



# **Parent-Pupil Handbook 2021-2022**

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# FACULTY AND STAFF

## ADMINISTRATION

Beth O'Donnell, Principal  
Rachel Levi, Assistant Principal

## SUPPORT STAFF

Christine McNamara, Administrative Assistant  
Chiffon Armistead, Administrative Assistant  
Jean Stewart, Office Aide  
Paul Cote, School Counselor- 2nd, 3rd, 4th  
Taylor Hawkins, School Counselor- K, 1st, PEAP  
Kelly Carey, Technology Resource Teacher  
Erin Kirkland, School Psychologist  
Erika Berry, Instructional Coach  
Natalie Gerometta, Student Support Specialist  
Karla Herrera-Fisher, ELL Parent Liaison  
Amy Thomas, METRICS Coach  
Tracy Longerbeam, School Nurse

## READING SPECIALISTS

Jessica Ford  
Kathleen Morgan  
Stephanie Turner

## ESL TEACHERS

Chris Dowell  
Hannah Campbell  
Brandi Hammond  
Jen Linney

## RESOURCE TEACHERS

Robin McKay  
Samantha Street  
Katie Tantillo

## SPECIALS

Jackie Scott, Music  
Tabitha Jablonski, Drama  
Zach Krietz, Physical Education  
Amanda Furman, Librarian  
Kathy Matthias, STEAM  
Shannon Campbell, Art

## PRE-K TEACHERS

Bobbie Joyner  
Emilie Jung  
Margie Delaney

## KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Heather Lark-Rickard  
Nina Fortune  
Warren Sardelis  
Brittany Ohs  
Ch'Loris Clemons  
Liz Schweiger

## CAFETERIA

Tammy Reynolds, Cafeteria Manager  
Allison Smalley  
Donna Armel  
Winter Ball  
Brenda Tincher

## FIRST GRADE TEACHERS

Sarah Weir  
Holly Rucker  
Brandi Shirley

## PEAP TEACHERS

Missy Nelms  
Laurie Young  
Nicole Shimek  
Amber Colvin

## SECOND GRADE TEACHERS

Amy Kretchman  
Angie Yancey  
Amber Rieger

## THIRD GRADE TEACHERS

Rachel Doering  
Madi Robertson  
Rennie Earhart  
Liora Speir  
Karli Neff, PEDLE

## FOURTH GRADE TEACHERS

Emily Shafer  
Caitlin Schwizer  
Amy Vaden  
Kaitlyn Wright  
Lydia DeFazio  
Wanda King, PEDLE

## IRT

Tara Sargent  
Elizabeth Earnhardt

## TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Cynthia Banks  
Penny Gale  
Kelly Presgraves  
Mary Keelor  
Ginger Nail  
Diane Mason  
Elizabeth Stewart  
Laura Giudice  
Shannon Enright  
Megan Ryan  
Patti Quest  
Taylor MacMillian

## CUSTODIAL

Tom Campbell  
Nidia Bonilla  
Kelly Price  
Andrew Arnold  
Robert Nunan  
William Crittenden

# The Winchester Public Schools

## MISSION

Learning for All, Whatever It Takes

## CREDO

**We believe** that to accomplish “Learning for All, Whatever It Takes,” students, parents and educators must be committed to their individual role responsibilities. Each role is unique and critical to effective teaching and learning with our public schools and is necessary to promote consistent and positive development in our students. Further, we believe that positive interactions among us all are essential and must be characterized by:

- Mutual respect and trust
- Pride in our schools and community
- Commitment to high expectations
- Acceptance of personal and public responsibility
- Commitment to quality teaching and learning both in and outside of the classroom
- Active, open and meaningful communications among all participants
- Nurturing and caring relationships for all
- Excellence in our respective roles
- Receptiveness to new ideas
- Confidence gained from the acquisition of knowledge and skills

### HISTORY OF JOHN KERR SCHOOL

The school was named for the first public school benefactor in Winchester, Mr. John Kerr, a prosperous cabinetmaker, whose shop was located at the northeast corner of Boscawen and Loudoun Streets on the mall. He died on November 15, 1875. In his will, he arranged for funds to be used for the education of the children of Winchester. In 1883, City Council added \$6000 more to this total, and the John Kerr Public School building was erected. In 1972, the second John Kerr School was built on Jefferson Street behind John Handley High School. The original John Kerr building, at the corner of Cameron and Cork Streets, continues to serve hundreds of students each year as a facility for Shenandoah University fine arts and other special interest classes for learners of all ages. The current John Kerr School opened August 2016, and is located on Meadow Branch Avenue on the western side of Winchester.

