

John F. Kennedy Elementary School

BE PROUD TO BE AN EAGLE

STUDENT HANDBOOK



228 MT. VERNON AVENUE
WEST BERLIN, NJ 08091
856-767-9480

WWW.BTWPSCHOOLS.ORG

Educating Today for Tomorrow's Success

Note: Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Health Crisis, in order to create the safest and most optimal learning environment for students and staff, there may be additional policies and practices created and enforced. An addendum to this handbook may be created in the future.

John F. Kennedy Elementary School
228 Mt. Vernon Avenue
West Berlin, NJ 08091
856-767-9480
www.btwpschools.org
Principal: Michael Murphy

School Philosophy and Goals

Mission: At John F. Kennedy Elementary School we see ourselves as the safe harbor of this community. Our goal is to promote resilient young children and we will seek to achieve the highest levels of resiliency through academic education and performing arts.

The primary goal of an elementary education is to strive for high student achievement in core subjects of reading, mathematics and writing. A student's success in these areas is essential for acquisition of all future knowledge. We involve students in the educational process to produce an ownership to knowledge that stresses the value of education. This active process contributes to a student's willingness to learn and improves the transfer of experience to knowledge.

Each student is a unique person, each learning at his/her own special rate, each equipped with his/her own background of experiences, each possessing individual talents, each setting their own personal goals.

A professional staff that takes limitless initiative in solving student problems is a school's most valuable asset. An effective educational environment is the highest form of professionalism. We take pride in a staff that is hard-working, knowledgeable and caring.

Communication between the student and teacher is the most important act that takes place in a school. Through such communication our teachers set realistic goals for student achievement and behavior that correspond to those attributes that will be essential in later life. We believe that cooperation regarding rules and the ability to work hard are the foundation for a successful entry into society.

School Hours

Regular school day: 8:45 – 3:15

Early dismissal day: 8:45 – 1:15

Delayed opening day: 10:45 – 3:15

School Calendar – Important Dates

Please see the school calendar on the JFK school website www.btwpschools.org for current events in the school.

Student Attendance

Inconsistent school attendance can cause serious dire consequences in a student's academic and social development. Missing instruction can frustrate a student's efforts in grasping important skills and a negative attitude toward school.

Please contact the school each morning if a student is absent (856-767-9480). Your communication will guarantee that all students are safe. Upon returning to school the student must bring a note explaining the reason for the absence. If a student is absent for **five consecutive days or more, a doctor's note must accompany the student's return to school.** Students, who are absent due to a fever, must be fever-free for 24 hours prior to returning to school. Excessive absences and/or excessive tardiness may result in retention in the present grade level and/or a petition for the student and parent to appear in municipal court.

All students will enter school at 8:45 AM. If a student enters school after 8:50 AM, he/she must report to the office and receive a late pass. Late arrival to school will be recorded in the student's attendance record accordingly. Students must be in school for a minimum of four hours to receive credit for attendance for the day. Dismissal is at 3:15 PM.

Students who do not ride the school bus will enter and exit school through the main entrance of the school located on Mt. Vernon Avenue. Doors open at 8:40 AM and close at 8:50 AM. While waiting to enter school all students must be supervised by an adult. There will be no supervision of students provided by school personnel prior to 8:40 AM. An adult who is listed on the school emergency contact for the student must accompany a student who leaves school. Students will not be permitted to leave school on their own.

Students who must leave school early for a special appointment or due to illness may only be picked up at school by an approved adult as indicated on their emergency contact form. Parents/guardians must give the office

advance notice of late arrival or early dismissal of a student due to a prearranged appointment. All parents or guardians must provide photo identification when picking up a student from school.

Students who need to make arrangements out of the ordinary for dismissal from school (i. e., go home on a different bus) must have a note from the parent/guardian. Students will not be dismissed from school in a manner inconsistent with their usual dismissal procedure unless the parent/guardian provides advance written notice.

