an understanding of how to develop and accomplish worthwhile goals in a democratic way. Our goal is to have a productive learning environment for all students. Expectations are established for students with responsible independence as the ultimate objective.

Middle school students are expected to be respectful and considerate of others. Warmth, friendship, patience, acceptance, kindness, and respect establish the tone we wish to maintain. When we work in an environment of trust, integrity, equity, and honesty – true learning occurs for everyone.

In addition to the WJCC School Board policy on Student Discipline: Rights and Responsibilities, students must adhere to the following rules:

- adhere to the WJCC Code of Conduct;
- respect the property and the personal and educational rights of others;
- follow all directions and requests given by school personnel; and
- attend class and be on time.

Students are not permitted to take or display audio, video graphic, or still images of a person while on school property or any school related activity. Schools reserve the right to monitor and govern student use of electronic guidelines during the school

Respect for Adults and Each Other

WJCC strives to create a community of mutual respect. Students are expected to respond to adults in an appropriate manner as well as follow staff's directions in a respectful manner and tone. Students will work with their teachers to learn school wide expectations in order to be safe, respectful and responsible.

Every student has a right to a safe school environment. Each student is expected to behave in a safe manner. If you should ever feel unsafe at any time, please tell any adult in your school or at home. Students are expected to walk quietly and in an appropriate manner through the hallways without running, pushing, or making loud or excessive noise. The school is to be respected as a scholarly setting.

Students are expected to respect the individual space of others and to keep their words positive toward other students. Students are discouraged from pushing, shoving, or demonstrating any type of horseplay. The student is responsible for his/her actions. All actions we take have consequences. Part of becoming a responsible citizen is to understand the impact of what we do. The student is expected to fulfill his/her obligations.

WJCC Student Rights and Responsibilities

Student Rights and Responsibilities are found in Section J of the [WJCC Policy Manual](#).

Dress Code

Doing our best and being successful every day relies on looking and feeling our best. Clothing and dress can be a form of individual expression; however, it should always convey a sense of personal pride and confidence that is conducive to learning. In order to ensure that our learning environment reflects a professional atmosphere, WJCC middle schools have the following guidelines and expectations for school dress.

If contacted by the school administration, a parent/guardian may be requested to come to the school to provide acceptable clothing. If a parent/guardian is unavailable or cannot be reached, the student will be provided with a change of clothing. Students unable to correct their dress may receive low-level disciplinary consequences.

Our Beliefs

- All students should be able to dress comfortably for school and engage in the educational environment without fear of or actual unnecessary discipline, body shaming, or discrimination.
- All students will learn and practice skills of personal responsibility and decision-making through making choices regarding daily dress that allow for individual expression while also preparing them for life beyond high school.

Students **Must** Wear:

- **Shirt/Dress (or the equivalent)** – Tops must cover the chest from one armpit across to the other armpit and down to the waist so that the stomach is covered. Tops must have straps.
- **Pants/Jeans (or the equivalent)**
- **Shoes** – Appropriate athletic shoes must be worn in PE class.

Students **May** Wear:

- Fitted pants, including nontransparent leggings, yoga pants, and skinny jeans
- Ripped jeans without exposed undergarments
- Clothing with commercial or athletic slogans
- Tank tops
- Athletic attire

Students **Cannot** Wear

- Sleepwear to include pajamas, slippers, blankets, and robes
- Swimsuits
- Violent language or images that includes hate speech, profanity, or pornography
- Images or language depicting/suggesting drug use, illegal activities, or threats
- Images and/or language that creates a hostile or intimidating educational environment based on identity or class
- Accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon
- Anything that could affiliate with illegal organizations or criminal activity
- Any clothing or manner of appearance that disrupts the educational/school-related environment will not be allowed.
- Head covers such as hoods, hats, caps, or facemasks are permitted for religious beliefs, health or safety, or when worn in connection with a school sponsored event. Head covers should not be worn in a manner to disrupt the educational environment.