**COLORS:** Blue and Red

**MASCOT:** Cardinal

## Cardinal Pride

\*Perseverance   \*Respect and Responsibility   \*Integrity   \*Discipline   \*Excellence

Cardinal Pride is our Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) program at John Kerr. Cardinal Pride, assists in promoting a positive, safe school climate for all students.

## TARDY/EARLY DISMISSAL

Arriving on time is very important to the academic success of your child. Your child must be in the classroom and ready to begin by 7:45 a.m. each day. **All students who are tardy to school or who are dismissed early must be signed in or out in the office by a parent or an authorized adult.** Students will not be dismissed early unless a note has been sent. Students picked up by someone other than a parent require a written note from the parent/guardian. These are necessary procedures for the protection of students. Only the principal or designee will approve exceptions to this procedure.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE

It is very important that we maintain up-to-date home and email addresses and telephone numbers in the school office for every student. Please notify the school **immediately** if there is a change during the school year. **When an address change is made, new proof of residency is required, such as a lease agreement or a monthly bill.**

## EMERGENCIES

Emergency data for each student ***MUST*** be on file in the office; changes should be reported to the office **immediately**. These sheets provide a constant link between school and home in case of illness or other emergencies. Please keep them updated.

If the need arises to evacuate the building, the following procedures will be in effect:

- An announcement will be made and the building will be evacuated. Students will remain outside or be moved to a safe location until it is determined that it is safe to return to the school building.
- If school must be dismissed for the day, parents/guardians will be notified through emergency numbers kept by the teachers or through Instant ALERT notification

## TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

**Any change** in a student's regular means of transportation in the afternoon must be by written note from a parent or guardian. A note may be faxed to the office at (540) 662-4728 or emailed to [mcnamara@wps.k12.va.us](mailto:mcnamara@wps.k12.va.us) and [armistead@wps.k12.va.us](mailto:armistead@wps.k12.va.us) by 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday if there is a last minute change. **We ask that you call the school to notify the office of your incoming fax.** Student safety is very important to us!

## CAR RIDERS

Students may enter the building at 7:25 AM upon the arrival of staff safety personnel. Buses and car riders are dismissed at 2:25 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## STUDENT TAGS FOR CAR RIDERS

To increase the safety of children during the car pick-up process, individual student tags are provided to families. These tags, with the student's first name and last initial, are to be shown when picking up a child who is walking home or placed in the passenger's front windshield when picking up a student in a car at school dismissal. Each family will be given three student tags to distribute to those picking up your child/children. If you need more tags, please contact the office. **If a car does not have the tag displayed in the windshield, the driver will need to park and come into the office to pick up the child. Between 2:15 PM-2:40 PM the office is open only to school personnel and volunteers. Students who are picked-up by car will be dismissed to the car pick-up line, only, during dismissal.**

## VISITOR PARKING

Visitor parking spaces are available. Cars are not to be left unattended in the drop-off zone and the fire lane is not to be used for traffic or parking of any kind unless under the direct supervision of the administration.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

To ensure the safe arrival and dismissal of our car and bus students the traffic patterns are as follows:

**All car traffic is to enter the school property via Meadow Branch Avenue. Car traffic must follow traffic patterns designated by staff when "dropping off" students. Please adhere to staff requests in the parking lot.**

**Do not speed.** For the safety of all our students, staff, and parents please allow plenty of time. **The speed limit is 10 mph.**

**Stay in the proper lane.** We have 2 lanes of traffic both morning and afternoon. Cars should enter following arrows, cones, and then staff directions. Please proceed to the front of the building to drop off students in the morning and to pick up students in the afternoon.

**STATE LAW:** Bus drivers are not allowed to deactivate traffic warning lights when loading or unloading pupils on school driveways. Cars will not be able to move while buses are obeying this law. Please be patient while we implement this state requirement.

**Staff will be on duty** 7:25 a.m. and 2:25 p.m. to help expedite car and bus traffic safely through the arrival and dismissal process. Additional staff members are not available during any after school programs or PTO Enrichment dismissal. Please be **EXTRA** cautious and aware of all traffic procedures.

**Parents should stay in their vehicles.** If there is a need to go into the building, please park in the parking lot and walk into the building.

