

**THOMAS JEFFERSON
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Children First!



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2009-2010

August 20, 2009

Dear TJES students and families,

At TJES, we strive to put “children first,” and in doing so try to help students become confident and independent, creative, inquisitive, healthy, thoughtful and generous, trustworthy, and high achieving. We can do this best when the school staff and families work closely together to meet individual student needs. In this student handbook, we provide some details about the school that will give you information about school policies, procedures, and expectations. These basic guidelines help us unite in the shared task of teaching each child well and providing for his or her safety and well being.

Please take some time and read through the student handbook; it will answer many of your questions about how TJES works. Do not hesitate to call or email me or any member of the staff during the school year. I also encourage you to join the PTA, get to know other families in our school, and volunteer regularly.

I invite you to attend the regular Principal’s Coffee times during the school year and visit the school webpage. I look forward to these chances to discuss important topics with our families, field questions, and listen to input about ways to strengthen our instruction. These forums are an excellent way for parents to stay in touch and communicate with the school. We will post the times for coffees on the Internet and in the monthly *Patriot Press* newsletter sent to each family. You may also visit teacher webpages linked to the school site- www.bedford.k12.va.us/tjes.

Don’t let these meetings be the only time we have the chance to communicate. Please call or email (agreenough@bedford.k12.va.us) with questions, ideas, or concerns at any time. I look forward to working with you as we teach, care for, and challenge our children together.

Sincerely,

Andy Greenough,

Principal

The Thomas Jefferson Elementary School Vision

At Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, children come first.

We strive to help our students be

- **Confident and independent,**
- **Creative,**
- **Inquisitive,**
- **Healthy,**
- **Thoughtful and generous,**
- **Trustworthy, and**
- **High achieving.**

To achieve this goal, the TJES staff will

- **Model, recognize, and reward the student characteristics above and the pillars of Character Counts,**
- **Challenge students and selves with high expectations,**
- **Allow time for student exploration of concepts,**
- **Give students choices in the classroom to build their ownership of learning,**
- **Make efforts to connect with and learn from colleagues, and**
- **Develop supportive relationships with students, parents, and community**

and learning will be

- **Purposeful,**
- **Thought-provoking,**
- **Differentiated (that is, challenging, developmentally appropriate, and in an appropriate amount),**
- **Creative and hands-on, and**
- **Aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning.**

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Age A child may enter kindergarten if he/she has reached age five on or before September 30, 2009. Children who are six years old by **September 30, 2009** must be enrolled in school.

Vaccinations A parent or guardian must present evidence of his/her child having been immunized against the communicable diseases for which vaccinations are required by state law. **Students who are not fully vaccinated (or who have not met alternate requirements) will not be allowed to enter school.**

Physical Examination Children entering kindergarten or elementary school for the first time must have a comprehensive physical examination performed within the twelve months prior to enrollment and the parent or guardian shall furnish the school with a report signed by a licensed physician. There is a religious exemption for the physical exam requirement.

Social Security Number Students enrolled in public schools should present a federal social security number. School divisions may assign another identifying number to students who are ineligible to obtain a social security number, or to students whose parents are unwilling to present the student's social security number (22.1-2.60 Virginia State Code).

ASSEMBLIES

A variety of educational assemblies have been planned for students. Assemblies serve to enrich the educational experiences of the children. Special attention to etiquette and good citizenship is expected of all students.

ATTENDANCE

Parents should call the office before 8:40 a.m. if their child is sick and will be absent from school that day.

An absence shall be considered excused when a student provides the attendance secretary or principal with a valid note signed by the parent/guardian and a phone call from the parent or guardian, and the absence is for one of the following:

1. Personal illness (medical documentation may be required)
2. Death or serious illness in the immediate family
3. Subpoenaed court appearance
4. Circumstances beyond the control of the student or the parent/guardian
5. To accompany parent/guardian on a special occasion or unusual travel opportunity
6. A learning opportunity pre-approved by the principal or building supervisor

Medical documentation may be required. **The principal will be the judge of the validity of any excuses.** According to an amendment to Section 22.1 –258 of the **Code of Virginia**, whenever any pupil fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school

day and school personnel have received no notification regarding the student's absence, a reasonable effort to notify the parents or guardian by telephone shall be made by school personnel.

Based on the attendance regulations for the **Code of Virginia**, the principal or designee must contact the parents when the child accumulates (5) absences not supported by parent communication. The code further states that the parent must work with the administrator and develop a plan to ensure that the child attends school on a regular basis.

Virginia Code also states that should the student miss an additional day without parental communication, the principal will schedule a conference, which may include others, to resolve the student's attendance issues. (Typically the Bedford County School Resource Officer attends this conference.)

