



**THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL  
JAGUARS  
2022-2023  
Student Handbook**

**THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL**

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PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR DAILY STUDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS  
AND DISTRICT POLICIES

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2022-2023  
STUDENT HANDBOOK

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

**ALMA MATER**

Now our high school we are praising,  
With our hearts so true  
Black and gold our banners waving  
Loyal e'er to you!  
Moulder of our lives to come  
Mentor of our youth,  
Alma Mater, Alma Mater  
Thomas Jefferson.

The West Jefferson Hills School District is an equal opportunity educational institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, handicap, or limited English proficiency in its educational programs, activities, or employments policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments, Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Section 504 requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

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## ***WELCOME TO THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL***

The Student Handbook has been prepared as a ready reference guide to school policies and regulations. All students and parents should take the time to read this information and become familiar with the materials so that your high school years will be productive and enjoyable. The staff and administration urge you to participate in our co-curricular activities of the school and to strive for excellence in your academic courses. It is through your personal involvement and commitment that you will develop a sense of pride in yourself and your school. Thomas Jefferson High School is your school. Be proud of it, and always conduct yourself in a manner that will reflect pride in yourself, your school, and your community.

### ***MISSION STATEMENT***

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

### ***VISION STATEMENT***

- The learning and the educational development of individuals are collaborative efforts involving students, family, school & community.
- High expectations promote high achievement.
- Individuals are responsible for their actions.
- The family is a primary influence and motivator for the student.
- Students are the primary focus of the school system.
- Everyone learns at different rates and in different ways.
- All students have an equal opportunity for an education in which they are encouraged to develop their potential.
- Effective learning takes place in a safe, positive, and caring environment where respect for others is demonstrated.
- Education involves an interdisciplinary process.
- Learning involves acquiring basic academic knowledge, skills, and the ability to analyze, interpret, apply, synthesize, and evaluate.
- Education provides skills to enable all students to participate in a lifelong process of learning in a changing world.
- Quality education includes activities inside and outside of the classroom.
- An effective educational program requires giving an exceptional staff a voice in the educational process and providing them with consistent and planned professional development opportunities.
- Advancements in technologies impact knowledge and education.
- Quality public education is essential for a thriving community and requires shared fiscal responsibility, as well as academic accountability.
- Effective communication among school, family, students, and community is vital throughout the educational process.

## *Personal Core Values*

### Respect

Our commitment is to earn the respect of others by building trust, honoring differences, and celebrating diversity. We are in this together!

*We will expect the best of others by treating them the way we would want to be treated...*

### Empathy

Our commitment is to listen deeply before jumping to conclusions. We will work to understand first.

*We will seek first to understand before being understood...*

### Integrity

Our commitment is to model high moral behavior by being honest, fair, and forthcoming with ALL our interactions.

*We will do the right thing AND we will do things right....*

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## *District Core Values*

### Learner-Centric Focus

Decisions about people, policies, practices, and structures are decided by focusing on what is best for the learners.

*Keeping Learners First*

### Personalization/Customization System

We believe that the future of education will be characterized by a customized and highly personalized system where the instructional methodologies are optimized for the needs of each learner.

*Every learner, every day*

### Fostering Positive Relationships

We know positive relationships have the power to unleash untapped potential in people.

*Honoring and Affirming Others*

## **DIGNITY AND RESPECT PROGRAM**

Thomas Jefferson High School students and staff have committed to participating in the *Dignity and Respect Program*. The D&R Campaign came to life as a workplace initiative to promote a culture of inclusion, dignity, and respect at several corporations has now turned into a large-scale movement that includes community partners, schools, anti-bullying campaigns, and educational and awareness groups. The mission of the program and the school is to teach individuals to have respectful interactions, build cultural awareness, and find common ground with individuals different from themselves. All staff and students take the Dignity & Respect Pledge, "I will do my part to make West Jefferson Hills School District a better place by treating everyone with dignity and respect". By working with Dignity and Respect Liaisons, participating in Dignity and Respect lessons, and engaging in group and individual discussions, students and staff will continue to work towards achieving our goals.

**STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE  
WEST JEFFERSON HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT**

It is the responsibility of the total school community to create and maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, living, and teaching. Everyone in the educational process has the right to expect that the environment shall be safe, pleasant, and well organized. The climate should produce security and consistency through the establishment of reasonable rules and guidelines that require an interaction based on mutual respect and cooperation. The emphasis should be on courtesy, consideration and the fulfillment of all necessary obligations at all times.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work, and compliance with school rules and regulations. Students share with the entire staff a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living. No student has the right to interfere with the education of his/her fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of all who are involved in the educational process. Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner so as not to offend or slander others.

***The students' responsibilities are to:***

1. Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves in accordance with them.
2. Be willing to volunteer information in disciplinary cases and cooperate with school staff should they have knowledge of importance in relation to such cases.
3. Dress and groom themselves to meet fair standards of safety, health and common standards of decency.
4. Assume that until a rule is waived, altered or repealed, it is in full effect.
5. Assist the school staff in running a safe school for all students enrolled therein.
6. Be aware of and comply with state and local laws.
7. Protect and take care of the school's property.
8. Attend school daily, except when excused, and be on time for all classes and other school functions.
9. Make all necessary arrangements for making up work when absent from school.
10. Pursue and attempt to complete the courses of study prescribed by the state and local school authorities.
11. Avoid inaccuracies in student newspapers or publications and avoid indecent or obscene language and topics that incite student unrest.
12. Refrain from using disrespectful, indecent, insensitive, or obscene gestures or language in direct or indirect contact with other persons.
13. Actively participate and engage in any online learning opportunities that may arise due to school closures.

**GENERAL CONDITIONS**

1. The examples, procedures, and disciplinary options/responses at each level are not limited to those specified.
2. The provisions of the student code of conduct apply to students who are under the supervision of school authorities while scheduled for part of their educational program at a facility other than the homeschool. (e.g., Steel Center CTE, Mon-Valley School, Co-op Education Programs, extra-curricular activities, field trips, etc.)

**WEST JEFFERSON HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT:  
Telecommunication Acceptable Use Policy  
Objective**

The Board supports the use of the Internet and other telecommuting/computer resources in the district's education delivery environment, the student record keeping environment and the administrative environment of the District.

The District uses or may use the public Internet for (List of uses that may include but are not limited to)

- Maintaining a website that is currently used as an information-sharing device for the general public. Information sharing includes posting of schedules, event descriptions, posting of homework assignments, description of classroom activities and accomplishments.
- Email communication with parents, board members, PTA, vendors, other external business partners
- Distance Learning for staff and students
- Research by staff and students
- Communication with vendors and downloading of services and technology
- Partnering with vendors to enhance the use of technology in the District to reduce costs, improve service and provide expanded training and opportunity for students

The District also maintains Local Area Networks in each facility and a Wide Area Network which, in addition to providing Internet Access, is used for file sharing, operating and accessing both education and business applications and managing public, business only and confidential information. The District will store information both at District facilities and off-site locations.

Every staff member and the student is responsible for safeguarding District information and physical assets. Every staff member and the student is also responsible for using resources in an effective, ethical, and lawful manner.

**Scope**

This policy applies to the use of all District telecommunications/computing environment. This policy applies to all District staff (as defined in the Information Security Policy) and students using these resources.

**Policy**

Authorized personnel may only use District telecommunications/computing resources for approved purposes in prescribed manner consistent with all district policies. Occasional, limited, appropriate personal use of such systems is permitted, provided that such use does not preempt, disrupt, interfere, create liability or harm the District or the delivery of education services.

**Standards**

1. Only authorized users may use, or otherwise be granted access by IT Management, to the District's telecommunications/ computing environment.
2. All access must comply with the implemented standards, processes and procedures for telecommunications/computer usage including but not limited to Password Management Policies, Virus Protection, Internet Monitoring, Screen Saver Standards, Internet Safety and Cyberbullying and Backup Standards.

This includes but is not limited to:

- o Maintaining strong passwords that are changed frequently
  - o Never reveal a password to another
  - o For users that have multiple userIDs intended for specific purposes, never using an id for an inappropriate purpose.
  - o Never accessing a computer that is logged in under another userID
  - o Never leave a computer without logging off
  - o Always using a locking screen saver that is activated within minutes of inactivity
  - o Never saving District information on non-District computer
  - o Never placing portable storage devices (diskettes, CDs, zip disks, etc. (in unsecured locations)
3. Any attempt to disable or circumvent security software or processes including but not limited to passwords, Internet monitoring software, virus protection software, network monitoring software, and firewalls, is prohibited.
  4. Auditing, testing, hacking, or bypassing security controls (whether within or outside the District network) is prohibited without written authorization from the Superintendent.
  5. The falsification of identity or information is prohibited
  6. Sharing of accounts and user passwords is prohibited.
  7. Access by authorized users is limited to those rights specifically granted by IT Management.
  8. District's computer and electronic communication systems may not be used for outside business activities or the dissemination or storage of commercial or personal advertisements, solicitations, promotions, or political materials or any other non-district related business or education purpose.
  9. Material that is fraudulent, harassing, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, offensive, or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate may not be accessed, displayed, stored, created, or disseminated on or using District's telecommunications/computing environment.
  10. Any use of the District's telecommunications/computing environments that conflicts with any of the District's explicit or implied policies is prohibited.
  11. Unauthorized or illegal installation, distribution, reproduction or use of copyrighted materials is prohibited.



12. Accessing public bulletin boards or chat rooms not specifically related to District business is prohibited.
13. Expressing controversial or inflammatory opinions or making statements in public forums or email from the district's network such that those statements could be interpreted as representing district opinion is strictly prohibited.
14. All illegal activities including but not limited to malicious attempts to inappropriately access, harm or destroy data, hardware or software including parts of the district's telecommunications/computing environment or launching such an attack against another from the district's network is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to creating, uploading or accessing viruses, installing worms or Trojan horses, launching attacks or inappropriately monitoring or capturing another user or systems activity or data.
15. Abuse or waste of resources is prohibited.
16. All access to District information and information resources is restricted to a need-to-know basis. Ability to access information or information resources does not imply permission to do so.
17. Users may not access, alter or copy information belonging to another user without first obtaining permission from the owner or IT Management.
18. The ability to access, alter, or copy a file belonging to another user does not imply permission to do so.
19. Inappropriate and unsecured online behavior and activities via communications with individuals or organizations on social-networking website, instant messaging clients, mobile feed, and in chat rooms is prohibited.
20. Using District resources to execute actions which result in defamation of character of an individual or group and cyber-bullying is prohibited.

### **Exceptions to Policy**

The Board acknowledges that under rare circumstances, certain staff may need to employ systems or processes that are not compliant with this policy. The Superintendent/Designee must approve in writing all such instances in advance.

### **Reporting**

All violations or non-compliances with the Policies must be reported to IT Management and the Superintendent's office immediately. Failure to do so implies cooperation with the noncompliance and will be subject to the same consequences as the violator.

### **Consequences of Inappropriate Use**

The violator of these or related Policies will be responsible for damages to equipment, systems, and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts. General rules of behavior and communications apply when using the telecommunications/computing environments including all policies related to privacy, harassment, vandalism, and theft. Vandalism is defined as a malicious attempt to inappropriately access, harm or destroy data, hardware or software including parts of the district's telecommunications/computing environment or launching such an attack against another from the district's network. This includes but is not limited to creating, uploading or accessing viruses, installing worms or Trojan horses, launching attacks or inappropriately monitoring or capturing another user or systems activity or data.

If a student violates any of the District's security measures, the Incident Handling Policy covers the investigation of any such incident. A substantiated charge of non-compliance against a staff member or student shall subject such staff member or student to the restriction of use or access to computer/telecommunications resources and other disciplinary action up to and including discharge or expulsion. Illegal use of the telecommunications/computing environment, deletion or damaging of files or data, copyright violations, theft of services, hacking, or bypassing security controls, violations of the privacy standards of another user, student, staff or the district misrepresentation of another's identity, will be reported to the appropriate legal authorities for possible prosecution.

### **Bring Your Own Device Policy**

All students will be required to use the district issued Chromebook. Students are not permitted to use their own laptop computer, tablet, or other electronic devices at Thomas Jefferson High School. Students are permitted to have a cell phone in school; however, no cell phone or smart watches will be permitted to be used in a classroom unless directed to do so by a Thomas Jefferson High School teacher.

### **One-To-One Chromebook Initiative**

#### **Introduction**

In order to enlarge and challenge today's learners, the school environment must reflect the complexity of the modern world. One-to-One learning allows each student to experience the kind of learning environment that is rich in digital media, with instant access to resources all over the world, and support critical thinking skills. Students at WJHSD will experience a dynamic environment on a daily basis and in turn, will become lifelong learners who are active, knowledgeable, and creative.

#### **Chromebook Guidelines**

Chromebooks are the property of WJHSD and must be returned to WJHSD at the conclusion of the school year or when the student withdraws from the district.

The WJHSD Acceptable Use of Educational Technology binds students' use of the Chromebook regardless of the location of usage. The Chromebooks are educational tools and are to be used only in that capacity.

The use of the Chromebook is a privilege. Inappropriate use or neglect of a Chromebook, its accessories, the Internet, and all other software will result in the loss of the use of the Chromebook, which will not change classroom and/or assignment completion expectations.