**PLEASE DO NOT CROSS IN BETWEEN CARS UNLESS AREA IS SUPERVISED BY STAFF.**

## ACCOMPANYING YOUR CHILD TO HIS/HER CLASSROOM

To facilitate a smooth school day for children, we request that parents/guardians not walk a child or children to the classroom, including on the first day. If you are concerned about your child, staff can check on your child while you wait in the cafeteria or give you a phone call later in the day.

## FACE COVERING AND SOCIAL DISTANCE

Due to Covid-19 policies and procedures, at this time all students and guests to the building are required to wear a face covering at all times, unless directed otherwise by a staff member.

# SCHOOL HOURS

**Students:** Monday-Friday 7:25 a.m. – 2:25 p.m.

Students who are brought to school by their parents will be permitted to enter the building at 7:25 a.m. and report to classes. **Supervision is not provided before that time and students will not be allowed to enter the school.** Please read carefully the section on Arrival and Dismissal, Rules for the Road on page 9.

**Faculty:** 7:20 a.m. – 2:50 p.m.

**Business:** 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

# INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of bad weather, the superintendent will do one of the following: (1) determine a virtual snow day; (2) close school; (3) delay opening; or (4) dismiss early.

**Virtual snow day-** Students will participate in online learning during the snow day. Schedules and communication will be provided by the school and classroom teacher.

**School closing** – On any morning when ice or snow has fallen, listen to the local radio or TV station for announcements. Information will be on School Messenger, the GoWPS! app, local radio and television stations, and the school system website. If conditions are deteriorating during the early morning, a delay may be announced first, followed by a closing of schools. If possible, the decision will be announced by **6:30 a.m.** On days when school is closed for inclement weather, the day will be a virtual learning day. Students will continue their education online.

**Delayed opening** – If the superintendent feels that the road conditions may improve sufficiently during the morning, he will announce a delayed opening of either one or two hours. Dismissal will be at the regular time.

**Early dismissal** – If weather conditions worsen during the day, the school may dismiss early. Please make arrangements for your child in the event of early dismissals. Students who are normally car riders will be dismissed 10 minutes earlier than other students.

| ONE-HOUR DELAY                                                                           | TWO-HOUR DELAY                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tardy Bell - 8:45am<br>Dismissal - 2:25pm<br><i>*Breakfast will be served at 8:25am.</i> | Tardy Bell - 9:45am<br>Dismissal - 2:25pm<br><i>*Breakfast will be served at 9:25am.</i> |

# HEALTH AND MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

Under the amended Code of Virginia, Section 22-220.1 no child will be admitted for the first time to any public kindergarten or elementary school unless certification of a comprehensive physical examination is furnished. A physical must have been performed no earlier than twelve (12) months prior to the date the pupil first enters a kindergarten or public school. As part of the physical, certification must also be given that the child has been successfully immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus (DPT), polio (OPV), measles (rubeola and rubella), chicken pox (varicella), and mumps. Those families who do not have a family physician and wish to have an appointment with the Health Department Clinic should contact the school nurse.

Parents should inform the school officials of any medical or physical disability that might hinder the child's progress in school or pose a threat to the child's safety. As an added precaution, each successive year, the parent should inform the child's teacher of this condition and of any procedure that should be followed should a problem arise.

In the interest of the child and public safety, the school nurse or official will contact the parents and send a child home when illness or injury has been determined.

## MEDICATIONS AND DRUGS

When possible, medication should be scheduled for out-of-school hours. We recognize that this is not always possible and will cooperate in the administration of medication. The following guidelines have been established:

Parents or guardians assume full responsibility for supplying the medication.

**Parents or guardians must deliver** any medication to the school with a medication request form filled out by the physician that includes:

- (1) a request form for each prescribed medication, signed by the parent or legal guardian and filed in the principal's office, and
- (2) a labeled container of medication that includes:
  - Student's full name
  - Physician's name
  - Physician's telephone number
  - Name of medication
  - Dosage, schedule and dose form
  - Date of expiration of prescription

The school nurse will assume responsibility for placing medications in a locked cabinet.

Students will be assisted with taking medications according to the physician's instructions and the procedure will be observed and recorded by a designated school staff member.

Medications that are discontinued or unused must be picked up by a parent or guardian by the end of the semester. No medications can be sent home with a student.

It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to keep continuing prescriptions filled in a timely manner to keep from interrupting the educational process.

## BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAMS

All enrolled students at John Kerr Elementary School are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch each day at no charge this school year! You do not need to send in money or complete a form in order to receive this meal. A la carte items will be available for purchase in the cafeteria. A la carte items can not be purchased if there is no money provided at the time of purchase. No "charging" of a la carte items will be allowed.