Make-Up Work

Parents/Guardians should call the main office to arrange to pick up work when their child is absent from school. This will permit teachers to have make-up work ready at the end of the day after dismissal.

Homework

Homework is an important part of the learning process. Homework carries the educational goals of the school into the home, improves work habits, reinforces skills and teaches independent study habits. The amount of homework assigned is in accordance with the students' grade level. All students are expected to complete homework consistently. When assigned homework is not complete consequences may be imposed including a reduction in the child's grade or loss of privileges in school. **Note: Due to COVID-19 there may be no homework assigned during a Remote Learning School Environment**

2020-20221 Trimester Dates

1 st Trimester	09/07/2021 – 12/7/2021
2 nd Trimester	12/08/2021 – 03/15/2022
3 rd Trimester	03/16/2022– 06/16/2022

Emergency Closing

In the event of an emergency school closing or delayed opening we will notify the KYW (1060 AM) radio station. Our school number is 582. You can also check the website at www.btwpschools.org.

Dress Code Policy

We like students to be comfortable in the learning environment and to have the opportunity to participate in all available activities. To ensure that each child has this opportunity, the following guidelines have been established:

- Clothing should be clean and age-appropriate
- Clothing should be activity and weather appropriate
- Sneakers should be worn for physical education, class trips, field day and recess
- Hats and non-prescription glasses are not permitted in the building
- Sneaker skates are not permitted
- Inappropriate graphics/slogans on clothing are not permitted

Students are encouraged to wear shoes with closed front (unexposed toes). Shoes must fasten to the foot with a strap. No slip on, clogs or flip-flops are permitted.

Students who disregard the established standards will be asked to contact their parents to bring appropriate and acceptable attire to school. The student may be excluded from certain activities due to inappropriate attire.

Dispensing Student Medication/Medical Screening

The school nurse is the only authorized staff member in the school to dispense medication to students. He/she will give medicine in compliance with the following regulations:

1. Written instructions, signed by parent and physician, must be sent to the school nurse. Include the child's name, name of medication, its purpose, the time and dosage to be given, possible side effects and termination date for giving the medication.
2. The medication must be delivered to the nurse by the child's parent/guardian, in the original container, labeled by the pharmacy or doctor. Students must not carry medications to and from school.

The school nurse is the only authorized staff member in the school that will conduct medical screenings for students.

1. Height
2. Weight
3. Vision
4. Hearing

Cell Phones

Students are not permitted to carry cell phones in school. Students who have cell phones must store them in their backpacks during the school day and have them turned off. If a student carries a cell phone in school, the cell phone will be confiscated and stored in the principal's office. A parent/guardian must retrieve a confiscated cell phone from the principal's office.

Birthday Parties

If a student is inviting his/her classmates to a party, he/she must invite all of the students in the class or all of the female students or all of the male students. When invitations are given in school, students may not arbitrarily invite or exclude classmates from parties. Please note that in-school celebrations must be kept to a minimum as to not disrupt the order of the school day. No latex materials of any kind, including balloons, are permitted in school. **Note: Due to COVID-19 birthday celebrations will not occur in the classrooms.**

Volunteers/Visitors

We encourage parents and guardians to become active members of the school community. As such we occasionally invite parents and/or guardians to participate in specific school events. All parents and guardians who wish to participate in a school event or activity, including field trips, must be ADVANCE approved. Please contact the superintendent's office at 856-767-9480 (Ext. 1111) for information on how to become ADVANCE approved. **Note: Due to COVID-19 volunteers/visitors will not be permitted in school except with the approval of the School Principal and/or Superintendent of Schools.**

Response to Intervention (RTI)

The RTI process is a multi-step approach to providing services and interventions to students who struggle with learning at increasing levels of intensity. The RTI committee closely monitors the student's progress at each stage of intervention. Results of this monitoring are used to make decisions about the need for further research based instruction and/or intervention in general/special education or both.