Students and their guardians will be financially responsible for Chromebooks and assigned accessories not maintained or returned in good working condition.

## Internet and Software Guidelines

The WJHSD Acceptable Use of Educational Technology Policy must be followed at all times.

Students have no expectation of privacy as related to; any district-owned resources and assets, any personal resource/device attached to district-owned resources and assets such as software, programs, email, wired and wireless networks and Internet access.

Teachers, technical support staff (district personnel and/or their designee) and administrators may monitor the student device in real-time, review logs, documents and other records of usage.

Inappropriate web activity or email use will result in loss of data service privileges. If a student unintentionally accesses an inappropriate website, he/she should immediately close the site.

## General Rules/ Guidelines

- **Any time/anywhere that the Chromebook is not in use, close the lid! It only takes 8 seconds to startup!** This simple practice will go a long way in keeping your device damage free.
- Students are responsible for the Chromebook at all times. The Chromebooks are NOT to be left unattended.
- Stickers, writing, or other decorations on the Chromebooks are prohibited. Any issues will be addressed when returning the Chromebook back to the technology office for repair, withdrawal from the district, or at the end of the year.
- Certain Chromebook models are issued with an "always on case" which must not be removed.
- The lid must always be closed when transporting from class to class.
- Students are NOT authorized to use another student's Chromebook.
- Students may not use the Chromebooks on the buses.
- Do not lift or handle the Chromebook by the lid/screen.
- Do not store objects such as earbuds, pencils or other objects in a case or backpack with the Chromebook as they can create a pressure point causing the screen to crack should any weight be applied to the case/backpack.
- If a student is unable to carry and/or supervise his/her Chromebook, it is to be locked in the student's assigned locker. It is the student's responsibility to notify the school office if his/her locker is not working properly.
- Chromebooks are not to be stored in lockers overnight. All Chromebooks are to be taken home daily.
- Students must keep their passwords confidential, using only assigned accounts.
- Students are responsible for storing documents in their Google Drive and not on the Chromebook itself.
- Headphones may be used in the classroom with teacher permission.
- Obscene language and/or inappropriate materials, including screensavers, backdrops and/or pictures are strictly prohibited.
- Illegal use or transfer of copyrighted materials is strictly prohibited.
- School identification and name tags must remain on the Chromebook.
- Food and drink should be kept away from the Chromebook.
- Use the Chromebook on a flat, stable surface.
- Close the Chromebook gently; pull from the top center of the cover, not the corners.
- Students are to report any technical issues affecting the performance of the Chromebook to a member of the WJHSD technical staff or teacher
- If you feel that the Chromebook needs cleaning, contact the tech staff.

## Charging Guidelines

- **Start school each day with a fully charged Chromebook.**
- Align the power cord carefully when connecting it to or removing it from the Chromebook.
- If the battery is not charging, do NOT wiggle the power cord - remove the power cord and then carefully reconnect.
- Be aware of the location of the power cord. Do not run power cords across an area where people are likely to walk.
- Students should not leave the power cord in a classroom. Teachers are not responsible for student power cords that are lost or stolen.

## FAQs

Will there be training for students?

Student training is ongoing throughout the year throughout the classroom instruction.

Will students be able to use Chromebooks on the bus?

NO, use of the Chromebook while on the bus constitutes a safety issue. If used on the bus the student in violation will be disciplined accordingly.

If the student's Chromebook charger is lost or stolen, how much will it cost to replace them?

If the Chromebook or accessories are lost, students should report the lost items to the school office immediately. Students will be charged for the cost of the replacement if the Chromebook or accessory cannot be found. In the event of theft, a police report must be filed within 48 hours or students will be charged the full replacement value of the Chromebook and/or accessories.

What will the student or parent be responsible for if the Chromebook is damaged?

Just as with any school issued property, students are responsible for maintaining school resources in good condition and will be charged should they fail to do so. The cost of repair or replacement will be based upon the current cost of the parts or the entire device. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Any type of markings on the cover of the Chromebook.
- Any damage to the Chromebook screen.
- Any damage to the casing of the Chromebook.

- Any Dishonest, Fraudulent, Intentional or Criminal Act

Is insurance available? What is the cost and what does it cover?

Optional device insurance can be purchased through WJHSD to provide repair/replacement coverage in the event of **accidental** damage. WJHSD designated employees will solely make all determinations of accidental versus negligent or intentional damage.

What disciplinary action will be taken against the student for direct violation of Internet policies?

Disciplinary action is at the discretion of the principal and according to the student handbook which can be found online at the school website.

What will students do with their Chromebooks during fitness classes, while at vocational classes, lunch periods or while attending sporting events?

Chromebooks should be secured in their lockers.

Will students be given a new battery if one would go bad?

The manufacturer will replace the defective Chromebook battery under the warranty agreement.

How long will the Chromebook batteries last? What happens if a student's Chromebook battery runs out?

Chromebook battery life depends greatly on how the Chromebook was used. Students will be trained in strategies to maximize battery life. A typical battery charge on the Chromebook lasts 10 hours of use. Students are expected to ensure the device is adequately charged for a full day's use.

Can a student use their iPod or digital camera with the Chromebook? Can students load music and photos on the Chromebook?

Yes, students may connect their iPod music player or digital camera to their Chromebook. When loading music or digital pictures they must all be obtained legally. Students will not be able to "backup" their music and photos to district servers or web space.

Can students use their own accessories with the Chromebook?

The Chromebook comes with 3 USB ports. Students are permitted to use their own accessories (USB mouse, keyboard, digital camera, iPod, headphones, etc.) with the Chromebook. WJHSD tech support will not troubleshoot hardware that was not installed by WJHSD Tech Support or approved by the school for use.

Can a student use their Chromebook over the summer?

**Not at this time.** All Chromebooks are collected at the end of the school year. Every student will receive the same Chromebook each year. The senior Chromebooks carry over to the new freshman for the next school year.

What will students do without a computer in their classes if their Chromebook unit is being repaired or replaced?

WJHSD will stock a limited number of Chromebooks. Should a student turn in a Chromebook for repair, any damage or excessive wear noted will be charged to the student/guardian immediately. The building principal will be required to authorize the reissue of another device to the student if there is damage due to negligence or intention.

Do students need a printer at home?

No. The Google and Canvas platforms allow for collaboration and exchange of learning materials between teachers and students without the need to print.

What will the district do to help safeguard students from inappropriate Internet sites?

WJHSD utilizes multiple solutions that are designed to monitor all Internet activity, while in school and at home. These systems block inappropriate sites and maintain a history of every site that each user visits. Students who purposely attempt to identify and/or access inappropriate sites or sites that are designed to circumvent safeguards and monitoring or mask the user identity will be disciplined. The content filters currently in use meet the federal Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) guidelines.

What about computer viruses?

The device is browser-based and not susceptible to viruses.

Will students be able to use the Chromebooks for Internet access at home? What if a student does not have Internet access at home?

The Chromebooks may be connected to a home wireless network, but parents will be responsible for set up. WJHSD tech staff will not be responsible for or troubleshoot connection problems outside the school district buildings. Internet access at home will not be mandatory, and there are settings which allow for the students to work offline when the Chromebooks are used off campus without Internet access.

What if a student already has another model or brand of Chromebook computer?

Students will be required to use the WJHSD issued Chromebook when at school.

## District Chromebook Insurance Policy/Procedure

In an effort to improve our Chromebook protection program for the 2021-22 school year, the District will offer you two options for student Chromebook insurance - "Standard" insurance or "Always-on" insurance. There is no reason to purchase both.

### Standard Insurance

Standard insurance is \$25 for the duration of the school year and covers only one accident of any type per school year. After an accidental damage claim has been made, the Standard insurance coverage may be repurchased for \$75. The Standard insurance program is limited to two accidents per school year. After two accidents, students will **NOT** be eligible to purchase either additional Standard or Always-on insurance coverage during that same school year.

NOT covered:

- Intentional damages are NOT covered.\*
- The Chromebook charger is NOT covered against accidental damage. The charger is, however, covered for manufacturer defects for the life of the Chromebook.

*\*The school district or designee will make all determinations of damage due to negligence or intentional damage.*

### Always-on Insurance

Always-on insurance is \$25 and is bundled with a district-approved, "always-on" Chromebook case. Unlike Standard insurance, Always-on Insurance need not be purchased each school year. As long as the case is maintained in good, serviceable condition and the guidelines below are followed, the Chromebook is insured against unlimited accidents year after year. The cases are available in a choice of colors, and they have a lifetime warranty against manufacturer defects.

### Guidelines:

- Never remove the Chromebook from the case.
- Never put anything but the Chromebook in the case. Even small objects such as pencils and earbuds can create pressure points, breaking the screen and leaving behind clearly identifiable markings.
- Always maintain the case in good, serviceable condition (the handle is secure, the zipper is fully functional, the case does not have imperfections in the material over ½ inch, stitching and seams are not frayed or torn, and the internal straps are fully functional). *\*The school district or designee will make all determinations of whether the case is in good, serviceable condition.*

### How to pay for Chromebook Insurance:

Parents may purchase online at <https://wjhsd.revtrak.net/>. Payment can be made using a credit card, debit card, or personal check. You will need the Skyward OTHER ID of the student(s) that you are purchasing for. Most students have their 5 digit OTHER ID memorized as they use it as their lunch number to make purchases in the cafeteria. You can also locate your student's Skyward Other ID in the Student Info tab of your Skyward Family Access account, or the Profile section of Student Information if you are using the Skyward Mobile Access app on your smartphone. If you have not activated your Skyward Family Access account, please contact your student's school office.

## Web Publishing Policy

West Jefferson Hills School District uses printed newsletters and publications as well as its internet website [www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net) to provide information to interested individuals about school curriculum, instruction, homework assignments, school-authorized activities, and other general information relating to our schools and our District's mission.

The web pages also serve as a link to educational resources on the internet for students and staff to access. The content of those publications and pages is enhanced by the use of examples of student projects and activities. The satisfaction of students in seeing their work published is important as well.

The security and protection of students are of primary importance in all District activities including publications both print and electronic. To that end, the following safeguards are adhered to in all published material.

### 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Full first and last names may be published with parent approval
- Single student images may be published with parent approval
- No phone numbers, addresses or names of family or friends will be published

## Pennsylvania Safe Schools

Act 26 of 1995

Act 26 of 1995 implements the federal Gun-Free Schools legislation. This amendment to the Pennsylvania Public School code contains specific provisions, which require the expulsion of any student who brings a deadly weapon to school. The main parts of this important legislation are as follows:

1. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a school or area vocational-technical school shall expel, for a period of not less than one (1) year, any student who is determined to have brought a weapon onto school property, any school-sponsored activity, or any public conveyance providing transportation to a school or school-sponsored activity.
2. Every school district and area vocational-technical school shall develop a written policy regarding expulsions for possession of a weapon, as required under this section. Expulsions shall be conducted pursuant to all applicable regulations.
3. The superintendent of a school district or an administrative director of an area vocational-technical school may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis. The superintendent or other chief administrative officer of a school entity shall, in the case of an exceptional student, take all steps necessary to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public law 91-230, 29 U. S. C. 2400 et seq.)
4. **The provisions of this section shall not apply to the following:**
  - a) A weapon being used as part of a program approved by the individual who is in charge of the program
  - b) A weapon that is unloaded and is possessed by an individual while traversing school property for the purpose of obtaining access to public or private lands used for lawful hunting, if the entry on school premises is authorized by school authorities
5. Nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting the authority or duty of the school or area vocational-technical school to make an alternative assignment or provide alternative educational services during the period of expulsion.
6. All school districts and areas vocational-technical schools shall report all incidents involving possession of a weapon prohibited by this section as follows:
  - a) The school superintendent or chief administrator shall report the discovery of any weapon prohibited by this section to local law enforcement officials
  - b) The school superintendent or chief administrator shall report to the Department of Education all incidents relating to expulsions for possession of a weapon on school grounds, school-sponsored activities or public conveyances providing transportation to a school or school-sponsored activity. Reports shall include all information, as required under Section 1302-A
7. As used in this section, the term "weapon" shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.
8. The student discipline file of any student, who is determined to have brought a weapon onto school property, any school-sponsored activity, or public conveyance providing transportation to a school or school-sponsored activity, will be maintained until his/her graduation. A copy of the record would follow the student if he/she transferred to another school district.

## Student Discipline

### **DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS**

Disciplinary actions occur on four (4) levels, referred to as Level I, II, III, and IV. With each higher level, the severity of the behavior problem, and the repetitious nature of the behavior problem are addressed with stronger disciplinary action.

A strong behavior plan starts with classroom rules regarding Level I behavior. Each student is to be aware of the rules of the individual teacher and the penalties regarding misconduct in each classroom assigned. Classroom rules will be kept on file in the office for referral by the administration. Students must know what each teacher expects and be prepared for penalties if the rules are not followed.

All behavior problems that are referred to the administration will be handled according to the level of the misconduct as follows:

### **Unforeseeable Actions:**

As a matter of policy, it is recognized that not all foreseeable situations or their severity can be anticipated. Students and parents should understand that if unforeseeable situations should occur, the administrator will deal with these offenses at his/her discretion, including the possible use of law enforcement authorities. The principal may request a Superintendent's Hearing at his/her discretion. All referrals may be appealed to the principal.