We strongly discourage soft drinks in school lunches for our students. We appreciate the support of our families as we work toward developing healthy students. In addition to school rules, simple lunch rules and expectations allow our students to enjoy their lunch with friends in a healthy environment, while maintaining appropriate social distance:

- Wait until you are called to get your lunch or breakfast.
- Use good manners.
- Talk softly, always.
- Eat your own lunch and do not share food with others.
- Stay seated.
- Raise your hand if help is needed.
- Keep feet quietly under the seat and out of the aisle.
- When you are finished, stay in your seat.
- Leave eating space as clean as possible.
- Replace face covering at the conclusion of the meal.
- Throw trash away in large classroom trash can.

#### Adult Breakfast & Lunch Prices:

Breakfast: \$2.00

Lunch: \$3.80

## OUTSIDE FOOD

No outside food should be brought to school without the approval and communication with the classroom teacher. Due to allergies and food related restrictions, food must be approved or it will not be served to students.

## NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT PARTICIPATION

State law provides that, unless a court order has been issued to the contrary, non-custodial parents of students enrolled in public school shall not be denied the opportunity to participate in activities, such as eating lunch with the child and parent-teacher conferences. The custodial parent is responsible for providing the court order, if one exists, to the school.

## PROPER DRESS

A student's dress shall not distract others from the educational process or create a health or safety problem. Please see division policy for updated specifics on dress code. Clothing must be appropriate for school activities. **For safety purposes, TENNIS SHOES are required for P.E. classes.** Students may bring tennis shoes and leave them at school. **No student will participate in P.E. classes in shoes that are considered unsafe for active play.**

## REPORT CARD

The Winchester Public Schools elementary report card is linked to student's progress and mastery on the Virginia Standards of Learning. Codes in K-2nd grade differ from those used on 3rd and 4th grade report cards.

#### Kindergarten-2nd grade:

**MS** (Mastered Skills)- The student's achievement matches what is expected to be mastered.

**LS** (Learning Skills)- The child is developing mastery of the skills/content.

**AC** (Area of Concern)- The student's current achievement demonstrates inconsistent retention and/or application of the skills/content.

**NA** (Not Assessed)- Skills/content for this standard were not assessed for this reporting period.

#### 3rd and 4th Grade:

4- Exceeds grade level standards

3- Meets grade level standards

2- Approaching grade level standards

1- Developing proficiency

## PARENT/GUARDIAN-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held on October 7th and March 30th. However, teachers are available throughout the year to discuss a student's progress. If you would like an additional conference, please call the office or leave a message for the teacher OR send a note to the teacher and your child. **Please understand that teachers will not conference during the school day without prior arrangement.**

## COMMUNICATIONS TO PARENT/GUARDIAN

JKES is committed to partnering with families to support student learning at home, school, and in the community. Guardians have a significant role in making schools effective and enjoyable. As role models, parents, guardians, and staff should exhibit behaviors they would like for students to see in schools and in society. Critical aspects of communication between family and staff include effective two way communication.

Ways staff will communicate with staff include:

- Quarterly teacher newsletters
- Weekly or bi-weekly email or remind message
- Canvas and Remind (technology based)
- Phone Calls
- Emails
- Thursday or Friday Folders
- John Kerr Elementary School Twitter and Facebook Pages
- Instant Alerts

## SCHOOL VISITORS AND SCHOOL SECURITY

John Kerr has a security camera at the front entrance to the school. Upon arrival, guests should do the following:

- All visitors must report to the office upon entering the building during the day and after hours.
- Press the buzzer and state the name of the adult and the child that attends the school.
- One family at a time will be let into the school. If someone else is in the front office, families will be asked to wait outside or in the vestibule.
- Once families arrive in the office, they will address office staff with their reasons for coming.
- After the tardy bell rings at 7:45 AM, students and parents will be admitted by office personnel
- Parents must accompany their children if they are late in the morning to sign them in.
- A security camera has been installed at the front entrance of our school.
- All visitors must sign-in to the Raptor system in the main office and provide identification when using the system for the first time.
- This procedure will allow office personnel to assist visitors to the school and maintain a safe environment for our students.

## SALE/DISTRIBUTION

School Board policy does not allow for the sale of items through the school system. Students or Parent Organizations may not distribute publications, flyers, and other items without permission from the superintendent.