If the student accumulates an additional 2 days without parental communication, the principal will contact the School Social Worker who shall initiate one of the following (a) file a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the student is a child in need of supervision (CHINS) or (b) institute proceedings against the parent pursuant to Section 18.2 – 371 or 22.1-262 of the **Code of Virginia**.

Typically, students will receive credit for a full day's attendance if they attend school for at least half of the school day. (Students who leave after 11:40 a.m. will be given credit; students who enter school by 11:40 a.m. and remain in school till 3:00 will receive credit.)

Please refer to the Student Code of Conduct for other regulations regarding the attendance policies for students.

AWARDS

Students receive special recognition at the school for high achievement, creative and athletic talents, and good citizenship. Student portfolios, shared at a Family Portfolio Night in the spring, are a major showcase for student achievement and growth throughout the year.

CAFETERIA

The student lunch price is \$1.75 and the adult lunch price is \$ 2.25. The student breakfast price is \$1.00 and the adult breakfast price is \$1.25. Ice cream is \$.60, milk is \$.50 and juice is \$.40. The cost for a reduced price lunch, if you qualify, is \$.40 and a reduced breakfast is \$.30. A la carte items are also available. We encourage parents to visit our cafeteria whenever possible and partake of a nutritious meal with your child. Lunch is available to be preordered for field trips.

Look for information on the online prepayment/accounting program, Café PrePay, through which families can pay into their children's accounts using credit cards and check account balances. The website for the service is www.CafePrePay.com.

Cafeteria behavior expectations are posted as follows:

- We will respect others and use good manners.
- We will use inside voices while in the cafeteria.
- We will clean up after ourselves.
- We will stay in our seats except for being excused to go to the restroom.

In addition,

- Nutritional foods are promoted and served in the cafeteria. Therefore, sodas are discouraged in the lunchroom during lunch hours.
- Parents are encouraged to come and eat lunch with their children.
- Please let the cafeteria manager know if your child is on a special diet. The staff will work hard to accommodate special dietary needs.
- The School Nutrition Program is totally self supporting and relies on the funds generated each day in the school cafeteria. In an effort to assist with uncollected breakfast and lunch charges, the school nutrition program does have a meal charge policy. Elementary school students are allowed to charge up to \$5.25 which is the equivalent of three lunches. Students are not allowed to charge extra items such as bottled water or ice cream, only breakfast and lunch meals.

If a student comes to the cafeteria to eat lunch and has reached their charge limit, cafeteria staff will offer the student a cheese sandwich and milk for lunch. This will ensure that the student does receive something to eat and does not go hungry. When parents send in money for their child's account, if the child has any charges on the account, those charges will be satisfied first and the remainder of the money will be added to the child's account. It is imperative that parents keep track of their children's account balance and keep it in good standing. This is especially important in the last few weeks of school when charges are not allowed.

The cafeteria staff does not enjoy having to offer a student an alternative meal, but allowing unlimited charging in the school cafeteria hurts the financial status of the program. If you have any questions regarding the meal charge policy, you may speak with the school cafeteria manager or contact Karen Carter, School Nutrition Supervisor at (540) 586-1045 ext. 224.

- The Bedford County School Board has contracted with the Federal Automated Recovery Systems (FARS) for the electronic collection of checks returned for insufficient funds. The school cafeteria will gladly accept your checks; however, in the event your check is returned, your account will be debited electronically for the face amount and a \$50 fee (amount subject to change

without notice). Checks that are sent into the school cafeteria must contain a valid phone number. Checks written to the school cafeteria that are returned for insufficient funds are sent directly to FARS for collection and are no longer handled by the School Nutrition Program.

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

Cancellation of school takes place only during extraordinary circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. The school board and administrators are aware of the hardship which can be caused by an abrupt cancellation. Therefore, school will not be canceled unless a significant safety risk has been created by unusual circumstances.

Every practical means is used to notify parents of an impending cancellation, including radio and television. **Parents are encouraged to monitor local TV and radio stations during the chance of inclement weather. Please do not call the school to find out about cancellations.** This ties up our phone making it difficult for us to communicate in emergencies.