**2022-2023 Thomas Jefferson High School Discipline Matrix Link:**

[+ 2022-23 TJHS Discipline Matrix](#)

## West Jefferson Hills School District Student Discipline

### THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL – DISCIPLINE RESPONSE STRUCTURE – LEVEL I

Level I misconduct involves minor behavior problems that must be addressed to ensure the orderly operation of the classroom, school, and/or school-sponsored activities. All level I infractions will be handled by teacher classroom rules. These offenses will be recorded as discipline infractions in the Skyward system. Building level administration will not be involved in Level I Discipline offenses.

Such behavior is seen as Level I will be addressed as follows:

#### OFFENSES

- Breaking minor classroom rules (first three offenses must be handled under the respective teacher's classroom management plan) Minor Disruptive behaviors
- Minor defacing of school property (writing on desks, walls, books, etc.)
- Tardiness to class (first and second offense will be handled under the respective teacher's classroom management plan)
- Possession of any item that distracts from education is prohibited
- Minor disrespect to fellow students
- Throwing objects
- Any other minor offense that detracts from a student's ability to learn or a teacher's ability to teach in the classroom setting

#### PROCEDURES

- There is immediate intervention by the staff member who is supervising the student or who observes the misbehavior.
- A proper and accurate record of the offense and disciplinary action is maintained by the staff member.
- The staff member may wish to discuss the behavior with the parents/guardians, the administrators, and/or appropriate support personnel.
- Teachers will communicate through email or phone conversation with the parents regarding the classroom incident.

#### POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS/RESPONSES

- Verbal reprimand
- Teacher-student conference
- Isolation within assigned area
- Withdrawal of privileges
- After-school detention
- Lunch Detention
- Special assignment or activity
- Teacher/Administrator communication with parent/guardian
- Parental/Guardian conference
- Referral to counselor

## **THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL – DISCIPLINE RESPONSE STRUCTURE – LEVEL II**

Level II misconduct involves behavior that is repetitious, or serious enough to disrupt the learning climate of the school or school-sponsored activity. Level II offenses are referred to building level administration and will be handled according to the 2022-2023 Thomas Jefferson High School Discipline Matrix.

### **PROCEDURES**

- The student is referred to the administration for appropriate disciplinary action.
- The teacher is informed of the administrator's action.
- Parents/Guardians are notified of student's misconduct.
- A proper and accurate record of the offense and disciplinary action is maintained by the administrator.
- If/when a student exhausts the discipline matrix, progressive discipline will be applied.

## **THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL – DISCIPLINE RESPONSE STRUCTURE – LEVEL III**

Level III misconduct involves continued Level II offenses along with other behaviors which are considered to be more serious in nature. Level III offenses can, at times, be viewed as those which may pose a potential threat to the health, safety, welfare and/or morals of an individual. All Level III offenses are referred to building level administration and will be handled according to the 2022-2023 Thomas Jefferson High School Discipline Matrix.

### **PROCEDURES**

- Immediate referral to administration
- Administrator verifies the offense and, if necessary, confers with the teacher/staff person involved before meeting with the student.
- Administrator meets with the student to establish the most appropriate response and contacts parents/guardians.
- A proper and accurate record of the offenses and disciplinary action is maintained by the administrator.
- If/when a student exhausts the discipline matrix, progressive discipline will be applied.

## **THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL – DISCIPLINE RESPONSE STRUCTURE – LEVEL IV**

Level IV misconduct involves behavior that includes acts of violence directed toward a person and/or property. Such behavior poses a threat to the safety, health, welfare and/or morals of others, and/or materially disrupts the educational environment. All level IV infractions are required to be reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

### **PROCEDURES**

- The staff member documents a proper and accurate record of the offense and the student is then referred to the administration for appropriate disciplinary action.
- School Police will be notified immediately. If necessary Jefferson Hills Police may also be notified.
- The administrator meets with the student to review the information and determine an appropriate course of action. A formal investigation will be conducted by the school administration, school police, and local police when necessary. The Superintendent of Schools will be notified immediately.
- Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) are contacted by telephone and will have the option to meet with building an administration and/or local police representative. Suspension Notice report will be mailed home. An informal hearing will be offered as required by law.

Such behavior seen as Level IV will be addressed as follows:

### **LEVEL 4 OFFENSES ACCORDING TO PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION Include all State Level 4 Infractions**

- Aggravated Assault/ Student/Staff
- Arson
- Battery on student
- Bomb Threat
- Bullying/Cyber Bullying



- Burglary
- Criminal Trespass
- Disorderly Conduct
- Distribution/selling of unauthorized substance/drugs/alcohol
- Engaging in any conduct contrary to the criminal code or ordinances of the Commonwealth / Community on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities
- Extortion
- False fire alarm
- Fighting
- Gun Threat
- Hazing
- Indecent exposure
- Indecent Assault
- Kidnapping
- Leading or participating in a major disruption
- Major disrespect to a school employee
- Molesting a student
- Murder
- Physical assault on a student
- Possession/use/transfer of weapons/dangerous instruments or tools not reasonably related to education
- Racial/Ethnic intimidation
- Reckless endangerment
- Refusal to cooperate with a search based on reasonable suspicion
- Rioting
- Robbery
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual assault
- Terroristic threats
- Theft/possession/sale of stolen property (greater than \$50)
- Use and/or possession of drug, alcohol or nicotine related paraphernalia
- Use or possession of unauthorized substance/drugs/alcohol
- Verbal Assault of Student
- Verbal Assault on Staff Member
- Vandalism (over \$50)
- Violation of security protocol of the West Jefferson Hills School District computer network and its components.
- Walkouts/demonstrations/food fights
- Any other offense so severe as to merit expulsion or police involvement

#### **PROCEDURES**

- Immediate referral to an administrator
- The administrator verifies the offense and, if necessary, confers with the teacher/staff person involved before meeting with the student.
- After an informal hearing, the student is suspended from school and parents/guardians are notified. If appropriate, law enforcement agencies will be notified.
- A complete and accurate report is submitted to the Superintendent for a possible hearing before the Board of School Directors.

#### **SUGGESTED POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS/RESPONSES**

- Suspension(Out-of-School)
- Referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies
- Restitution of damages or property
- Referral for School Board hearing that could result in appropriate disciplinary action including possible

- expulsion
- Charges under the criminal code
- Referral to Student Assistance Program (SAP)

\*The procedures and options suggested are actions that may be taken. Additional consequences may be at the discretion of the building administrator.

\*Should an occasion arise that demands it, reasonable force may be used by a teacher, administrator, school police, staff, or security personnel. Examples of such situations are to quell a disturbance, or to obtain possession of weapons or dangerous objects, for self-defense, for protection of a person's property, or to remove a student who is disruptive or a danger to him/herself or others.

## **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE**

Students who continue to violate Level 1, 2 , and 3 infractions of the Thomas Jefferson High School Discipline Matrix are subject to placement in the West Jefferson Hills Cyber Academy or other approved alternative school options.

### ***West Jefferson Hills School District Policies***

Please review all policies in their entirety at [www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net).

#### **SUSPENSION POLICY 233**

<http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/wjhsd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=9W8PZU6719AA>

#### **NO SMOKING POLICY 222**

<http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/wjhsd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=9W8PZB670546>

#### **DRUG & ALCOHOL ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES POLICY 227**

<http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/wjhsd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=9W8PZK670E78>

#### **BULLYING POLICY 249**

<http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/wjhsd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=9W8Q2T673D6D>

#### **HAZING POLICY 247**

<http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/wjhsd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=9W8Q2K6734E0>

#### **WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS POLICY 218.1**

<http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/wjhsd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=9W8PYV66F535>

#### **ATTENDANCE POLICY 204**

<http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/wjhsd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=9W8PXQ66C998>

## **Attendance**

The following are reasons for an excused absence for temporary periods of time from school:

**Religious Holidays** -- A student may be excused from school for the observance of legitimate religious holidays of particular religious groups. A student's absence from school for religious holidays will be recorded as an excused absence, and there will be no penalty attached to such absence. The excuse should be submitted to the attendance officer three (3) days prior to the absence.

**Health Care** -- A student may be excused during school hours for the purpose of obtaining health care under the following circumstances:

- a) The health care services are rendered by a state licensed practitioner.
- b) The time of necessary absence from school involves a minimum of interference with school work.
- c) Every principal may require a written statement signed by the state-licensed practitioner stating the time of the student's appointment.

**Illness or Other Urgent Reasons** -- Upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent reasons, every principal may excuse a student from non-attendance from school during a temporary period. However, the term "urgent reasons" will be strictly construed and will not be used to permit irregular attendance.

**Funerals** -- Funerals are considered excused absences for members of the immediate family. Non-family member funerals may require documentation.

**Educational Visits/Trips** -- Student absences from school resulting from family vacations with the educational value typically will not exceed ten (10) school days to be considered excused. Educational trips will be ruled excused if, in the opinion of the building administrator, a vacation does have educational value and the following procedure is adhered to:

- a) The parent/guardian provides a written request to the building administrator on the form provided by the school district PRIOR to the educational trip (or it will be denied) that will indicate the school days to be missed, the destination of the trip, and the educational value of the trip.
- b) All students that miss school will be expected to check their respective teachers Canvas pages while away to stay current with all assignments missed in class.
- c) The student will give completed assignments to his/her teachers and arrange for the completion of other academic work missed.
- d) All academic work will be completed within a time period not exceeding the number of days absent as a result of the trip.
- e) Prior excessive tardies, early dismissals and/or numerous( 10 or more including the trip) absences may result in the educational trip being denied.
- f) No Educational visits/trip permission will be granted over the 10 school days allowed by state law. Any day that a student misses over the 10th day will be considered an unexcused/ illegal absence.

### **WRITTEN STATEMENT REQUIRED FOR ALL ABSENCES**

Upon return from an absence from school for any reason, the student will present to the attendance office a written statement which is signed by the student's parent or guardian giving the date and reason for the absence or a written email, from the parent/guardian from an account that is registered in Skyward. If the written statement is not presented within three (3) days of the student's return to school, the absence will be considered unexcused/illegal absence.

If a student misses 10 or more days of school during one school year, he/she will be required to present a

written statement from a **licensed medical practitioner** for all subsequent absences. It is recommended that chiropractic care/physical therapy should be scheduled after school hours. A student who is required to present such proof must do so for every subsequent absence from school. Failure to provide appropriate documentation will result in the absence being recorded as unexcused and possibly illegal under the compulsory attendance laws of Pennsylvania. If a student has exceeded 10 absences, he/she will be required to provide a written physician's excuse for tardiness in addition to absences.

### **POLICY REGARDING UNEXCUSED ABSENCES/MAKE-UP PRIVILEGES**

While all unexcused absences are subject to the provisions of the Pennsylvania School Code, certain such absences include make-up privileges, and others do not. The following unexcused absences carry makeup privileges:

- Emergency at home – One or more days of absence may include make-up privileges depending upon the nature of the emergency.
- Runaways – Each case must be dealt with on its own individual merit. A decision to grant makeup privileges is the responsibility of the administrator involved.
- Weddings and Graduations – Make-up work will be granted for the day and reasonable travel time.

The following unexcused absences from school do not carry makeup privileges:

- Leaving school without permission
- Class cut

### **Failure on Attendance Policy/Procedure**

Students with excessive unexcused absences can fail a course based on missed instruction. Teachers will have the discretion to administer the following procedure if a student is excessively absent from the class:

Students with 12 unexcused absences from a semester class can fail for the semester course.

Students with 24 unexcused absences from year-long class can fail the year-long course.

\*The teacher will notify parents when a student has missed 10 classes. The documented communication will also be submitted to the grade level principal and appropriate school counselor.

### **TARDINESS TO SCHOOL**

All students are to be in the school by 7:25 am. Students who are tardy to school will be required to sign in at the tardy kiosk. Individuals with excuses will be asked to drop the signed parental note upon arrival in the high school attendance office. Failure to report to the attendance office may result in disciplinary action. All students must be in school prior to 9:01 a.m. in order to be eligible for any extra curricular activity scheduled on the date. Extra curricular activities are defined as athletic practices, games, matches, competitions, or special recognition events. Additionally, any activity such as parades, musical practice/ performance, play practice/ performance, mock trial, academic competitions, or any other social event that occurs outside the normal school day of 7:30-2:35. Only exceptions to the 9:01 tardy rule are students with documented medical appointments, mandatory court appearances, and students that have pre-approved arrangements with the high school administration.

### **WRITTEN STATEMENT REQUIRED FOR ALL TARDIES**

Upon return from a tardy, the student will present to the appropriate attendance personnel a written statement by the student's parent/guardian or a licensed medical doctor giving the date and reason for the tardy.

Valid reasons for an excused tardy include personal illness, a medical/dental appointment, funeral, court hearing, extremely poor road conditions, or a family emergency verified by a school administrator. All other reasons will be deemed unexcused.

If a written statement is not presented within three (3) days of the student's tardy day, the tardy will be deemed unexcused.

If a student has a record of excessive tardiness (10 or more days in one year), he/she will be required to present a written statement from a licensed medical doctor stating the reason for the tardiness. A student who is required to present such proof must do so for every tardy from school. Failure to do so will result in the tardy being recorded as unexcused.