The RTI process has the potential to limit the amount of academic failure that any student experiences and to increase the accuracy of special education evaluations. Information and data gathered by the RTI process can lead to earlier identification of students who have true disabilities and are in need of special education services. Parents should participate in problem-solving discussions with their child's teacher about the specific strengths and areas for improvement. Parents should also ask when will the school update them on the results of an intervention. When possible, parents should make suggestions about strategies and interventions based on what they know works at home. Finally, parents should praise their children for any improvement in the area of concern. Ultimately, a child needs positive reinforcement inside and out of school for success.

The RTI framework helps schools organize effective instruction for the benefit of all students. The program encourages early intervention services to help prevent academic and behavioral difficulties. Lastly, the program is designed to be a proactive and positive approach to educating every student.

Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)

In order to develop an environment that encourages and supports pro-social student behavior at the school-wide, classroom and individual student levels JFK practices and enforces Positive Behavior Supports. Positive Behavior Supports is a research - based process that uses a collaborative and consistent teaming approach to generate and define behavior expectations for all students in all areas of school. Students are taught and expected to be safe, respectful and responsible at all times. Students who do not comply with the school-wide expectations may be referred to the Behavior Referral Team for an intensive analysis of their behavior and to develop an individualized behavior improvement plan of action.

Expectations: All students are expected to abide by the following:

- Be respectful to others
- Be responsible for oneself
- Be safe at all times

These expectations and guidelines apply to students during their travel to and from school, during school and at all school functions. Students who do not meet these expectations will be assigned consequences of various levels to encourage them to correct their behavior.

Guidance Counselor

The JFK Elementary School Guidance Counselor will arrange for one on one, small group and whole class mini-lessons. **Note: Due to COVID-19 guidance counselor sessions/lessons may be done remotely.**

Discipline Code

Goal: Our goal is to develop students that exhibit self-control and self-discipline. This in turn will help ensure an effective and productive learning environment. We promote collaborative work and play among our children. The school expectations – be safe, respectful and responsible - help to promote the social interactions of children with peers and adults and to ensure a standard of conduct in the school community. School expectations come from many sources, including New Jersey State Law, Berlin Township Board of Education Policy and other sources. The aim of this discipline code is to provide John F. Kennedy Elementary School personnel, parent/guardians, students and other members of the community a clear understanding of the types of infractions or violations of those rules and to ensure a fair, consistent, reasonable approach in the administration of the discipline code.

Parents, please remember the importance of reinforcing school expectations with your child. If you have a question or concern about the reason for a discipline referral, please feel free to discuss it with the staff member that issued the referral in order to gain a more complete understanding of the situation.

Referrals are written with the intent of addressing a behavior concern, not to punish the student. Everyone makes mistakes; a discipline referral is often a learning experience for the student.

Parental support is essential to shaping appropriate student behavior. When discipline is handled in school and reinforced at home, the behavior will generally not be repeated. However, a cycle of behavior difficulties can start if the parent "takes the student's side" by not supporting the discipline policy and reinforcing the proper standards of behavior, giving the student the perception that he/she is "above the rules."

Thank you for your cooperation with this. Together, our students, your children, will have a successful school year.

Level One (Nuisance Behaviors)

Includes all conduct that impedes the orderly operation of the classroom and/or school

Behaviors	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal acts of misconduct (swearing, name-calling, teasing, “put downs”) • Defiance and disrespect to others [verbal and non-verbal (gestures)] • Possession of items that are disruptive to learning (Ex. hand-held electronics) • Violation of individual teacher/classroom rules and procedures • Technology violation • Cheating • Defacing school property • Dress code violation • Loitering • Littering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-teacher conference • Natural consequence to rebuild trust (written apology) • Corrective behavior (pick up litter, etc.) • Loss of privilege • Parent contact • Repeated infractions <u>may</u> lead to referral to administration

Level Two

Includes all conduct that impedes the orderly operation of the classroom and/or school and that may be harmful or dangerous