CAR RIDERS

MORNING PROCEDURES:

Parents who bring their child to school should follow the signs to the side entrance of the school (by the gym). Parents should let their child off at the car rider area and proceed ahead to allow others to move forward. School staff members will be in this area to monitor your child. This area is to be used as a “*drive by-drop off area.*” **If parents need to accompany their children in the building, they must park in the side visitor parking area. Students may begin coming into the building at 8:00 a.m.** * *Following this procedure will help to keep this area safe for everyone!*

AFTERNOON PROCEDURES:

Car riders (children being picked up by parents) will be dismissed at 3:00 p.m. each day to the side entrance by the gym. Parents should line up in the car lane and wait for the children to be dismissed. We can place all the children in their respective cars within 10-15 minutes if everyone follows these directions. **Parents should not park and cross the car lane!** This slows down the dismissal and creates a hazardous condition for the children. Parents who need to pick up prior to 3:15 may come to the office before 2:40 and the child will be called from class. Please help us as we work together to make a safe dismissal area around our school. **If a parent does not arrive to pick up his/her child by 3:10 p.m. the child will be taken to the office.** As parents drive up to the loading area, children will be allowed to proceed to the car. In order to maintain a safe procedure, children will only load at the loading area. Students must wait for their guardian to stop at the designated area before being allowed to exit the line.

If you plan to pick your child up everyday, you may write one note to the teacher informing him or her of this fact. Please call early in the school day if your child's transportation plans must change; it is difficult to make last minute changes at the hectic end of the school day. Children who need to be dismissed as car riders on an occasional basis should have a note sent to the teacher **EACH TIME.**

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It is very important, for emergency and administrative reasons, that every student maintains an up-to-date address and contact record at the school office. Please notify the school immediately if you have a change of address or phone number during the school year.

CHECKS

There will be a **\$50.00** fee charged for all returned checks (subject to increase without notice). BCPS has contracted with the Federal Automated Recovery Systems (FARS) for the electronic collection of checks returned for insufficient funds (NSF). The district will gladly accept your checks; however, in the event your check is returned, your account will be debited electronically for the face amount and fees allowed by the state of Virginia. Please include the following information on your checks:

- Drivers License Number
- Full Name
- Street Address
- Phone Number(s)

COLORS AND MASCOT

Thomas Jefferson Elementary has established red, white, and blue as our school colors and the "Patriotic Children" are our mascot. Each year a number of activities are organized to promote school spirit. We encourage our students to participate in these endeavors.

CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher Conferences are an important communication tool in reporting the progress of each child. It is expected that teachers at Thomas Jefferson Elementary will hold four Parent/Teacher Conferences during the school year. The teachers will schedule at least two "face to face" conferences at the school. Two days for face-to-face conferences will be scheduled for November 23rd and February 11th from 12 – 7 p.m. **School will be closed for children on these two dates.**

Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers throughout the school year regarding the progress of their child. **Each teacher will send newsletters and work**

home from the previous week in the child's folder on Monday. This will assist the parents in monitoring their child's progress in school.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF HIV AND DRUG/ALCOHOL TREATMENT RECORDS

The Bedford County Public Schools shall comply with the confidentiality requirements of section 32.1-36.1 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, providing for the confidentiality of records related to any test for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). In addition, the school division shall maintain confidentiality of drug and alcohol treatment records as required by federal and state law.

DAILY SCHEDULE

7:30	Office opens
7:40 a.m.	Breakfast program begins and first bus loads arrive
8:00 a.m.	Teacher supervision begins and car riders begin arriving; children prepare for the day in the classroom
8:20 a.m.	Instructional day begins; all doors locked except the front door of the school
3:00 p.m.	Dismiss bus riders to their buses in front of the school and car riders to side entrance near the gym
3:25 p.m.	Second Bus Load and Teachers dismissed
4:30 p.m.	Office closes

DISCIPLINE

Thomas Jefferson Elementary School encourages self-discipline in our students. The behavior expected from the students is based on common courtesy and safety considerations.

Effective school discipline takes place when the following criteria are met:

1. Instruction is of high quality.
2. Children are given positive reinforcement for good behavior.
3. The school rules are clearly posted.
4. The school consequences are clearly defined.
5. Teachers and parents work together to improve a child's behavior skills.
6. The behavior management plan is consistent and fair.

*** Classroom rules will be posted in each class.**

*** Special focus will be given to anti-bullying efforts.**

GENERAL SCHOOLWIDE EXPECTATIONS

1. We will be kind and respectful.
2. We will keep hands, feet, and objects to ourselves, staying in our own space.
3. We will not talk in the hallways.
4. We will walk inside the building.
5. We will clean up after ourselves.

CAFETERIA EXPECTATIONS

1. We will respect others and use good manners.
2. We will use inside voices while in the cafeteria.
3. We will clean up after ourselves.
4. We will stay in our seats except for being excused to go to the restroom.