In the event of four (4) or more unexcused tardies, disciplinary action will result. The disciplinary actions include: after school detention, revoking driving privileges, Saturday Detention, parent conference, exclusion from school sponsored social events, and out-of-school suspension.

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

#### **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY**

Student attendance and tardiness will be recorded and monitored in the Skyward student information system.

An electronic report listing those students who are absent for the day will be made available to all faculty members as early in the day as possible in the secondary schools.

All faculty members will maintain an accurate daily record of absences and tardiness of all students in classes assigned to them.

The district will seek to assist the parent/guardian and the students to resolve chronic attendance problems through counseling and appropriate referrals.

#### **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The Commonwealth's compulsory school attendance law charges the student's parent/guardian with the responsibility for the student's school attendance. Therefore, all parents should encourage their children to be in regular and continuous attendance at school during the school year.

Parents should direct their children to report to school even when it appears the child may be late to school.

#### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

Students are responsible for regular school attendance. They are expected to report to school and all classes each day on time.

#### **Full-Day Absences**

Students who are excused for the entire school day will be given the opportunity to make up all work missed. All work must be completed within a time period not to exceed the number of school days the student was absent.

#### **Partial-Day Absences**

Students who are excused for any part of the school day are responsible for the work covered in all classes. If students know that they are going to miss class because of an appointment or an athletic event, they should get their assignments or make arrangements to take a test BEFORE they leave for the day. Students are expected to be prepared for class the next day. In addition, any homework due that day must be submitted BEFORE leaving.

## Attendance attached to School Dances

**NOTE: 10 or more unexcused tardies or unexcused absences, students will not be eligible for any extra-curricular activities such as Prom, dances, etc., at the discretion of the High School Administration. Loss of driving privileges will apply for the remainder of the school year.**

- 4 unexcused tardies to school/ 4 unexcused absences= No homecoming dance
- 10 unexcused tardies to school/ 10 unexcused absences= No TJHS Prom
- Failure to attend assigned Saturday Detentions also result in the loss of school sponsored social events

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

### **ACTIVITY PROGRAMS**

Thomas Jefferson High School maintains an extensive extracurricular program. Each student is encouraged to belong to at least one after-school activity. New clubs or activities can be initiated by students and will be incorporated into the activities program if enough students are interested, if a faculty sponsor is available, and if the necessary facilities can be provided. Click on the link for this year's activities:

[☰ Activity Club Sponsors/Descriptions 22-23](#)

### **AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING**

Students are not permitted to audio or video record on a school campus without permission from school administration.

### **AFTER SCHOOL DETENTION**

After school detention is assigned for minor disciplinary infractions, taking place on Tuesday and Thursday from 2:35 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Activity buses will be available for transportation every Thursday. If a student fails to attend after-school detention once assigned and confirmed with the parent, the student will be assigned a Saturday Detention.

### **ASSEMBLY CONDUCT**

Students and teachers are to sit together unless participating in the assembly. Students are to move to their seats quickly and quietly. All talking should cease when the program begins, and students should indicate their sincere appreciation by continued attention and applause only.

### **BELL SCHEDULE**

Bell Schedule:

[☰ Bell Schedules 22-23](#)

### **BOOKBAGS, BACKPACKS & ATHLETIC BAGS**

Students are encouraged to keep bookbags, backpacks, and large purses locked in their assigned locker during the school day. Students are permitted to arrive and leave with bookbags and backpacks daily. All athletic bags will be dropped off in an assigned bag room that will be locked and monitored by camera during the school day. Students will not be permitted to retrieve athletic bags from cars once the school day begins for safety and security reasons. No book bags or back packs will be permitted in the student center during the lunch periods.

### **BAG DROP ROOM**

Upon arrival to school, all students that have sports equipment that cannot fit in a locker will be expected to place the bags, clubs, etc... in the bag drop room next to the student center on the first floor of TJHS across from the JAG Den. Bats, golf clubs, as well as any bag too large to fit in a locker must be stored in this room during the school day.

### **BULLETINS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Announcements for the day are made over the public address system (TJTV) each morning. If you wish to have announcements made regarding school activities, you must have the announcement approved by both the teacher/advisor, and by an administrator. It is the responsibility of all students to read and be aware of announcements pertaining to them. The Daily Announcements are posted on the district website and e-mailed to students and parents.

### **CAFETERIA/STUDENT CENTER**

A hot lunch or a la carte is provided for those students who wish to buy their lunch. Students may bring their own lunch if desired. Food items are designed to be consumed in the student center. Administration will make all attempts to keep the consumption of food items centralized to the first floor student center. Students are responsible for returning their trays, paper and waste matter to the disposal area, and keeping their area clean. Students who don't clean up after themselves during breakfast/lunch will be subject to the discipline matrix (cafeteria disturbance). All students are expected and required to clean up their personal area and their table before leaving the student center. Students are NOT permitted to receive lunch from outside establishments or to have food vendors deliver items to the cafeteria or to the high school without prior **Administrative** approval.

### **CALCULATOR POLICY**

Students who require the use of a graphing calculator for math or science class will have two options. The first: students can purchase their own graphing calculator that is equivalent to a TI-83 or higher. The TJHS Math Department recommends a TI-83. Option two: students can rent a calculator from TJHS for the year at a cost of \$40. Calculators rented from the school that are lost or damaged, the student will be charged the full price to replace the calculator, \$100. Calculators being rented will be distributed on a first come first serve basis. TJHS has a limited amount of calculators for rent during the 2022-2023 school year. Rental payment and signed parent form must be submitted before a calculator is provided.

### **CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM**

Academic dishonesty involves stealing something from another source and not giving credit to the source. It includes, but is not limited to, willingly sharing your completed work with another student, copying another's homework, submitting someone else's work as the student's own (this includes having parents do a student's paper or work), copying any part of another's work without proper attribution using the Thomas Jefferson High School Research Manual and/or MLA/APA documentation styles, using or attempting to use unauthorized aids during a test or other academic exercise intended for assessment or evaluation purposes.

**Academic dishonesty will result in a zero being issued for the assignment(s). This includes, but is not limited to homework, quizzes, tests, labs, projects, and research papers. Parents will be notified in cases of academic dishonesty, and a discipline a referral will be issued.**

Students who engage in any type of academic dishonesty are referred to the National Honor Society Advisory Board for review, which may impact the student's eligibility in the National Honor Society.

Students who take a picture, record, or share an assignment from their chromebook, smartphone, or smart watch without teacher permission will receive a Zero on the assignment and be referred to the main office for Cheating/Plagiarism & Cell Phone / Smart Watch unauthorized photo video. In addition to the zero students will also receive a consequence for the inappropriate use of a smartphone/smart watch during an assignment.

### ***CHILL PROJECT***

The CHILL Project is a comprehensive mindfulness-informed, skill-building program that serves the needs of the entire school community, including teachers who encounter secondary trauma, burnout and compassion fatigue. Through systematically addressing the complex school community, the CHILL Project looks to increase the wellbeing of all members, ultimately leading to greater resiliency, student success, teacher wellbeing, involved caregivers, and a compassionate learning community that promotes healing and wellbeing.

#### ***Chill Room Procedure***

All students that require use of the chill room during the school day must have permission and an E-hallpass from a classroom teacher, counselor, administrator, or chill room coordinator. Individuals will be required to check in upon arrival. All teachers will be notified electronically of students that are utilizing this service during instructional periods. Additionally the chill room will be open for drop in service during PLT or students may schedule time through Flextime manager.

### ***CLASSROOM CELL PHONE POLICY***

All students are required to check in their cell phone in the cell phone caddy located in every classroom at the beginning of each period. Unless directed to do so by a classroom teacher, cell phones are not permitted to be used during instructional periods. Students who violate this policy are subject to school discipline according to the TJ discipline matrix.

Students called to the main office to meet with any administrator must place their cell phones in the basket located on the counter upon arriving in the main office.

### ***COVID 19***

All students in the WJHSD, while under school jurisdiction, must follow all district, county, state, and federal guidelines issued regarding COVID 19 as required by the district. Students who fail to comply with the district guidelines will be subject to consequences as per the established discipline matrix. Due to the nature of the COVID 19 Pandemic, all procedures and protocols are subject to change to meet the established guidelines throughout the school year.

### ***CYBER SCHOOL***

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

### ***DANCES***

Thomas Jefferson High School will sponsor two formal dances during the 2022-2023 school year, Homecoming and Prom. Tardiness, attendance, and student behavior are directly tied to participation in these extra-curricular activities. Any student that is suspended for a level 3 or 4 infractions may lose the opportunity to participate in one or all of these social events. Students who do not serve an assigned Detention or Saturday Detention will not be eligible to attend school sponsored dances, and will not receive permission from a school administrator to attend another school's dance/prom.



No student or guest over the age of twenty (20) years of age will be permitted to attend any school-sponsored dance including the prom. Any guest who is not a WJHSD student must complete the appropriate paperwork and provide photo identification prior to attending a dance. Middle School students are not permitted to attend High School dances. All school rules pertaining to student behavior will be in effect. Prom does not permit students who are in grades 9 or below to attend.

### **DRESS CODE**

It is the policy of the West Jefferson Hills School District to promote a positive learning environment that promotes the intellectual, personal, and social well-being of all students. In order to maintain this environment, the Board of School Directors recognizes the vital role of enforcing this dress code.

- Apparel which may be considered destructive to school property or generally unsafe for the health and wellbeing of other students is prohibited.
- Shorts and skirts must be of modest length.
- Apparel which reveals the student's bare midriff, cleavage, or bra cups is prohibited.
- Tank Tops must have a strap at least the width of the student's own two fingers. See-through shirts lacking appropriate coverage or showing visible undergarments are prohibited.
- Hoodies are not to cover the head while inside the building.
- Pants and shorts/skirts must be worn at or above the hips in a manner that does not expose undergarments.
- Clothing that depicts, advertises, or promotes any of the following is prohibited: Alcohol/drug use, violence, tobacco or tobacco products, profane language, ethnically/racially inappropriate behavior, obscene/sexual content, gang-related activities.
- Racial, ethnic, gender, or sexually offensive language or depictions on clothing is prohibited. \*Please refer to *Racially Offensive or Derogatory Language/Dress* in Discipline Matrix for administrative action.
- Earbuds or any other type of headphones are only allowed to be worn in one ear during the school day.

The following steps will be followed sequentially unless the safety and wellbeing of any student are at risk. The main goals of this process are to reduce the loss of instructional time and maintain acceptable dress and appearance.

- First Offense: Warning, phone call home, dress corrected
- Second Offense: Letter home, dress corrected, and after-school detention
- Third Offense: Parent meeting, dress corrected, Saturday detention, and no extra-curricular activities for one calendar week. Ineligible for upcoming dance (Homecoming, Prom, etc.)
- Fourth Offense: Progressive discipline as well as continued loss of extra-curricular activities will be administered.

\*\*Administration reserves the right to impose additional consequences based on the severity of the infraction.

For purposes of clarification, bandanas, chains, and any apparel promoting drugs, alcohol, sex, or violence are prohibited. Clothing that is not within the dress code policy, as deemed by the administration, which disrupts the orderly operation of the school or presents a clear and present danger to the health and welfare of the school community is prohibited. Students will be required to comply with the dress code standards and policies. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action as stated above.


### **DROP/ADD COURSE PROCEDURE**

Students may add or drop a class within the first three weeks( 15 days) of a course without a penalty during the first semester. All add/drops must be requested before the end of school on September 16, 2022.

Exceptions may be made with administration approval only for the following reasons: 1) medical recommendation; 2) additional coursework that was completed over the summer; or 3) academic misplacement. All students requesting to drop/add a course within the first fifteen days of school, must

complete the “Drop/Add Form” which can be picked up in the Counseling Office. A parent/guardian signature is required to drop a course within the drop/add window. For any student that requests to drop a course outside of the fifteen day window for academic misplacement, a meeting with the parents, administration, counselor, and the classroom teacher must be held prior to the course drop and assignment of a new course. Dropping a course after the first three weeks(15 days) may result in a “Withdrawal F” that will be permanently recorded on a student's official high school transcript.

Drop /Add Form Link:

 [Drop-Add \(22-23\) form](#)

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Students requesting an early dismissal must report to the attendance office prior to 7:30 a.m. with a written statement from their parent or guardian indicating the reason for early dismissal. A parent also has the ability to request an early dismissal during the day through email. Early dismissal emails can be sent to [cbricklemyer@wjhsd.net](mailto:cbricklemyer@wjhsd.net) Requests for early dismissal will be granted in cases of (1) verified medical and dental appointments; (2) driver's test; and (3) family emergencies. Early dismissal for college appointments, job interviews, or graduation projects must have prior approval from a counselor or administrator prior to leaving. Students must sign out with the attendance secretary/ or high school security personnel in the main entrance prior to leaving the building. Parents/guardians picking up students for early dismissal will only be asked to sign out their child at the security station on the way into Thomas Jefferson High School if a written note or email was not previously provided to the high school attendance office. Parents/guardians will not be required to get out of their automobile for early dismissal pick up. All students leaving for early dismissal will be sent out of the main entrance doors of Thomas Jefferson High School after checking in with the attendance office. Students will be required to provide documented verification for early dismissal upon returning to school the day of or the following day. Administration may request documentation from a state licensed practitioner for excessive early dismissals. Failure to provide medical documentation will result in an unexcused absence. It is suggested that all chiropractic and physical therapy appointments be scheduled after school hours. All students with an early dismissal must return to school following the appointment in order to participate in extracurricular activities.