Behaviors	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graffiti on school property • Physical acts of misconduct (kicking, shoving, tripping, hitting, etc.) • Throwing or shooting objects (snowballs, ice, rubber bands, paper clips, etc.) • Tampering with school property or property of others • Inappropriate physical contact • Severe disruptions, disrespect or defiance • Verbal threat with the intent to frighten or intimidate • Disrespectful actions toward a staff member or substitute (talking back, gestures of disrespect, etc.) • Inappropriate physical exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-teacher conference • Natural consequence to rebuild trust (written apology) • Loss of privilege • Parent contact/conference • Possible referral to administration • Possible suspension from school

Level Three

Includes all conduct that is illegal and/or life/health threatening

Behaviors	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weapons possession, assault with weapon • Drugs – distribution, usage • Assault, physical cruelty • Repeated verbal or graphic threat with explicit intent to harm • False alarms/bomb threats • Theft/stealing (money, electronics, clothing or similar items of value) • Physical, sexual, verbal and/or emotional harassment • Vandalism/destruction of school property or property of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate referral to administration • Natural consequence (repair item, return of property) • Mandatory parent conference • Suspension • Possible police involvement • Referral to BOE for expulsion/disciplinary hearing

Consequences represent discipline options available to staff members. Staff members may consider the behavior as well as whether or not it is repetitious in nature in order to determine the appropriate consequence(s). Staff members may choose to use a combination of consequences (i. e., corrective behavior plus parent contact). Involvement of support staff (counselor, social worker, psychologist) is also available when necessary, to develop a plan of improvement (see Positive Behavior Supports above). **Note: Behavior expectations will also apply to any Remote Learning School Environment**

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

As stated in Berlin Township School District Policy 5131.1: Harassment, intimidation, or bullying is defined as any gesture, any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, as defined in N.J.S.A 18A:37-14. The Board of Education strictly prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The Board of Education policy in regards to Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying will be provided to parents in its entirety and will be available on the Berlin Township School District website www.btwpschools.org.

ACCEPTABLE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY INTERNET ACCESS

The Board considers use of the school district's technology resources to be a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in disciplinary consequences, including possible cancellation of the privilege, suspension or expulsion and even, in serious situations, legal prosecution. The Board of Education policy in regards to Technology Internet Access will be provided to parents in its entirety and will be available on the Berlin Township School District website www.btwpschools.org. Note: Acceptable Use Policy extends to the Remote Learning School environment.

Bus Rules & Expectations

- It is a privilege for students to ride the bus.
- All students must adhere to the bus rules listed below.
- All students must ride assigned bus and enter and exit at assigned stop.
- To ensure safety of preschool and kindergarten students an adult will escort them to and from the bus.
- Students who violate bus expectations may be subject to suspension of bus privileges including field trips.
- If your child is not eligible for bus transportation, he/she may not ride the school bus. If your child wants to go home with another student, a parent must provide transportation. Your child's teacher and the main office will need a note from the parent/guardian to change normal dismissal procedures for you child.

Bus behavior expectations:

Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay out of the street • Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before getting on and off • Remain in assigned seats • Fasten seatbelt properly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use kind words and actions • Use quiet voices while on bus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep bus clean • Be responsible for your belongings • Calm quiet behavior

Bus behavior consequences:

1 st offense	Conference with principal/ behavior letter to parent/ meeting with counselor
2 nd offense	Written warning
3 rd offense	5 day suspension from the bus
4 th offense	10 day suspension from the bus
5 th offense	1 year suspension from the bus

C.A.R.E Program

Berlin Township Children's After-School Recreation and Education (CARE) is an extended day program providing children with an environment that is safe, warm, friendly, and stimulating. The program includes time for rest, play and learning as well as an opportunity for the child to develop intellectually and to interact with adults and peers through a variety of activities. CARE is sponsored by the Berlin Township Board of Education and is open to any school-aged child (grades pre-kindergarten through 8th) enrolled in the district provided the program can meet the needs of that child.

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