PLAYGROUND RULES (developed by the TJES SCA)

1. Work out differences with others with appropriate language and without fighting.
2. Go down the slides only- no climbing up the slides.
3. Do not stand on or near the swings or climb on the bars above them. Do not jump off the swings while in motion.
4. Do not throw mulch.
5. Do not climb on the fence.
6. Do not tackle in football.
7. Keep games separate- for example, no tag or ball games on the mulch.
8. Older students should not play in the fenced preschool playground.
9. Do not sit or stand on top of the monkey bars.
10. Do not disturb classes with loud play near the building.

Positive reinforcement will be encouraged throughout the school. Students who exhibit poor behavior will be administered a suitable consequence. Each teacher will compose a behavior plan. Teachers will share this plan with students and parents at the beginning of the school year.

Parents and students should also refer to the Bedford County Publication “Code of Student Conduct” as a further reference to appropriate discipline.

DRESS CODE

In general, students should dress neatly and modestly, wearing clothing that is not distracting to other students, teachers, or the administration. Parents and students should refer to the county publication “Code of Student Conduct” for further information on this subject. It is important to note that **athletic shoes must be worn for PE classes and recess** and that “Heely”-type shoes with wheels are not permitted. School staff will call parents if reminders or other steps are needed to comply with the dress code.

EQUIPMENT USAGE

Our school contains a variety of educational, safety and maintenance equipment. Students should not use or handle equipment unless they have been specifically authorized to do so. When school equipment is damaged through negligence or unauthorized use, the party at fault is held financially responsible.

FAMILY LIFE

Bedford County Public Schools implemented the Family Life Education Curriculum in all grades during the fall of 1989. The program adheres to the Standards of Learning Objectives and regulations approved by the State Board of Education for Virginia Public Schools. The program has been reviewed and updated by a community involvement team comprised of school personnel, school board members, parents, clergy, and the medical profession in addition to being approved by the Bedford County School Board.

Parents are encouraged to review the content for the Family Life Education curriculum and supplemental materials being used to teach the Standards of Learning Objectives. Copies of the curriculum are located at TJES. To review the material, please call the school and make arrangements.

Bedford County Public Schools' "Opt-Out" Procedure

The "opt-out" procedure has been developed to ensure communication with the parent or guardian for permission for students to be excused from all or part of the Family Life Education Program. Parents may exercise the "opt-out" procedure for any or all of the Family Life Education Standards of Learning Objectives correlated with current curriculum in the major areas of language arts, social studies, health, and science by completing the form sent home with each child/student. In the event you do not have this form, you may request one from the school.

Parents are encouraged to review the content for the Family Life Education curriculum and supplemental materials before exercising the "opt-out" procedure. Copies of the curriculum, for review, may be found in each of the elementary, middle, secondary schools, and the Bedford county Public Schools Administration Building.

If parents elect for a child not to participate, the form should be completed and returned to the school. Parents who wish to add to, modify or withdraw an "opt-out" request during the school year should secure and submit a new "opt-out" form or notify the school in writing of their desire to withdraw the "opt-out" request. Questions about the Bedford County Public Schools' Family Life Education Program may be addressed to the school principal.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips within our county and to nearby points of interest are scheduled by classroom teachers throughout the school year. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the classroom curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the community. Parents will receive notices of field trips well in advance of the scheduled trip date and will be asked to sign field trip permission forms. Sometimes money may be requested from each student to help defray transportation or facility use costs. **Please follow the guidelines shared by your child’s teacher regarding chaperoning, money collection, transportation, and other field trip matters.**

GIFTED STUDENTS

Our school will officially begin to identify students for the gifted program in second grade after the standardized test data are received and examined and considered along with other criteria. Students in grades 3-5 may also be identified using similar criteria.

GRADING/REPORT CARDS

Bedford County Public Schools Policy IK-R outlines grading practices for elementary schools (Grades K-5):

1. All students will be issued an interim at the end of the fourth week of the 9 week grading period. Students who are performing below a C will receive a second interim at the end of the seventh week.
2. At least three times during each nine weeks, teachers will communicate students’ academic progress with parents by sending home graded work.
3. Final report cards will be issued to students on the last day of school.
4. Students will not receive letter grades for handwriting, social growth and citizenship, physical education, music, technology and art. Students will receive non-point grades in these programs.

S= Satisfactory
N= Needs Improvement
U= Unsatisfactory
- = Not applicable
Inc.= *Incomplete

5. K-1 Grading

Nine-week grades in kindergarten and first grade will be assigned as follows. No final or semester grades will be assigned in these grades.

Kindergarten

S=Satisfactory
P= Progressing
N= Needs Improvement

First Grade

O= Outstanding
S= Satisfactory
N= Needs Improvement

- = Not applicable

U= Unsatisfactory
- = Not applicable

6. 2-5 Grading (Letter Scale)

Nine-week and final grades in grades 2-5 will be reported as letter grades.