Students being sent home from the nurse will be picked up at the high school athletic entrance. The school nurse will contact a parent/ guardian prior to the student leaving school. School security will ask parents/guardians to sign the ill student out prior to them exiting the building through the athletic entrance.

### **EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATES**

Child Labor Laws require each student seeking employment to obtain a certificate for employment from the school district. Employment certificates are processed by office personnel and are available daily from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. State law requires the parent or guardian to sign the application which can be found on the district website to be completed by the parent. Proof of age must be provided.

### **FIRE DRILLS AND SAFETY DRILLS**

Fire drills at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys orders promptly and clears the building by the prescribed route as quickly and quietly as possible. The teacher in each classroom will give the students instructions about exiting the building.

Safety Drills will be conducted with the students and staff during the school year. Drills will be conducted using the ALICE (alert, lockdown, inform, counter, evacuate) Response Training.

### **FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTION DAY**

The district reserves the right to move all members or partial members of the high school community to on-line learning through the canvas platform as a result of the following: Poor weather conditions, excessively cold temperatures, state or grade level testing, health related concerns, or any other reason the district communicates with the families in advance. With the exception of poor weather, excessive cold, or health related concerns that may affect the high school community the administration will communicate with all stakeholders the reason for the flexible instruction day(s).

### **GUIDANCE/COUNSELING SERVICES**

Counseling services are available for every student at Thomas Jefferson High School. These services include assistance with educational planning, interpretation of test scores, occupational and career readiness information, help with individual concerns, or any question he/she would like to discuss with their appointed counselor. Students wishing to visit a counselor should contact the counseling secretary in the guidance office to arrange for an appointment or they are eligible to request one during PLT through email. Academic handbooks and Program of Studies are available for course selection questions.

### **Graduation Requirements**

The following requirements apply to all students. Credits are totaled for grades 9 to 12:

		2022 and Beyond
Language Arts (English)	Credits	4
*Social Studies (SS)	Credits	3SS/4SC*
*Science (SC)	Credits	3SC/4SS*
Mathematics	Credits	3
Computers	Credits	0.5
Physical Education /Health	Credits	1.5
Arts and/or Humanities	Credits	1
Electives	Credits	8
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>		<b>25.00</b>

*\* All students must complete three social studies and three science courses as well as one additional Science or Social Studies credit (or .5 credit of each) in order to fulfill the graduation requirement.*

*In order to commence with your class and receive your diploma, you must earn all course-credits needed to fulfill your graduation requirements by the end of your senior year. Course-credit failures earned in grades 9, 10 and 11 must be made up during or prior to the summer between your junior and senior years.*

**Every student must completely fulfill all graduation requirements established by the West Jefferson Hills School District in order to participate in commencement activities at the end of the school year. Any student who fails to earn the 25 credits required for graduation will not be eligible to participate in the commencement ceremony without exception.**

Students who have completed the highest level of coursework in a subject area have the option to enroll in a college course. The college course must continue the progression of learning in that subject and can

not be a current course offered at the high school. The student assumes the cost of tuition and fees from the college or university. The college course needs to be approved by the High School Principal and will appear on the student's transcript at the conclusion of the course. The grade earned will be calculated into the student's high school GPA in accordance with our College in the High School (CHS) weighted credit scale.

### Grading System and Weighted Scale

The marking system in Thomas Jefferson High School represents five levels of achievement. These levels indicate a student's achievement as compared with that of others studying the same subject matter.

### Quality Points

*See course description in 22-23 Program of Studies for unit of credit*

COURSE CREDIT	GRADES	POINTS
1	A - Superior attainment (90.00% - 100.00%)	4
1	B - Above average (80.00% - 89.99%)	3
1	C - Average (70.00% - 79.99%)	2
1	D - Below average (60.00% - 69.99%)	1
1	F - Failing (00.00% - 59.99%)	0

COURSE CREDIT	GRADES	POINTS
.5	A - Superior attainment (90.00% - 100.00%)	2
.5	B - Above average (80.00% - 89.99%)	1.5
.5	C - Average (70.00% - 79.99%)	1
.5	D - Below average (60.00% - 69.99%)	.5
.5	F - Failing (00.00% - 59.99%)	0

COURSE CREDIT	GRADES	POINTS
1.5	A - Superior attainment (90.00% - 100.00%)	6.0
1.5	B - Above average (80.00% - 89.99%)	4.5
1.5	C - Average (70.00% - 79.99%)	3.0
1.5	D - Below average (60.00% - 69.99%)	1.5
1.5	F - Failing (00.00% - 59.99%)	0

### Weighted Scale

As long as courses differ substantially in academic challenge, a weighted scale for computing grade-point average will remain at Thomas Jefferson High School.

**Quality Point System**

Grade	Regular	Honors	AP and College in High School
A	4	4.50	5
B	3	3.50	4
C	2	2.50	3
D	1	1.00	1
F	0	0.00	0

All Advanced Placement/College in High School and Honors courses will be reviewed annually by the West Jefferson Hills School District Board of Directors and approved as per the Thomas Jefferson High School Program Of Studies/ Academic Handbook.

**Class rank and GPA/QPA will not be given over the phone.** Thomas Jefferson High School does not publish or use class rank for students.

**QPA Calculation Example**

Course	Final Letter Grade	Quality Points		Course Credit Value		Quality Point Total
Algebra I	A	4.0	x	1.0	=	4.0
Biology	B	3.0	x	1.0	=	3.0
Honors Civics & Government	B	3.5	x	1.0	=	3.5
AP Psychology	B	4.0	x	1.0	=	4.0
Physical Ed.	A	4.0	x	0.5	=	2.0
				<b>4.5</b>		<b>16.5</b>

**Quality Point Average = 16.5/4.5 = 3.67**

**Class Rank**

Thomas Jefferson High School does not publish or use class rank for students.

**Percentage Grading System**

The marking system uniformly used at Thomas Jefferson High School represents five levels of achievement.

These levels are:

- A – Superior attainment of course objectives (89.5%-100%)
- B – Above-average attainment of course objectives (79.5-89.49%) •
- C – Average attainment of course objectives (69.5-79.49%)
- D – Below-average attainment of course objectives (59.5-69.49%)
- F – Performance does not meet minimum standards

**Calculation of Final Grades**

Reporting of nine-week and will be done by averaging the percentage grade for each marking period. The

averaged percentage will then become a final letter grade for the course. It is important to note that only the final grade will be recorded on the official high school transcript.

Semester Course Grade Calculation Example: Q1: 93% Q2: 82% Semester Average =  $(93+82)/2 = 87.5\% = 88\% = B$

Year-long Course Final Grade Calculation Example:

Q1: 82% Q2: 71% Q3: 87% Q4: 93% Year Average =  $(82+71+87+93)/4 = 83.25\% = 83\% = B$

### **Incomplete Rule**

Major Course Requirement: an incomplete grade (“I”) will be entered as the grade for any marking period when a student does not complete a major course requirement. The incomplete will remain as the grade of record until the student completes the major course requirement prior to the end of the course. If the major course requirement is not completed, the incomplete grade will remain on the report card, and the final course grade will be an “F” regardless of quality point average.

Major course requirements subject to this rule include term/research papers; notebooks required for a course; required projects in industrial technology, arts/crafts, home economics, etc. Chapter tests, homework assignments, quizzes, etc., are not considered major course requirements.

Prior approval by the principal is required to implement this rule. Once approval is given, strict procedures for notifying students and parents in advance must be followed.

An extension of time will be made to allow for students who fail to meet major course requirements due to a health problem, death in the family, or some unforeseen problem. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the building principal.

### **Appeal Process**

Should any parent or guardian have a question regarding a reported grade, it is recommended that a parent contact the school to arrange a conference with the teacher either in person or via phone to receive verification through classroom records. If further inquiries concerning the grade in question are desired, conferences with building administrators/school counselors and teachers may be arranged.

### **Honor Roll**

An Honor Roll will be compiled at the end of each nine-week period. Honor Roll status is based upon a student’s earned quality point average as follows:

Students with an “F”, “D” or “I” (incomplete) are not eligible for honor roll status.

<b>GPA</b>	<b>Honor Roll Recognition</b>
4.0	Highest Honors
3.600 – 3.999	High Honors
3.200 – 3.599	Honors

## Graduation Recognition Levels

Upon completion of final senior year grades, a student's final cumulative GPA will be calculated for all four years of high school. Students meeting criteria will be awarded cords and or medallions to wear at graduation to signify their academic accomplishments. The final, cumulative GPA requirement for cords and medallions is listed below:

GPA	Graduation Award Recognition
4.0	Medallion
3.600 – 3.999	Gold Cord
3.200 – 3.599	Silver Cord

## National Honor Society

To be eligible for selection into the TJHS Local Chapter of the (NHS) National Honor Society, you must have a cumulative GPA of 3.800 or higher. Cumulative GPA will be assessed after the completion of your sophomore year. The induction ceremony takes place in the fall of the student's junior year. Eligible students will be notified in writing with more details in September by the NHS Adviser. Complete details regarding NHS membership can be found in the Thomas Jefferson High School Chapter of the National Honor Society Chapter Bylaws.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/14x-1an\\_dXBd5LQelonlleyCX3B9AfHBxsByq63DEBYQ/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/14x-1an_dXBd5LQelonlleyCX3B9AfHBxsByq63DEBYQ/edit?usp=sharing)

## AP Scholar

Students who have taken at least 5 AP examinations and who have scored at least a three or greater on three or more exams will be recognized as an AP Scholar. AP Scholars will be recognized in the graduation program and will be awarded a medal to wear at graduation.

## Graduation Speakers

All graduating seniors will have the opportunity to submit a speech to be evaluated to speak at commencement. All speeches will be judged according to board approved procedures and rubrics. Three members of the graduating class will be selected to speak at graduation according to the criteria determined. They are as follows:

1. Class president
2. One student with an unweighted 4.0 through the first seven semesters of high school.
3. One student from the graduating class.

## KEYSTONE EXAMS

The Keystone Exams are state mandated, end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in the subject areas of Algebra, Literature, and Biology. Students in all Algebra I, Biology and English 10 courses will demonstrate their proficiency on the Keystone Exam as an end of year assessment in May. Students who do not score proficient or advanced will re-test 3 times during future test administrations in Winter, Spring, and/or Summer. Demonstrating proficiency on the Keystone Exams is the first pathway to graduation from a Pennsylvania public school. Scoring proficient or advanced will satisfy the state graduation requirement. Students who do not pass the keystone exam after multiple attempts will be required to successfully complete one of the alternative pathways listed in Pennsylvania Senate Bill 1095. These alternative options are listed under "Procedures for Seniors Who Do Not Pass a Keystone Exam."

### **Procedures for Students Who Do Not Pass a Keystone Exam After Multiple Attempts**

A student is permitted to re-take the Keystone Exams until the conclusion of his/her junior year. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) can participate in the retest option and participate in other supplemental instruction, as determined by the IEP Team.

### **Procedures for Students Who Do Not Pass a Keystone Exam**

If a student does not receive a score of “Advanced” or “Proficient” on a Keystone Exam, the student is permitted re-test during designated testing windows established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Students may take the retest as many times as desired prior to the conclusion of their junior year.

If a student does not reach at least the “Proficient” level on a Keystone re-test in a particular subject, he or she must demonstrate proficiency through an alternative pathway to graduation outlined in Pennsylvania Senate Bill 1095.

### **Procedures for Seniors Who Do Not Pass a Keystone Exam**

A senior who has basic or below basic scores on the Keystone Exam have alternative ways to graduate under Pennsylvania Senate Bill 1095. Seniors will need to successfully complete one of the alternatives:

- Proficiency on the SAT (score of 1010+ total), PSAT (score of 970+ total), or ACT (21+ composite)
- Earning a score of 3+ on an AP Exam
- Completion of a dual enrollment program
- Completion of a pre-apprenticeship program
- Acceptance to an accredited four-year nonprofit institution of higher education
- Completion of a Service Learning Project
- A letter of full time employment
- An acceptable score on a Work Keys Assessment. (Gold Level National Career Readiness Certificate)
- ASVAB score of 31 or better.
- Attainment of an industry based competency certificate related to the students CTE program of study.

### **Keystone Testing Dates**

- Winter Retakes and Make-ups: January 4-18, 2023
- Spring End of Year Assessment & Make-ups: May 15-26, 2023
- Summer Make-ups: July 24-28, 2023

### **Keystone Exemptions**

Members of the class of 2023 may be exempt from the Keystone graduation requirement due to Covid-19 and the order issued by the PA Department of Education. Additionally any student that was enrolled in the Keystone tested course during the 2019-2020 school year will receive a pass from the PA Department of Education on the respective course(s). Keystone tested subjects are Algebra I, Biology, and Literature.