Bullying

Bullying is not tolerated. Respect for all is expected at all times. Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying can be virtual, social or physical.

E-Hallpass/Restroom Access

Students will use a digital hall pass, E-Hallpass, to move about the building. The E-Hallpass format allows for monitoring students location outside of the classroom. Teachers and staff can use E-Hallpass to schedule meetings with students and to create passes for student use.

During class transitions, student restrooms will be closed. Students may use the restroom during instructional time with an E-Hallpass from their teacher to a specific bathroom in the building. We ask that students respect their teacher and the class by asking to go to the bathroom when direct instruction is not being given. We also ask that students go directly to the designated bathroom and return directly to class in order to minimize out of class time as well as to help with following social distancing guidelines.

Student Services

Bus Transportation

All riders should be at their assigned stop on time and prepared to board the bus. All discipline rules and policies govern student behavior on the school buses, at school bus stops, and while walking home. Indeed, the level of expectation for student behavior arises when students are riding a school bus because of safety issues. All riders should be at their assigned stops prepared to board the bus **10 minutes before the scheduled pick up time**. Bus drivers are not required to wait for habitually tardy students.

Bus Changes

If a student needs to ride a different bus home after school, the student must bring written permission from a parent or guardian. The student must bring a note to the main office **in the morning** and an office receptionist will issue a bus note for the bus driver. All bus changes must be in writing and approved prior to dismissal. The note must include a parent contact number so that the note may be verified, if necessary. At the end of the day, the student must pick up the pass from the main office to ride home on an alternate bus. Please notify the school by 12:10 pm if there is a change in the student's transportation during the school day and the student needs to be notified of these changes. The student is responsible for listening to the afternoon announcements.

Field Trips

Field trips are a privilege and must be earned. If a student's grades or behavior do not warrant the participation in the field trip, the student will not be permitted to go on the trip. All discipline rules and policies govern student behavior on field trips. The level of expectation for student behavior is elevated when students are visiting sites away from school and representing our school to the community.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills are conducted periodically to ensure that students and staff know what to do in case of a real emergency. Students are expected to follow instructions and conduct themselves in a serious manner when participating in all emergency drills.

Child Study Team

Our school has a Child Study Team composed of administrators, teachers, and resource personnel. The group reviews recommendations from teachers, parents, or administrators concerning students who experience academic, behavioral, or adjustment problems. These teams explore resources to help solve problems that a student is facing.

School Counselors

Counselors provide individual and small group counseling, conduct classroom guidance activities, work with teachers, assist parents, and coordinate community services. Parents/Guardians may exercise their right to have students not participate (OPT OUT) in guidance and counseling activities by writing a letter to the school's principal. Parents have the option, when writing the letter, to exempt students from all facets of the program or to allow participation in some parts of it. This "opt out" policy is applicable to the current year only and parents must request that their child does not participate on an annual basis.

Student Advancement Coach

The Student Advancement Coach serves students while working with the family in order for the child to achieve success. The resources include close monitoring of student progress and increasing the communication between home and school.

School Improvement Specialist

The School Improvement Specialist works with teachers, students, and the school community to improve the academic performance of our school through testing, data collection/analysis, and applying that information to our school.

Clinic/School Nurse

A full-time registered nurse is available to students during the school day. Except in cases of emergency, students must have a pass to visit the clinic. The school nurse reviews immunization admission requirements, implements specialized health care plans, renders first aid, manages medications, provides in-service training, performs required screenings, and serves as a vital link between parents and health care providers. In cases of serious injury, parents are contacted and the student may be sent to the emergency room by emergency medical personnel.

If your child is taking medication, it is recommended that arrangements be made with the prescribing doctor so that the medicine may be taken before or after school hours if at all possible. If this is not possible, proper medication permission forms must be completed by the

prescribing practitioner and the parent/guardian. Middle school students may bring prescribed medication to school, provided that they bring the medication directly to the clinic before the start of the school day.