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Performance Assessment</u>
A	92.5 - 100	Outstanding
B	84.5 - 92	Above Average
C	76.5 - 84	Average
D	69.5 - 76	Below Average
F	Below 69.5	Unacceptable
-		Not Applicable
Inc.		Incomplete work

GUIDANCE

Bedford County School guidance programs are designed to be both developmental and preventative, assisting children with the normal issues of growing up while also dealing with the crises they face. The school counselor achieves these goals by teaching classroom lessons, seeing children in small groups, and meeting with them on an individual basis. Children may be referred by themselves, a parent, or by a teacher. Before a child is seen regularly, either individually or in a group, parental permission is required. An "Opt Out Form" will be sent home at the beginning of the school year should parents desire that their child not participate in some aspect of the guidance program. Thomas Jefferson parents are encouraged to call the counselors whenever they have a concern about their child. They may be contacted for a phone conference or to schedule an office appointment between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 534-6159.

HOMEWORK

Meaningful homework should be given to provide practice and reinforce skills taught in class. It can also provide opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking. Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for the children to work and by seeing that assignments are completed. The following "Homework Hints" will assist parents in providing the support needed for their children with homework:

1. Provide a place to study that is quiet, well lighted, and has adequate workspace.
2. Have paper, pencil, dictionary, and any other needed supplies handy.
3. Set specific study times, and try to stick to the schedule.
4. The TV and radio should be off during study time.
5. Check with your child **daily** to see if homework has been assigned.
6. Check periodically to see if your child is doing the homework correctly.

7. Make sure the homework is done neatly and on time.
8. Motivate your child by using positive remarks and techniques, rather than negative ones.
9. Show interest in your child's homework by discussing the assignment and related materials.
10. Pay attention to your child's daily work. Frequent attention stresses the importance of the work.
11. Help your child with drill and review assignments. Use flashcards, notes, etc. Have your child answer questions about the assignment.
12. Encourage your child to study for a test over several days. "Cramming" for a test is generally not successful and does not replace learning that should take place over days or weeks.
13. Supervise any work that your child does on the Internet.

Take the time necessary to help your child develop good homework habits. As your child becomes more competent, you will not have to spend as much time helping with the homework. Students in grades 2-5 should utilize the homework assignment notebook. Homework will count for no more than 10% of a student's grade.

General guidelines for homework assignment are:

- Grades 1-3 should have no more than 1 hour of homework nightly
- Grades 4-5 should have no more than 1 ½ hours of homework nightly

Late Work Policy

Students will need to adhere to the following policy regarding late work:

1. Late work turned in by the student will always be checked and corrected by the teacher.
2. Students will receive a reduction in their grade, for any unexcused late work turned in the day after an assignment was due. In order to receive this reduced credit, a note of explanation must accompany the work from the parents or a telephone call must be made to the teacher in regard to the late work the day the work is due.
3. Students with excused absences may make up work accordingly.

Absent 1-2 days will have 3 school days to make up work.

Absent 3-5 days will have 6 school days to make up work.

Absent 6+ days will talk with the teacher to establish a date for the work to be completed.

HONOR ROLL

Academic recognition is given to students in the fourth and fifth grades each nine weeks through the Honor Roll. An asterisk (*) by the student's name denotes all A's.

Eligibility for this recognition is based on the following:

All grades for which letter grades are assigned are "A," "B," or "S." (The handwriting grade will not keep a child off the honor roll.) No grades of "U" or "N" are acceptable for honor roll.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

In case of illness or injury the school nurse or a member of the school staff will care for a child temporarily. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary the parents will be contacted. Please park in the designated area in the front parking lot when picking up your child. If parents are not available, the child will be taken to the emergency room at the hospital. **Remember that an emergency card with the telephone number where parents can be reached and the name and telephone number of the student's family doctor must be on file at the school.**

LOST AND FOUND

The school has a lost and found area located in the cafeteria. Students and parents are encouraged to check the lost and found area should an item be misplaced. **All unclaimed items will be given to a local charity at the end of each grading period.**

MEDIA SERVICES

The mission of the Thomas Jefferson Library Media Center is to ensure that students and staff are effective and efficient users of ideas and information. Our media program promotes literacy and the joy of reading; provides guidance in the use of information, instructional materials, and educational technology; and serves as a resource for materials and activities that promote life-long learning. Our facility houses a substantial collection of books, magazines, and audiovisual materials.