### ***E-HALLPASS***

All students are required to generate an e-hallpass, via their Google Chromebook, whenever a request is made to leave the classroom. When a student receives an e-hallpass, it is expected that the student travels directly from their location to the destination which was approved. It is also expected that students utilize the e-hallpass in a timely manner, determined by the classroom teacher. E-hallpass use is a privilege. Abuse of this privilege will result in disciplinary action and/or restrictions.

- Students must generate an e-hallpass with an electronic device.



- Students will not be granted permission to use an e-hallpass at the start of class. Students are expected to use the restroom during class changes.
- Students will not be granted permission to use an e-hallpass during instruction. Instruction is not to be interrupted unless in the case of an emergency.
- All student requests to leave the classroom are to be done, via a Quick Pass or Regular Pass. In addition, faculty and staff may use the Appointment Pass to schedule students to come to their classroom/office on a future date.
- Only one student is permitted out of the classroom on an e-hallpass at a time, this includes during PLT. Exceptions to the above mentioned are in the case of an emergency.
- Students found out of their classroom without an e-hallpass will be returned to class, and a discipline consequence will be assigned. Additional misuse of e- hallpass procedures will result in progressive disciplinary action.

Note: Based on supporting data, the administration reserves the right to restrict a student's hall pass use.

### **HEALTH SERVICES**

Procedures for Students Coming to the Health Room. All students must have a pass from a teacher or administrator before going to the health room (exception: emergencies). Students reporting at the end of a class will be asked to go to the next period teacher to request a pass. When the nurse is not available, students are to report to the main office.

Early Dismissal Due to Illness. Students who become ill during regular school hours may be excused by the school nurse. The parent/guardian will be contacted by the school nurse from information provided on the emergency card only, (students are not permitted to contact parent/guardian directly for dismissal). Early dismissals count toward days of absences. The parent/guardian will be responsible for transportation necessary to take the student home. Students, along with parents/guardians must sign out with the secretary or with school security personnel. in the main entrance. The parent/guardian may be responsible for providing documentation from a state licensed practitioner for chronic early dismissals. Failure to provide documentation from a state licensed practitioner will result in an unexcused absence. Extreme emergencies requiring immediate doctor's care will be handled as the situation warrants. Students who contact a parent for an early dismissal without consulting with the nurse will receive a discipline referral for inappropriate cell phone use. The dismissal will be recorded as unexcused unless a medical note from a licensed physician is provided within three (3) days upon returning to school.

Emergency Cards. Emergency cards are required to be completed by the parent/guardian for each student and returned to the health office. Any changes throughout the year are the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide the health office with the new information.

### **West Jefferson Hills School District Policy 210 Use Of Medication**

NO STUDENT is permitted to carry any prescription or over the counter medication in school for any reason without permission from the school nurse. Please refer to Policy 210 for information regarding Use of Medication.

<https://go.boarddocs.com/pa/wjhsd/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies#>

### **HOMEWORK**

All students have the capability to obtain homework assignments through the Canvas LMS Platform. Teachers will provide students with their Canvas Online Learning Platform information, which will notify students of their homework assignments.

### ***INTERNSHIPS***

Seniors are encouraged to explore internships during their Senior Year to gain valuable career experience. Interested students need to contact their school counselor to request admission into the Career Work Study/Internship Program.

### ***INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS***

Thomas Jefferson High School belongs to the P.I.A.A. and W.P.I.A.L. and adheres to the rules and regulations of these organizations. Sports programs are available in the following areas:

**BOYS:** Football, Soccer, Cross Country, Golf, Basketball, Wrestling, Baseball, Track, Tennis, Volleyball, and Swimming

**GIRLS:** Volleyball, Tennis, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Basketball, Softball, Track, Soccer, and Swimming

**ATTENDANCE ELIGIBILITY:** To participate is contingent on attendance. Students must arrive at school prior to 9:01 a.m. to participate in that day's activities, and if a student has an early dismissal or excessive tardies/dismissals, they may not be eligible to participate.

**ACADEMIC AND CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS FOR ATHLETICS:** You must be passing at least four full-credit subjects, or the equivalent, as of each Friday during a grading period (week, quarter/marking period, and semester). If you fail to meet this requirement, you will lose your eligibility from the immediate following Sunday through the Saturday of that week. All grades will be checked again during the Friday of the ineligible week. If the student is passing four full credit subjects, or the equivalent, their eligibility will be reinstated on the immediate following Sunday. Additionally, all student athletes must have passed at least four full-credit subjects or the equivalent during the previous grading period, except the eligibility for the first grading period is based on your final grades for the preceding school year. If you fail to meet this requirement, you will lose your eligibility for at least 15 school days of the next grading period, beginning on the first day that report cards are issued.

### ***LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER***

Thomas Jefferson's media center is a learning center where students can complement their studies through the use of books, computers, magazines, pamphlets, videos, etc. Students must obtain an e-hallpass or sign up on Flex Time Manager for PLT for admission into the library.

### ***LOCKERS***

All students will be assigned lockers. The expectation is that all students keep their backpacks, bookbags, and large purses in their assigned locker during the school day. Students should only keep school bags, clothing, and school-related materials in lockers and should keep their locker locked at all times. Lockers are considered school district property and state regulations permit school authorities to search a student's locker and seize any illegal materials; such materials may be used as evidence against the student in disciplinary, juvenile, or criminal proceedings. Students should maintain their locker in a neat, orderly manner. The District will not assume responsibility for items removed from a locker.

### ***MENTOR GROUPS***

Each student will be assigned a mentor teacher during the school year. Mentor groups will meet periodically throughout the school year to set goals, monitor grades, and assist the students' high school journey. Mentor groups will typically meet during Personalized Learning Time intermittently throughout the school year.

## ***METAL DETECTORS***

The program will be run by randomly selecting a bus, walkers/drop-offs, junior drivers, or senior drivers on the days of the search. Students will be escorted to the metal detector lines by the administration. Students will be asked to empty their pockets and place all items in a plastic bin with their devices, cell phones, and keys. Students should keep their shoes, belts, and watches on during the process. Prior to walking through the detector, the students will place their bins and bags on a table which will be searched by staff members. The students will then walk through the metal detector. If the student sets off the alarm, they will be escorted to a separate more private area for level 2 screening. Level 2 screening will involve administration (male and female) and the district's school police officer using a wand to identify the metal object setting off the alarm. Please assure your children that depending on their belts, watches, etc., there is a chance that these items may be the cause of the alarm.

Please make our school nurse aware of any medical condition or surgically implanted device that your child has that may be adversely affected by going through a metal detector. For example, any child that has a pacemaker or defibrillator should not go through the metal detector. Most surgically implanted devices, such as artificial hips, or metal rods, may set off the metal detector, but will not cause harm. Please provide medical documentation verifying the condition and/or implant your child has and if they would be adversely affected by using a metal detector. If you are not sure if a condition, implant, or magnet your child has will be adversely affected by the metal detector, please consult your child's physician and then relay the information you obtain to our school nurse.

We are asking for your cooperation with the following items:

- Have your students clean out their book bags and purses. All chosen students will have their bags searched upon entering the building.
- Review the procedures with your children and talk about the importance of maintaining a safe school environment

## ***PERSONALIZED LEARNING TIME (PLT)***

PLT is a period in the day where students take ownership of their schedule and select learning opportunities based on personal preference or academic need. Students are responsible for signing up for PLT sessions daily and lunch will be scheduled based on your PLT selections. However, a teacher has the authority to override a student's PLT selection when a teacher adds them to their day's PLT. Students who are failing or are not meeting expectations in a course will be scheduled with that course teacher for remediation and review. Failure to register for a PLT or failure to report to a teacher added PLT, will result in a class cut referral.

## **RULES FOR PLT**

1. Students must sign up daily before 11:15 am for three specific PLT activities through Flextime manager.
2. Students are required to stay with the teacher they selected or were pulled for for the entire 30 minute period.
3. Students are not permitted to take food from the cafeteria or the Jag Den to a teacher's PLT classroom.
4. Students are not permitted to use the pods during PLT without permission and supervision from a member of the high school faculty.
5. Students in the hallways during PLT need to have an active E-Hall Pass.

## ***REASONABLE SUSPICION – DRUG TESTING OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS***

If based on observable behavior or symptoms, a school employee has a reasonable suspicion that a student is under the influence of a controlled substance, the employee will report the matter to the building principal and the student will be escorted to the school nurse's office for an examination that may include checking the

student for abnormal vital signs. If based on the student's observable behavior, medical symptoms, vital signs or other factors, school administrators have a reasonable suspicion that the student is under the influence of a controlled substance, the student may be required to submit to drug or alcohol testing. The testing may include but is not limited to, the analysis of blood, urine, saliva, or the administration of a Breathalyzer Test. Saliva or breathalyzer tests may be administered by a school district administrator.

### ***RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE***

The High School Administration will make every attempt to repair or restore student/staff relationships when disciplinary actions occur. The high school administration will work with school counselors, social workers, Chill Room specialists, and school resource officers to reintegrate students into the learning environment upon returning from disciplinary consequences.

### ***SATURDAY DETENTION***

Saturday detention is the process of requiring a student to remain outside of normal school hours as a disciplinary consequence for behaviors that occurred in school or during a school-sponsored activity. The detention process exists for the purpose of holding a student accountable for their misbehavior/non-adherence to school rules.

**Times for students to serve** Saturday detention occurs on designated Saturdays and runs from 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. School transportation to and from Saturday school detention will not be provided.

**Time/Process for Saturday school detentions:** When a student is issued detention, they will have one opportunity to reschedule with high school administration prior. All students must report to the Saturday school detention room by 8:00 a.m. Students will then stay the required number of hours. Late students will not be admitted to Saturday detention. Failure to serve detention will result in progressive discipline according to the TJHS Discipline Matrix. **Students who skip an assigned Saturday Detention will be ineligible for any extra-curricular activities including dances and school sponsored events until the Saturday Detention is served.**

### **Saturday Detention Rules:**

- No eating
- No earbuds and headphones
- Phones are not permitted
- No talking
- No sleeping

The detention monitor will meet students at the front atrium of the high school and proceed to the designated classroom at 8:00 a.m. Late arrivals will not be admitted.

All students are required to have work to complete during the entire 3-hour period. All students are also required to complete the Saturday Detention Activity that involves goal setting, reflection, and career related activities.

Failure to adhere to detention rules could result in immediate removal and hours served not being counted. All students removed from Saturday Detention will not have the time served count and will face progressive discipline according to TJHS Discipline Matrix.

**Saturday school emergencies:** If a student is unable to serve detention during Saturday school due to an emergency, a parent or guardian must call Mr. Murphy's voicemail (412) 655-8610 ext. 6235 by 8 a.m. on Saturday identifying their student and the emergency.

**Valid emergency list:** Illness, family emergency, out of town vacations, funeral. Parents/guardians must call before 8 a.m.

### ***SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS***

Students acknowledge that participation in extracurricular activities and travel to activities is a privilege and not a right. Students should understand that baggage is subject to surveillance and possible inspection at the discretion of the School District. Students with failing grades, excessive tardies, dismissals, absences and/or behavior issues may be denied the opportunity to attend school-sponsored field trips.

### ***SCHOOL FIELD TRIP & OVERNIGHT POLICY***

Teachers, clubs, and athletic teams have the ability to schedule overnight trips for students that are part of the curriculum or extra curricular activities. Teachers, sponsors, and coaches must adhere to the following guidelines when planning trips that require students to miss school.

1. School sponsored field trip cannot remove a student from Thomas Jefferson High School for more than two instructional days without written approval from high school and district administration. Any trip that would require more than two instructional days to be missed of school must have approval prior to any arrangement being made.
2. All overnight trips must include a submitted itinerary where students have designated time to complete school work on scheduled school days.
3. Any student who has missed more than 10 school days, excused or unexcused is in-eligible for any overnight field trips. Students who fundraise or pay out of pocket for overnight opportunities may or may not be eligible for refunds based on travel arrangements made prior to the trip.
4. Students are expected to turn in all missed work on the day they return from the scheduled field trip.
5. Students must be passing at least four full-credit subjects, or the equivalent, 1 week prior to the scheduled departure date of the overnight field trip. Any student not passing four full credit subjects, or the equivalent will not be permitted to attend the overnight field trip. Students who fundraise or pay out of pocket for overnight opportunities may or may not be eligible for refunds based on travel arrangements made prior to the trip.
6. Exceptions: Students who qualify for WPIAL, PIAA, PIHL, PIMBA, or other school sponsored activities do not fall under the overnight field trip policy for days missed. Attendance, and academic eligibility will apply for all student athletes participating in WPIAL and PIAA sanctioned events.

### ***SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION PODS (SGIs)***

The Small Group Instruction Pods located in each academic wing of the high school will be utilized throughout the school day for instructional purposes at the discretion of each teacher. Students in an SGI must be assigned to that location by their scheduled teacher.

### ***STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAP)***

The purpose of the Student Assistance Program (SAP) is to identify students who are experiencing significant personal problems that may place their academic success at risk. Examples of problems might include substance use (drug/alcohol), depression, suicidal thoughts, and other crisis situations. The goals of the SAP are to develop an atmosphere of trust in which students will seek help from support team members; to assure students that problems are resolvable with help from professionals, and to acquire necessary counseling services for students in need before problems reach a crisis level. Assistance is always available by visiting the School Social Worker, Guidance Counselor, or by contacting a team member.