## MISCELLANEOUS AND ELECTRONIC ITEMS AT SCHOOL

**Any toys, cards, games, and accessories that do not have an educational value or detract from class work must be left at home. School personnel will not be able to investigate the theft of such items, thus please keep items at home. At the conclusion of each semester, all items not picked up by a parent or guardian will be disposed of.**

During the school day, student cell phones should not be activated or visible.

Personal tablets are permitted for silent reading. **Student's personal electronic items are the responsibility of the student and the school is not responsible for damages, loss, or theft. Administration will not investigate the loss or theft of an item.**

Playground equipment or balls of any kind may be brought to school upon special permission by the teacher or administration.

## FIELD TRIPS

Students may have an opportunity to participate in school-sponsored field trips to reinforce instruction. While on a field trip, students will be under the supervision of school personnel or designees, and all school rules and regulations will apply. Parents/guardians will be advised of any field trip prior to its occurrence. Please check the **yes** blank on the Parent Permission Form for Student Involvement (received in the first week packet) if your child is allowed to participate in field trips under these conditions. **Students are expected to participate in field trips as part of their academic curriculum.**

**Students who have exhibited unsafe behaviors may be kept at school as determined by the principal. A parent may be requested to escort a child in order for the student to attend the field trip, also.**

All participants on field trips function under school policies and regulations.

We encourage parents to join students on most field trips. Occasionally, the staff may **not** request assistance. Siblings of students won't be transported with the school on grade level trips. School Board policy requires background checks for participation as a volunteer field trip chaperone if children will be out of sight of school personnel.

## SCHOOL COUNSELOR AND COUNSELING SERVICES

The Winchester School Board supports the provision of a comprehensive program of guidance and counseling services for all students. All services are optional and no student will be required to participate in any counseling program to which the student's parents or guardian object.

Personal/Social Counseling is counseling which assists students in developing an understanding of themselves, the rights and needs of others, how to resolve conflicts and to define individual goals reflecting their interests, abilities and aptitudes. Counseling is offered through structured individual or small group multi-session counseling which focuses on the specific concerns of the participant(s).

## LIBRARY

Every student in our school is given the opportunity to use the library. The librarian works very closely with each teacher to provide needed services for all students. The media center houses over 10,000 books and magazines, and provides access to the Internet.

## SUSTAINED SILENT READING

JKES participates in sustained silent reading. This twenty-thirty minute time is one of the most important instructional times of the school day. It is an extension of the language arts/reading block. This is the time that our students read at their independent level or interest level. While direct reading instruction is critical, so is independent reading time. Literacy improves when students realize that the school is very interested in their independent reading level and provides time for them to read. The message to the students is clear: **reading is important**. Please support this integral component of reading instruction.

## ACTIVITIES: ENRICHMENT AND TUTORING

After school activities will be offered throughout the school year. Dates, times, and topics for the sessions are yet to be determined. Information will be sent home when available.

## ACTIVITIES: K KIDS

The purpose of the School-Community Association is to promote an attitude of being civic minded and to encourage in our students the qualities of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, and citizenship by designing and sponsoring community service projects and projects to serve John Kerr students.

## PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The John Kerr Parent-Teacher Organization takes an active role in the school community. The executive board consists of four officers, teachers, principal, committee chairs and any interested parents. PTO flyers and information are sent home in student's Thursday folders. To contact the PTO, visit the PTO webpage on the JKES website for information. The PTO schedule of events and bylaws can be found on the John Kerr website.

[www.wps.k12.va.us/jkes/jkeshome.html](http://www.wps.k12.va.us/jkes/jkeshome.html).

## 2021-2022 PTO Officers

**President:** Perry McAlister      **Treasurer:** Ashley Hobbs  
**Vice-President:** Jody Plitt      **Secretary:** Jennifer Currie  
[REDACTED]  
**ELL Liaison:** Karla Fisher

## PTO Meeting Dates

9/8, 11/3, 1/19, 3/9, and 5/4

All meetings will be held at 7:00 PM in the JKS Cafeteria

## STANDARD OF LEARNING TESTS

Students in grades three and four will take Growth Assessments for the first time at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. These assessments are required by the state of Virginia and are intended to show growth from the beginning to the end of the school year. Students will take this assessment in both reading and math.

Students in grades three and four will take the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests at the end of the school year. Student performances on these tests are used to determine which students are in need of additional assistance as well as awarding our school's accreditation status with the State of Virginia. The following grades and SOL tests are as follows:

- **Grade 3:** Reading, Math
- **Grade 4:** Reading, Math, Virginia Studies