The Thomas Jefferson Library Media Center is fully automated, with an electronic circulation and on-line catalog system. Students will receive instruction in how to search electronic on-line databases and CD-ROM reference tools. Students will utilize the library media center for skills instruction, individual or small group research, book selection, storytelling, and leisure reading. Students can access the catalog via any computer in the media center for classroom projects and instruction.

A primary objective of the library media program is to instill the benefits of learning through reading, viewing, listening and producing. The library media specialist hopes to create a love of reading for fun, relaxation and knowledge by introducing students to authors and illustrators of fiction and nonfiction books. Students in all grades will have

scheduled circulation and instructional classes. During these classes, children are exposed to a variety of literature and receive instruction that supports the Virginia Standards of Learning, with particular emphasis on the English and Computer/Technology 5.3 SOLs.

Parents can assist their students by encouraging them to read and utilize the wide variety of materials that are available in our media center and at the public library. Try to read with your children as often as possible. Ask them to share the books they have borrowed from the media center with you, and talk to them about the stories they have heard and the activities they have done in the media center. Please encourage your children to treat all media materials with care and respect and return them in a timely fashion.

MEDICATIONS TO STUDENTS

Our school will make every effort to assist parents with administering medication to children when **absolutely necessary**. We appreciate our parents' assistance in regard to understanding that the school needs to limit the administration of medication to only those children in real need.

Please refer to the regulations governing medications below:

1. Medications prescribed by a doctor for three doses must be given at home (morning, after school and at night.)
2. The school will dispense prescription medications that must be given during school hours as determined by the doctor.
3. Over the counter medications will not be administered during school hours without a written note from a doctor.
4. All medications must be in the original container with specific directions for administration.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A state law requiring students and staff to observe a moment of silence at the beginning of each day became effective July 1, 2000. A moment of silence will be observed each morning. Students will be expected to remain seated and silent at this time.

NEWSLETTERS

The newsletter, "*Patriot Press*," will be distributed to each family monthly throughout the school year. The newsletter highlights student and staff achievement and special activities. Teachers will send home weekly newsletters and student work in Monday Folders. Teachers will also maintain a webpage linked to the school website containing important class information.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT RIGHTS

The General Assembly added section 22.1-279.4 to the Code of Virginia, which specifically allows non-custodial parents to participate in school related activities. The law states that unless there is a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents cannot be denied the opportunity to participate in school activities such as lunch breaks, parent/teacher conferences, and extracurricular activities. In fact, the law states that non-custodial parents should be allowed to participate in any activity that is supported or encouraged by school policy. If there is a court order denying access, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide a copy of that order to the school.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (P.T.A.)

The P.T.A. is a tremendous asset to Thomas Jefferson Elementary. The P.T.A. officers for 2009-2010 are as follows:

President: Julie Polk
Vice-President: TBD
Secretary: Gwenn Cheatwood
Treasurer: Kris Paul.

The P.T.A. officers have been busy planning programs for our school family and have developed ways in which the P.T.A. can support the educational programs at Thomas Jefferson Elementary. We encourage each family to be active participants in our P.T.A. during the 2009 – 2010 school year. The P.T.A. Board assists the officers in planning and administering the P.T.A. The P.T.A. meetings for the school year are tentatively scheduled as follows:

September 15	Executive Board, 6:15 General Membership meeting and Curriculum Night to follow
October 13	Executive Board, 6:15 General Meeting and Internet Safety Program, 7:00
November 10	Executive Board, 6:15 General Meeting and 2 nd Grade Musical Program, 7:00
December 8	Holiday Sing-Along, 6:30 (SNOW DATE 12/17)
January 12	Executive Board, 6:15 General Meeting and Reflections Program, 7:00
February 9	Executive Board, 6:15 General Meeting and 4 th Grade Musical Program, 7:00 (SNOW DATE- 2/16/10)
March 9	Executive Board, 6:15 General Meeting and PE Family Fitness Night, 7:00

April 20	Executive Board, 6:15 General Meeting and Kindergarten Musical Program, 7:00
May 1	Patriot Fair, 11-2
May 11	Executive Board, 6:30
June 15	Executive Board and Transitional Dinner, 6:30

Please see our regular school calendars for information about meeting dates. All general meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise posted.

PARTIES

Each class may have a Halloween, Winter, Valentine, and End of the Year party. The classroom teacher will coordinate these activities. Parental involvement is encouraged during these special events. We encourage parents and students to bring healthy snacks for class parties and consider donating a book to the class or school library in honor of a student's birthday instead of bringing sugary treats.

PETS

Pets of any kind are not allowed in the school without **prior consent** from the principal.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Tennis shoes are required for participation in PE. Please do not wear "sling back" shoes, "backless" shoes, "zipper" shoes (they always unzip while running), "Heely"-type shoes, or "skateboard" shoes. The faculty administers a series of physical fitness tests in the fall and again in the spring. Our physical education teachers will monitor the test scores and plan strategies for the improvement of physical fitness among the students.