### **STUDENT DEBTS**

It is the practice of the School District that when a student accrues a debt to the school district through loss or damage of school district property, materials, equipment, or cafeteria debt, the student's report card, transcripts, and/or diploma may be withheld until such debt is cleared.

### **STUDENT DISCIPLINARY OBLIGATIONS**

It shall be the practice of the West Jefferson Hills School District that a student's report card and/or the diploma may be withheld, when deemed necessary, until the satisfactory completion of disciplinary obligations. Seniors will not be able to participate in commencement if school discipline is pending or unserved.

### **STUDENT DRIVING REGULATIONS**

Students in grades 12 & 11 will have the privilege of driving to school for the 22-23 school year. Students wishing to utilize this option are required to purchase a non-refundable drivers permit, good for the 2022-2023 school year only. All students will be required to park in a designated spot assigned by lottery. High school administration reserves the right to suspend or cancel individual drivers privileges without reimbursement for violations of school rules in accordance with the 2022-2023 discipline matrix. The cost of the 2022-2023 parking permit is \$30. Payment must be made at the time of the application.

Drivers pass application link:

[Driver-Rider Information 22-23](#)

A parental permission form to drive to school must be filed in the high school office. Drivers' passes must be displayed in the vehicle at all times. Students will park in areas designated and are not permitted to loiter in parked cars, visit their car during the school day, or move their cars until after the buses leave. Students are not permitted to lend, borrow or attempt to use another student's pass. Students violating driving regulations will have their driving privileges revoked and could be disciplined according to the discipline policy. An accumulation of 8 unexcused tardies will result in revocation of a driving pass for the remainder of the school year. Excessive a.m. absences may result in removal of driving privileges. Only students in grades 11 and 12 will be permitted to purchase a parking pass. Driving passes are non-transferable. Student drivers MUST park in the appropriate areas assigned. Students placed on behavior probation will lose their driving privilege for the duration of the probation.

If space is available, students in grade 10 may apply for a drivers pass beginning on April 3, 2023. Sophomores will only be permitted to park at the tennis court parking lot of TJHS. The cost of this parking permit is \$30 and will be issued on a first come first serve basis as long as spaces are available.

The following rules are listed on the driver's pass:

1. All drivers must be in the school by 7:25 am
2. Dangerous/reckless driving is an automatic revocation of the pass and may result in a citation issued by school police.
3. All students will be expected to park in the assigned numbered spot they are issued by the high school office without exception.
4. Any student vehicle in the parking lot without a school parking pass will result in administrative action according to the discipline matrix.
5. Eight TOTAL tardies (unexcused) will result in revocation of a parking pass for the remainder of school year.
6. Cars are not to be moved once parked unless asked to do so by school personnel.
7. Any student using another student's pass will have their pass revoked for the remainder of the school year.

8. Student drivers/riders are not permitted to use or be in possession of tobacco products, alcohol or controlled substances while driving or parked on school grounds. Student drivers are not permitted to have such materials in their vehicles. The School District reserves the right to search the vehicle upon reasonable suspicion of such behavior and further reserves the right to conduct search activities with respect to said material.
9. Parking permits will be issued to seniors first, and then to juniors. A lottery system will be utilized to assign spots to students. Payment and proper documentation must be submitted in order to be eligible to receive a parking spot.
10. Dismissal from the student parking lot will be done in an orderly fashion under the direction of high school administration or the school police. Students who fail to obey the direction of staff in the student parking lot will be subject to school discipline according to the 2022-2023 discipline matrix.

\*Students and parents are responsible for reading and understanding the rules and guidelines set forth in the driver application packet. Failure to follow any of the rules or guidelines will constitute a parking violation, and the student will receive a school parking ticket

### ***STUDENT GRADING REPORTS***

Report cards are given to students every nine weeks. The report cards are the property of the students and are not to be returned. Progress Reports may be mailed to parents between marking periods when the quality of the student's work is not satisfactory. Parents are encouraged to access Skyward to view the most current status of student achievement. The marking system at Thomas Jefferson High School represents five levels of achievement. These levels indicate a student's achievement as compared with that of others studying the same subject matter.

A - Superior achievement	(89.50 - 100%)
B - Above average	(79.50 - 89.49%)
C - Average	(69.50 - 79.49%)
D - Below average	(59.50 - 69.49%)
F - Failing	( 0.00 - 59.49%)

### ***SWIMMING POOL DRESS CODE***

During the 2022-23 school year, all students scheduled into a PE class will utilize the new TJHS pool. All students entering the pool must have proper attire as outlined in the PE course syllabus. The TJHS PE staff will explain all regulations for swimming with students prior to the aquatics unit.

The following are guidelines for student dress while utilizing the swimming pool during PE class. All students are asked to dress respectfully for their peers and instructors while in the pool or on the pool deck.

Male students must wear garments that are designed for use in water. Shorts must be of moderate length, board shorts or similar. No racing shorts will be permitted during PE class. Male students are permitted to wear dry fit shirts if they prefer while participating in swimming class.

Female students must wear garments that are designed for use in water. One piece bathing suits are permitted. Two piece bathing suits that do not tie on the bottom or top are permitted when worn in conjunction with a dry fit shirt. Bathing suits that tie are not permitted even with the use of a dry fit shirt during PE class.

### ***SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS***

Please be advised that the West Jefferson Hills School District has completed the installation of surveillance cameras inside and outside Thomas Jefferson High School, including parking locations. The surveillance

cameras will provide safety for our students, staff, and property of the School District. The action was recommended by the Administration and approved by the School Board. Surveillance cameras can and will be used to aid in investigations of student misconduct that occur during the school day and on school grounds.

### **TESTING CALENDAR 2022-2023**

TBA

### **THOMAS JEFFERSON IS YOUR SCHOOL**

Your parents and all taxpayers are legally required to pay taxes that build, maintain and staff the public schools. In fact, everyone including you pays taxes in one form or another. Therefore, any damage done to this building, equipment, books, etc., must be paid for with your own family's money. It is not enough that you should refrain from doing anything to increase this cost to you, your family and neighbors, but you must help protect the school by discouraging or reporting such activities by others.

### **VISITORS**

An added level of security has been implemented for ALL visitors to Thomas Jefferson High School. All parents, guardians, and guests are subject to metal detector search before being granted access to the school building between the hours of 7AM - 3 PM. All guests must register with school security in the high school reception area and receive a visitor's pass that must be worn prior to entering any other area of the building. Parents/Visitors will be asked to provide a state-issued identification card or driver's license to be scanned for criminal background checks. The district believes this is another safety measure to keep our children protected. Visitors who do not register will be considered trespassing. **The main entrance to Thomas Jefferson High School is the only entrance that can be used during the school hours.** Students are not permitted to open exterior doors throughout the school for any student, staff, or visitor.

### **WORK RELEASE**

Seniors who wish to work during school hours can be released as long as he/she meets class hours and graduation requirements. This release must begin during the first four weeks of the school year, at the beginning of semester two, and/or at Administration's discretion. A letter is required from the student stating how this work release will enhance his/her college/work resume. A work release form must be completed, and on file in the school before work release can be granted. Changes will only be made to accommodate late release based on seat/course availability.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

1. The student **MUST** be a senior.
2. The student must be scheduled in all classes necessary to meet graduation requirements at a minimum and must maintain passing grades in all scheduled courses.
3. Work release students must attend a minimum of five regularly scheduled courses at Thomas Jefferson High School.
4. Students must complete all assignments associated with our work studies curriculum.
5. Students will only be permitted to arrive once and depart once from school each day.
6. Students must leave school property without disrupting the rest of the students and classes. They must sign out every day and dismiss out the front entrance of high school.
7. Students will not be on school property after their last scheduled class ends.
8. The student or their parent/guardian must provide transportation from school as necessary based on the student's schedule.
9. If a student is unable to attend school because of illness, the student should not be at work.
10. **We recommend that seniors continue to take a full academic load if they are planning to attend college. Many colleges/universities recommend students take a full academic load, including four**



**years of English, math, science, social studies/history, and foreign language.**

**\*\*The preceding rules and guidelines contained in this handbook are a partial representation. The complete policy guides are on file in the high school office and on the website, [www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net).**

**\*\*\*The student handbook can always be amended throughout the school year by the district or high school administration. All changes will be communicated to the school community prior to implementing any change.**

# Education for Homeless Youth

42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.

**Date of Issue:** February 3, 2010

**Date of Review:** December 10, 2016, August 19, 2015, September 1, 2011

## Purpose

In 1987, Congress passed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, (subsequently renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) to aid homeless persons. The Act defines the term "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. On December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was enacted, amending McKinney-Vento.

## Procedures

This Basic Education Circular (BEC) explains the categories of children who are "homeless" and entitled to the protections of the federal law. These categories include:

- i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals;
- ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- iv. "migratory children" who qualify as homeless under federal law because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii) above. The term "migratory children" means children who are (or whose parent(s) or spouse(s) are) migratory agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers or migratory fishermen, and who have moved from one school district to another in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain (or accompany such parents or spouses in order to obtain) temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work; and,

- v. "Unaccompanied homeless youth" including any child who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." This includes youth who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, been abandoned by parents or guardians, or separated from their parents for any other reason.

Communication and collaboration among education and child welfare professionals is critical to support school stability and continuity for children in out-of-home care. The law requires child welfare and local education agencies to work together to promote school stability and continuity including trying to ensure children remain in the school in which they were enrolled at the time of placement when it is in their best interest. Best practice would suggest that decisions be made collaboratively between school personnel, child welfare agencies and any other individual involved in the child's case including the child, resource parent, child advocate and attorney. It is imperative that caseworkers and school district administration and staff work together to help ensure the educational progress of all students.

Under the Pennsylvania Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plan, homeless children are defined as "children living with a parent in a domestic violence shelter; runaway children and children, and youth who have been abandoned or forced out of their home by parents or other caretakers; and school-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations."

The McKinney-Vento Act states that it is the policy of Congress that state educational agencies shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths 42 U.S.C. § 11431. Specifically, 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g) (3) (A) indicates that the local educational agency (LEA) shall, according to the child's best interest: In accordance with Section 722 (g) (3) (B) (ii), the local educational agency:

- I. must presume that keeping a homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest unless doing so is contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth;
- II. must consider student-centered factors related to a child's or youth's best interest, giving priority to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth; or
- III. if the LEA determines that it is not in a child's or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin, or the school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, it must provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form that is understandable.

According to the McKinney-Vento Act the term "school of origin" means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g) (3) (G).

## Homeless Students Residing in Shelters, Facilities or Institutions

Section 1306 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code (24 P.S. §13-1306) deals with the public school admission of nonresident students living in shelters, facilities or institutions. Implementing regulations for Section 1306 are found in Section 11.18 of the State Board of Education regulations. 22 Pa. Code § 11.18 (a) addresses the public school admission of nonresident children who live in an institution, shelter or custodial care facility:

- a. *The board of school directors of a school district in which there is located a licensed shelter, group home, maternity home, residence, facility, orphanage or other institution for the care or training of children or adolescents, shall admit to the district's public schools school age children who are living at or assigned to the facility or institution and who are residents of the district or another school district in this Commonwealth.*

22 Pa. Code § 11.18, as it applies to homeless children and youth, includes within the definition of "licensed shelter" those facilities which provide temporary shelter for a specified, limited period of time. Therefore, children in temporary shelters and children who "lack a fixed, regular, adequate night time residence" – homeless children – are entitled to free school privileges from either the school district in which their person or the shelter is located or the school district of origin.

## Homeless Students Not Residing in a Shelter, Facility or Institution

Homeless students may reside in hotels, motels, cars, tents or temporarily doubled-up with a resident family because of lack of housing. In determining residence and in the case of homeless children, equating "residence" and "domicile" (home) does not apply. They are presently unable to establish "homes" on a permanent basis. Homeless families are not required to prove residency regarding school enrollment. These students should be enrolled without delay, in the district where they are presently residing or continue their education in the district of prior attendance.

Children experiencing homelessness are often highly mobile and may not stay in the same school district each night or each week. This is particularly true regarding children who stay overnight in vehicles, those who stay with different family members or friends, or those who receive services from agencies, organizations or networks which facilitate overnight accommodations in multiple school districts. These children should not be

forced to change school districts every time their overnight accommodations change. Rather, these children are entitled to attend school in any school district where a parent, guardian, an adult caring for them or where an unaccompanied child:

- Spends the greatest percentage of his or her time; or
- Has a substantial connection such as where he or she is
  - regularly receiving day shelter or other services involving any of the 16 McKinney-Vento Activities (42 U.S.C. 11433(d)) for individuals who are homeless;
  - conducting daily living activities; or
  - staying overnight on a recurring basis.

This policy helps maintain continuity and school stability for homeless children in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.

The child or youth shall continue to be enrolled in the school in which he or she is seeking enrollment until the complaint or appeal is fully resolved by a McKinney-Vento coordinator, state coordinator, through mediation or in court.