Per School Board Policy, medication may not be sent home with student at the end of the school year. The parent/guardian must come to the clinic to retrieve any unused medication. Any medication not picked up at the end of the school year will be appropriately discarded. Students may not possess medication at any time during school hours or activities with the exception of some inhaled asthma medications and auto-injectable epinephrine. Student possession of such emergency medications shall require additional documentation signed by a physician and the parent.

English Language Learner Support

English as a Second Language (ESL) services are provided to our students who are in need of additional assistance in bridging their language and socialization challenges as new students to our school community..

Speech/Language Pathologist, Occupational and Physical Therapist, and Hearing Impaired Specialist

Speech/Language Pathologist, Occupational and Physical Therapist, and Hearing Impaired Specialist available on a part time basis to serve all our students who demonstrate a qualified need for these services through our Student Services department at WJCC.

Social Worker

The school social worker serves as a liaison between school and home, addressing issues such as attendance, family life, and community resources. The social worker also works with the school administration and our Juvenile Court Services in Williamsburg-James City County to develop assistance plans to aide and support students who might be experiencing difficulty with school attendance.

School Psychologist

The school psychologist works with our students and families to assist in a wide variety of support services, ranging from skill streaming and team building activities to behavioral interventions for student success. The School Psychologist also consults with our teachers in helping to develop academic and behavioral approaches for student in individual classrooms.

Technology

Personal Electronic Devices

Students are NOT allowed to use any personal electronic devices in the building without direct permission from a staff member. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, tablets, MP3 players, and portable electronic games. Electronic devices will be confiscated if they are not turned off and stored away. These items should be left out of view from any and all persons. **Refer to School Board Policy JFC.**

School Telephones

The telephone is for emergency use only. Students will not be called to the phone except in emergency situations. Messages may be left and will be delivered during class changes throughout the school day. Students must have the permission of a teacher or staff member before using a phone. Cell phones are NOT allowed to be used during the school day to call parents. Please make arrangements with your child before school with regards to any special arrangements to keep phone calls limited.

Student Laptops

Each student will be issued a computer to use for instructional purposes throughout the school year. It is the student's responsibility for the maintenance of the computer, computer bag, and charging cable. Students are to refrain from using the school laptop both at home and at school for non-school activities or assignments. Each student will have a signed "Student Laptop Loan and Expectations for Responsible Use Agreement" on file at school. Students will be charged for all lost or damaged computer equipment. **It is the student's responsibility to ensure the computer is charged each day and ready for use in the classroom.**

Technology and Equipment

Students may need to use school owned equipment such as instruments, microscopes, calculators, etc. It is the student's responsibility to take care of the equipment and ensure that it is returned in the same condition in which it was received. Any damage to school owned equipment may result in the need for a student or his/her family to reimburse the school for a replacement.

Additional Information

Water Bottles

Individual student water bottles are highly encouraged. Students will not have access to water fountains but will have access to water bottle refill stations. Glass water bottles are not allowed.

Health and Safety

[WJCC Health Services Mitigation Guidelines](#)

Students should follow basic hygiene expectations. There are hand sanitizing stations throughout the building for students to use during the day. Students should not use large amounts of sanitizer, squirt it on to the floor, or touch other students with it. Frequent handwashing throughout the day is also encouraged.

Students will walk on the right side of the hall only. Hallways are one-directional to decrease overcrowding. Students are expected to exit to the right out of their classroom and walk along the right side of the hall to get to their next location.

Valuables

The school strongly encourages students to leave any valuable belongings at home. This includes cellular phones and all other electronic devices. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Also, bringing large sums of money or other valuables to school is strongly discouraged. Should it be necessary to bring a large amount of cash or expensive property to school, you may leave it in the main office for safekeeping until the end of the school day.

Backpacks

Students will need a bag to carry their supplies during the school day.



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