PICTURES

Thomas Jefferson Elementary School provides students an opportunity to have school pictures made in the fall and the spring of each year. The school also contracts with the photographer to make a class picture and publish a color yearbook. The fall pictures have a traditional background and are a more formal pose. The spring pictures are casual, featuring either a contemporary background or an environmental background. **Students are encouraged to wear bright colorful clothing for their pictures.**

- The fall pictures will be taken on **Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2009 (retakes Nov. 5)**
- The spring pictures will be taken **Thursday, March 18, 2010.**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Virginia legislation states, “all students shall be required to learn the Pledge of Allegiance and to demonstrate such knowledge.” The legislation further stipulates that each school board “shall require daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in each classroom of the school division and shall ensure that the flag of the United States is in place in each classroom.” Students are to stand and recite the Pledge while facing the flag with their right hand over their hearts. No student, however, can be compelled to recite the Pledge if he, the parent, or guardian objects on religious, philosophical, or other grounds to participating. Students who are exempt are to remain quietly standing or sitting at their desks while others recite and are to make no display that disrupts or distracts others.

PROMOTIONS AND RETENTIONS

Promotions and retentions are based on an evaluation of academic, physical, social and emotional growth. The primary reasons for considering retention are (a) Insufficient progress on grade level concepts, (b) indifference or lack of effort on the part of a capable student, (c) physical or social immaturity, and/or (c) frequent or long absences.

Parents can assume their child will be promoted unless the alternative of retention has been discussed during the school year. Parents will be involved in any retention decision.

RADIOS, CD's, AND TAPE PLAYERS

Radios, tape players, CDs, and other electronic devices are discouraged and must be kept turned off and away from sight during the instructional day. The same rule applies on school field trips unless the principal makes an exception.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued at nine-week intervals, and interim progress reports are sent at the mid-point of each grading period. Please review your child's progress and contact the school if you have any questions.

RESIDENCY

A parent or guardian can be charged with a Class 4 misdemeanor for knowingly making a false statement concerning the residency of a child. All students attending Bedford County Public Schools must live with a parent or legal guardian residing in Bedford County or must reside with a parent or legal guardian who owns property in Bedford County (Section 22.1-264.1 Code of Virginia).

SAFETY MEASURES

Preventing emergency or crisis situations is a top priority at TJES. In cases of emergencies, plans are in place to mobilize the school staff and community resources to respond quickly and effectively. Preventive and response steps include the following:

- The school will schedule drills (fire, tornado, and lockdown) throughout the school year to ensure student safety. A fire evacuation drill will be held each week during the first 6 weeks of school and at least monthly throughout the year.
- All school doors except the front door are locked at all times during the school day.
- Staff members are required to wear identification badges at all times.
- Visitors are welcome at TJES, and they are required to check in at the office, print a badge, and wear it while at school. Visitors without a visible badge will be asked to visit the office to obtain one.
- Substitute teachers are given a summary of the Crisis Plan to use in case of emergency.
- An active school crisis team updates plans regularly to respond to medical and other emergencies. Communication and first responder provisions are part of this plan.
- Bus safety drills are practiced, and car and bus traffic is separated to the extent possible in the morning and afternoon high-traffic periods.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Each teacher has furnished his or her students with a list of supplies needed for the year. The lists are also posted on the school website. These supplies are modestly priced and easy to obtain. **The office will sell the specialized writing journals and the TJES homework assignment books.**

STUDENT SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES

1. **Parents who desire to pick up their children between 8:00 a.m. – 2:40 p.m. must come to the office.** If your child is sick, please feel free to use the designated parking spaces in the front parking lot across from the gym. Otherwise, please park in the side parking lot.
2. The office staff will use the intercom to call the child's classroom teacher. **The secretary or principals will request that the child be sent to the office. The office will not call for students after 2:40 p.m.** Parents who want to pick up their child before the end of the day must do so before 2:40 p.m. (We are doing this to coordinate car riders and bus dismissal.)
3. The parent or authorized individual will complete the information requested at the office counter.

4. Parents may write one note to the classroom teacher if their child will be a car rider every day. Parents who occasionally pick up their child will need to write a note **EACH** time. This will help maintain a safe procedure for car riders.
5. Please call early in the school day if your child's transportation plans must change; it is difficult to make last minute changes at the hectic end of the school day.
6. Car riders will be dismissed at 3:00 and must be picked up by **3:10 p.m.**
7. **TEACHERS WILL NOT RELEASE A STUDENT TO ANYONE UNLESS THIS PROCEDURE IS FOLLOWED.**

STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are as follows:

- (1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school division receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the building principal, a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The building principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- (2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent of eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading.