## School Placement

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that, "local educational agencies will designate an appropriate staff person, who may also be a coordinator for other federal programs, as a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth." This person has the following responsibilities:

1. Identify homeless children and youths with assistance by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Inform parents or guardians of educational rights and related opportunities available to their children, including Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs), early intervention services under Part C of the IDEA, other preschool programs administered by the LEA, and provide them with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
3. Disseminate public notice of the educational rights of homeless students where children and youths receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act (such as schools, family shelters and food pantries).
4. Mediate enrollment disputes in accordance with the Enrollment Dispute section.
5. Inform the parent or guardian of a homeless child, youth and any unaccompanied youth, of all transportation options, including to the school of origin, and assist in accessing these transportation services.
6. Liaisons are required to ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement.
7. Liaisons are required to assist children and youths who do not have documentation of immunizations or medical records to obtain necessary immunizations or necessary medical documentation.

8. Understand the guidance issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) for the education of homeless students and be ready to explain the BEC related to homeless education to school district staff.
9. Get to know the best resources in their community to assist families with referrals for things such as shelter, counseling, food and transportation.
10. Distribute information on the subject of homeless students and arrange staff development workshops and presentations for school personnel, including office staff.
11. Provide standard forms and information about enrollment procedures and key school programs to each shelter in their district.
12. Become familiar with the various program materials that are available from PDE.
13. Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in locations frequented by parents and guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchen, in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth.
14. Liaisons must collaborate with a school district's special education program to ensure that homeless children who are in need of special education and related services are located, identified and evaluated. This is a requirement under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which mandates that highly mobile children with disabilities, including homeless children, be identified and served. Liaisons should also ensure that homeless youths who have or may have disabilities have a parent or a surrogate parent to make special education or early intervention decisions. In the case of unaccompanied homeless youth, if a student is disabled or may be disabled and the youth does not have a person authorized to make special education decisions, the following people can be temporary surrogate parents: staff in emergency shelters; transitional shelters; independent living programs; street outreach programs; and state, local educational agency or child welfare agency staff involved in the education or care of the child. This rule applies only to unaccompanied homeless youth.
15. Liaisons should also identify preschool-aged homeless children by working closely with shelters and social service agencies in their area. In addition, the liaison should inquire, at the time they are enrolling homeless children and youths in school, whether the family has preschool-aged children.
16. Liaisons can identify unaccompanied homeless youth while respecting their privacy and dignity by providing specific outreach to areas where eligible students who are out of school may congregate.
17. Liaisons ensure that unaccompanied youths are enrolled in school, and have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards as the state establishes for other children and youths, are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) (20 U.S.C 1087w), and their right to receive verification of this status from the local liaison.

Appropriate school placement arrangements, based on the child's best interest, should be implemented through the cooperative efforts of the respective chief school

administrators. Each case presents a unique set of circumstances and, therefore, requires an individualized response. In all cases, the LEA shall comply, to the extent feasible, with the request made by a parent or guardian regarding school selection, shall attempt to minimize disruptions and shall maintain the highest possible degree of continuity in programs for all homeless students. The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

Homelessness alone is not a reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment. Homeless children and youths should have access to education and other services that they need to ensure that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state student performance standards to which all students are held.

In determining the *best interest* of the child or youth under McKinney-Vento Act, the LEA shall:

- I. Continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and for the remainder of the academic year even if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
- II. Enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

The selected school shall immediately enroll the child or youth in school, *even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment*, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation. Section 722 (g)(3)(C) (i)(II) requires that a school selected based on a homeless child's or youth's best interest must immediately enroll such child or youth even if he or she has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.

The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" are defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities. The enrolling school must immediately contact the last school attended to obtain relevant records.

In order to ensure immediate enrollment, in accordance with Section 722 (g)(6)(A)(ix), the LEA liaison is required to: train school enrollment staff about the legal requirement that homeless children and youths be immediately enrolled and provided transportation; review school regulations and policies to ensure that they comply with the McKinney-Vento Act requirements; inform families and youth, in a language they can understand, of their rights; develop clear, understandable and accessible written explanations of decisions and the right to appeal; and expeditiously follow up on any special education or language assistance needs presented by a student.

## **School/Health Records**

The educating district should immediately enroll and begin to provide instruction. The receiving school district may contact the district of origin for oral confirmation that the child has been immunized. Oral confirmation between professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunization with written confirmation to follow within 30 days. The instructional program should begin as soon as possible after the enrollment process is initiated and should not be delayed until the procedure is completed. The law specifies that information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation shall be treated as a student education record, and shall not be deemed to be directory information. (Section 722 (g)(3)(G)).

According to federal law, "(iii) If the child or youth needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth to the local educational agency liaison designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii), shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records, in accordance with subparagraph (D)" 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(c)(iii).

## **Title I**

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (reauthorized December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act) mandates that funds be reserved to serve homeless children. Title I states, "A local educational agency shall reserve such funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to children in schools funded under this part to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children may live." Under Title I, homeless children are eligible for services if they are attending schools served by an LEA.

## **Transportation**

The state and its LEAs are required to adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to and from the school of origin. If the homeless student continues to live in the area served by the LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation. If the homeless student moves to an area served by another LEA, though continuing his or her education at the school of origin, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the student is living must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin. This includes students enrolled in public school Head Start and Early Head Start education programs. If the LEAs cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs must be shared equally. Distance, time of year, options available, the effects of a transfer, etc., should all be addressed.

The provision of transportation to the school of origin is based on a students' status as homeless. The provision to remain in the school of origin during the remainder of the





academic year is offered to provide for school stability. Local education agencies must continue to provide transportation to and from the school of origin to formerly homeless students who have become permanently housed for the remainder of the academic year during which the child or youth becomes permanently housed. (Section 722(g)(3)(A)(II)).

## Fiscal Responsibilities

Fiscal responsibilities apply to all homeless students, whether in regular or special education classes.

The educating district should apply the following criteria when determining fiscal responsibility:

- A. The procedures outlined below will be followed in cases when the education of the child is provided by the district where the homeless student is temporarily living (doubled up, motel, shelter). The procedures shall also apply in cases when the district of prior attendance, where that is not the district the child attended when permanently housed, will educate the child.
  1. Homeless individuals not in facilities (shelters) or institutions, as well as homeless individuals living in hotels, motels, cars, tents, doubled-up with a resident family, shall be reported and reimbursed as resident students;
  2. For homeless individuals in temporary shelters, the educating school district will send a PDE-4605 Determination of District of Residence for Student in Facilities or Institutions in Accordance with Section 1306 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code to the presumed district of residence;
  3. If PDE-4605 is acknowledged by the resident district, the educating district will enter the child on its rolls as a nonresident student from the acknowledging resident school district. The educating district will bill the resident district for tuition and will report membership data according to PDE child accounting procedures; and
  4. If PDE-4605 is disclaimed and a school district of residence cannot be determined, the educating school district should submit a written request to PDE's School Services Office to make a determination regarding the student's "ward of the state" status.
- B. In cases when the education of the child is provided by the district of origin, including preschool children, where that is the district the child attended when permanently housed, that district will continue to educate a homeless student for the period of temporary displacement and should maintain the homeless student on its roll as a resident student. When a child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, it also includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools. (Section 722(g)(3)(I)).
- C. In cases when the student becomes permanently housed during the academic year and continues in the school of origin, which is not in the district of new residence, the educating district will continue to educate the formerly homeless student, if requested by the student's parent or guardian, until the end of the academic year and should maintain the homeless student on its roll as a non-

resident student. The educating district should advise the new district of residence of its financial responsibility for this student and send a tuition bill.

## **Categorical Eligibility under the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs**

Effective July 1, 2004, Section 107 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 amended Section 9(b) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to make runaway, homeless and migrant children categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The following are guidelines set out by PDE for implementation of this amendment.

1. Homeless, runaway or migratory children are automatically certified as eligible for free meal benefits and can begin receiving free meal benefits upon proper documentation for meals. Please note that documentation as runaway, homeless, or migratory can only be provided by a school district migrant education or homeless education staff.
2. School district migrant education or homeless education staff are responsible for providing proper documentation of a child's status to the food service directors in each school district.

## **Dispute Resolution Process**

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, every state must develop procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths. 42 U.S.C §11432(g)(1)(C). The state must ensure that LEAs comply with requirements set forth in the McKinney-Vento Act including ensuring immediate enrollment, providing written notice to families concerning school selection, enrollment decisions and providing enrollment and pendency in the school of choice while a dispute is being resolved. 42 U.S.C §11432(g)(2)(A).

PDE has developed the following procedures to govern the resolution of disputes regarding enrollment, school selection, homeless status and complaints of non-compliance with legal requirements pertaining to the education for homeless children and youths:

### **Level 1 – A dispute may be raised with a LEA.**

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child or youth involved must immediately be admitted to the school in which they are seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute 42 U.S.C.§11432(g)(3)(E)(i). PDE recommends that the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth who initiates the dispute contact the LEA liaison for individuals experiencing homelessness as soon as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. If the person initiating the dispute does not contact the LEA liaison directly, the

LEA shall be responsible for contacting the LEA liaison regarding the dispute as soon as possible and referring the family or youth involved to the liaison.

The LEA liaison shall ensure that the child or youth is immediately enrolled, explain the dispute resolution process to families and help them to use it 42 U.S.C.

§11432(g)(3)(E)(iii). The LEA shall issue a written disposition of the dispute within 20 business days after the LEA liaison is notified of the dispute. The disposition shall be provided to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth and shall explain the basis for the decision and advise the parent, guardian or youth of the right to appeal. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(E)(i).

*NOTE:* The LEA should use and maintain copies of PDE's "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" form (see attached) which ensures that all LEAs (a) inform families of the basis of their decision regarding enrollment or school selection; (b) notifies families of their right to remain in their school of choice pending resolution of the dispute and (c) explains the procedures for challenging the decision of the LEA.

## **Level 2 – A complaint may be filed with a McKinney-Vento coordinator.**

If the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth is dissatisfied with the LEA's disposition of a dispute or would like to raise any issue of McKinney-Vento Act noncompliance, they may file a complaint or appeal with a McKinney-Vento site or regional coordinator or with the state coordinator. (See attached list which contains contact information for all of the McKinney-Vento coordinators in Pennsylvania). In lieu of filing an appeal with a McKinney-Vento coordinator, a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth may elect to appeal the LEA decision directly to a court of competent jurisdiction. Participation in the appeal procedure is not required prior to taking legal action.

A regional or site coordinator with whom a complaint or appeal is filed must notify the state coordinator immediately. Upon being notified, the state coordinator will review the complaint or appeal and assign it to a site or regional coordinator for disposition. The coordinator to whom the appeal is assigned may contact, interview and accept documentation from any individual or LEA involved, and shall issue a written disposition within 20 business days after the complaint or appeal has been assigned. The disposition shall be provided to the LEA and the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth involved. The child or youth shall continue to be enrolled in the school in which he or she is seeking enrollment until the complaint or appeal is resolved or until a disposition from a McKinney-Vento coordinator is received.

The state coordinator may assist in the mediation of disputes directly and may also invite those involved to have the dispute mediated at any time in the process through the Dispute Resolution Program operated by the Commonwealth Office of General Counsel (OGC). The [OGC Dispute Resolution Program](#) is a voluntary informal process through which a trained mediator assists in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution.

Participating in mediation is not a waiver of the right to file a lawsuit nor is participation in mediation required prior to taking legal action.

*NOTE:* The parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth may file a complaint with the McKinney-Vento site, regional or state coordinator on the attached complaint form. However, the use of the attached form is not mandatory. Any dispute raised by a homeless family or youth concerning school enrollment or any other right under the McKinney-Vento Act whether received via telephone, letter or any mode of communication shall be treated as a complaint.

## References

### Purdon's Statutes

[24 P.S. § 13-1301](#)

[24 P.S. § 13-1302](#)

[24 P.S. § 13-1306](#)

### State Board of Education Regulations

[22 Pa. Code § 11.18](#)[Opens In A New Window](#)

### Federal Regulations

Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#)[Opens In A New Window](#)  
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act[Opens In A New Window](#)

## US Code

[42 U.S.C. §§11431-11435 \(including section 722\)](#)[Opens In A New Window](#)

[20 U.S.C 1087vv](#)[Opens In A New Window](#)

## Other

[Pennsylvania Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plan](#) (PDF)

[U.S. Dept. of Education Guidelines – Homeless Children and Youth Programs](#)[Opens In A New Window](#)

[OGC Dispute Resolution Program](#)

[Determination of District of Residence for Students in Facilities or Institutions \(PDE-4605\)](#) (PDF)

## Attachments

[Procedural Safeguards Notice of Denial of Enrollment \(PDF\)](#)  
[Enrollment Complaint to PA Department of Education \(Word\)](#)  
[Pennsylvania McKinney-Vento Coordinators \(State, Regional & Site\)Opens In A New Window](#)

## **Bureau/Office Contacts**

### **Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
333 Market Street, 3rd Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333  
Phone: 717-783-6466

### **Child Accounting questions should be referred to:**

Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Management  
Division of Subsidy Data and Administration  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333  
Phone: 717-787-5423

### **Transportation questions should be referred to:**

Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Management  
Division of Subsidy Data and Administration  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333  
Phone: 717-787-3195

### **For additional information, please contact:**

Storm Y. Camara | Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program  
333 Market Street, 3rd Floor | Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333  
Phone: 717.772.2066  
[scamara@pa.gov](mailto:scamara@pa.gov)