Parents or eligible students may ask Bedford County Public Schools to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the school division decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school division will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent of eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

- (3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education record, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the division as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the division has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

[**Optional**] Upon request, the school division discloses educational records without consent to officials or another school division in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. [Note: FERPA requires a school division to make a reasonable attempt to notify the student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.]

- (4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school division to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20020-4605.

[Note: In addition, a school division may want to include its directory information public notice, as required by Section 99.37 of the regulations, with its annual notification of rights under FERPA.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

A substitute teacher may periodically teach students. The most common reason for employing substitute teachers occurs when the regular teacher is ill. However, substitutes are also used when regular teachers are on leave for personal business, professional training, or family emergencies. Students are expected to be extra courteous to substitute teachers. Any misconduct in the classroom will be dealt with immediately.

TARDIES

Parents who drive their children to school should bring them between 8:00 - 8:15 a.m. Students who arrive after 8:20 a.m. will be marked “tardy” and need to sign in at the office. The principals will contact the parents of students who are habitually tardy. Please assist the school by making sure your child is in his or her classroom ready to begin the day by 8:20 a.m.

TELEPHONE

The school phone number is (434) 534-6159. The office telephone is a business phone and is not to be used by students except in an emergency. Students are not allowed to use the phone to make personal arrangements, (permission to go to another child's home after school, calling for lunch money, textbooks, homework, etc.)

TESTING PROGRAM

Specific dates will be communicated in school newsletters and calendars later in the year.

September-October

- PALS Testing – Division-wide at Grades 1-3
- QRI reading testing for grades 4-5
- Grade 5 writing predictor

October-November

- PALS Testing – Division-wide for Kindergarten
- Benchmark testing in reading and math - 1st quarter (grades 2-5)
- Gifted Program Screening – Division-wide

January/February

- Benchmark testing in reading and math - 2nd quarter (grades 3-5)
- PALS Testing – Division-wide mid-year screening at Grades K-3
- QRI reading testing for grades 4-5
- Stanford 10 Achievement Battery/Otis-Lennon Student Ability Test – Division-wide Grade 2

March/April

- Writing Standards of Learning Testing for Grade 5
- Grades 3 and 4 writing predictor
- Gifted Program Screening – Division-wide
- Benchmark testing in core subject areas for Grades 2-5

May/June

- PALS Testing- Division-wide for Grades K-3
- QRI reading testing for grades 4-5
- Standards of Learning Testing for Grades 3-5

TEXTBOOKS

Students will be assessed the full replacement cost for textbooks and other school material that are damaged or lost.

TITLE NINE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Bedford County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in its programs, activities, or employment practices, as required by Title VI, Title IX and Section 504.

The person responsible for the coordination of the school division's efforts to meet its obligations under Section 504 and Title IX and their implementing regulations is Dr. Douglas Schuch, Division Superintendent, P.O. Box 748, Bedford, Va. 24523 (586-1045, Ext. 257).

TOY WEAPONS

Toy weapons (guns, swords, knives, etc.) **SHOULD NOT** be brought to school. The school staff and PTA want to discourage play involving aggressive behavior or weapons.

VALUABLES

The school administrators and staff cannot be responsible for valuables that students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home. **Toys should not be brought to school unless necessary for a class activity!**

VISITORS

Our goal at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School is to provide a safe and enjoyable learning environment for all school community members. In order for us to accomplish this goal we must ask that all visitors register in the office upon entering the building. We are always pleased to have visitors in our school.

In order to limit disruptions to the learning environment, the office staff will deliver items to students dropped off by parents, such as tennis shoes, back packs, school work, books, snacks, party items, etc. The office staff will also call for students being dismissed.

Aside from regular volunteers, parents wanting to visit their child's classroom must have permission from the office staff. Making prior arrangements for school visits is always a good practice. The safety and confidentiality of our students is our first concern.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Adults who share an hour or two each week can make a tremendous impact on the quality of education for children! We encourage parents, grandparents, and other significant adults to share your talents with our very special children!

Our volunteers assist children in reading, math, writing, art, and other areas. Volunteers also make a variety of instructional materials to assist the teachers. Many of our volunteers work in the Library Media Center (LMC), classroom, the office workroom, or at home.

Please come to the volunteer orientation on August 26, 2009 at 9:00 in the LMC to learn more about volunteering at TJES!

Thank you for your help in making TJES a safe and stimulating learning environment!

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