



James Jordan Middle School
Character • Community • College

818-882-2496

WWW.JAMESJORDANMS.COM

Parent Student Handbook

2008-2009

JJMS STAFF

Executive Director/Principal
Director of Operations
Student Services Coordinator
Operations Assistant

Dr. Myranda S. Marsh
Ms. Kimberly Bowlin
Mrs. Irene Nunez
Ms. Kathleen Frasca

MISSION AND VISION

James Jordan Middle School is a free public school devoted to offering students the opportunity to enjoy a small college prep school with many of the advantages of a private school. We promise to provide greater support and more individual attention than will be found in traditional district schools. We promise to focus on helping students prepare for college and a successful life in the real world. We are dedicated to offering the chance for enormous success to all types of students.

In exchange, we ask parents and students to give more effort to their schooling than would be demanded in a traditional public school. Students must exercise greater self-discipline and accept some limitations to their freedom to help move them towards greater academic success. Parents must be involved with their child's education and make significant efforts to meet with teachers, check homework and provide service to help the school. Our school can only prosper when all partners invest extra effort.

Charters are a school of choice. We offer a program that is very different from traditional district schools. This program will be wonderful for many students, but not for all students. Parents who find our approach does not work for their child have the option of returning to their residential district school at any time. Families who are unable to meet the promises made at enrollment and who violate the charter may not have the opportunity to return in the following school year.

The daily operation of the school is the responsibility of the Executive Director/Principal, Dr. Marsh. If a parent has cause for concern or disagrees with a decision made by the Executive Director they can inform the Board of Trustees at board@jamesjordanms.com.

THE PROMISES

When you enroll, the school promised to provide a safe supportive environment for learning. Parents and students also sign promises for specific things they would do to help everyone be successful. Keeping these promises is important for the success of the whole school. **Students and parents who repeatedly break these promises may not be invited to return in the following school year.**

JJMS School Council

Parents are invited to share their opinions and help make decisions about how the school works. Every parent is expected to attend at least TWO school council meetings during the year. The council will have elected representatives from each group of stakeholders: Parents, teachers, students, and staff. The council will participate in setting budget priorities, enforcing parent/student promises and other important choices. One of the elected parent representatives will also have a voting seat on the Board of Trustees. Your child will bring home the Parent Update newsletter on Thursday afternoons. You need to ask to see this newsletter each week. Notices about JJMS school council appear in the Parent Updates.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL DAY

Campus Hours

During the school year, the office will be staffed from 8am until 4:30pm. We will provide student supervision on campus from 7:30am until 6pm. From 4-6pm, the child must be enrolled in the After School Program. A student must be picked up by 4:15pm or they will be charged one day's fee for the after-school program. Parents are welcome to visit classes at any time after signing in at the front office. Please find the academic calendar and the bell schedule at the end of this handbook.

After School Program

There will be an after-school program available from 4-6pm. You can apply for the after school program by filling out a form. This program will be supervised by an adult, but not by a credentialed teacher. This is a quiet place to work on homework but staffing costs do not allow us to provide individual tutoring. The After School program is not part of the regular school day and students must maintain a high standard of cooperative behavior to be allowed to participate in the program. Students who qualify for the free lunch program will be not be charged for the after school program. Other students will pay \$50 per month for the program. If a family is unable to pay for after-school care, they can apply for a scholarship. Forms are available at the front office. Students **MUST** be picked up by 6pm or the parents will be charged \$1.00 per minute to pay employee overtime. If a parent is late more than three times, their child will not be allowed to participate in the after-school program at all.

Minimum Days and Pupil Free Days

We do not run our regular after school program on minimum days. The Winnetka Park is less than two blocks from our location and has after-school programs at very low cost. On **SOME** minimum days, we have a company that will be offering “camp” activities for \$10 per child. The activities will include lunch, sports and art/crafts until 6pm. The “camp” activities will be available for \$10 per child per day. The Camp activities are FREE to students who are on the free lunch program. Students with reduced lunch program pay only \$5 per day for minimum day or pupil free day activities. This camp is NOT part of the regular school day and students will need to sign up for this service with the company that will use our space to provide the activities.

Attendance

Please keep in mind that we only get paid by the state for the days that your student is actually in school. Please do not look at minimum days as a good time to take children out of school. The only absences that we can count as excused and therefore still paid by the state are verified illness or verified medical appointments, court appointments, or religious observances. Please help us get all of the funding we can by not removing your child from school for other reasons. Absences are only “excused” if they are verified by a doctor’s note or by summons from a court or upon proof of bereavement. Verified absences are those for which we have a note saying the child was absent with parent permission. We do not receive money from the state for these absences and therefore they are not considered “excused”. State law, specifically, Education Code 48260, defines more than three unexcused absences as “truancy” and may bring serious consequences. Any student who has more than 5 unexcused absences will be required to have a parent conference with the principal. Any student who is absent from school for more than 10 days without a legal excuse or independent study arrangement with the school will be disenrolled. ***Family trips must be taken outside of the school year.***

Tardy Policy

Any time that a student is late to class they miss valuable information. Also, the late arrival distracts the other students and the teacher. When a student is late to class, they will remain after class to make up the missed learning time. Another student will have to volunteer to stay and help explain the missed information. Everyone loses learning time when a student is late to class so students must make every effort to be on time for every class. Parents need to insure that students arrive on campus no later than 8:20 to insure that students will reach their first class before 8:30am.

Testing

The state of California requires all public schools to administer the CST and CAT6 tests during the month of May. **Our funding and status depends on having everyone take the test.** Please help us earn the best scores possible. Students must take this test seriously. Unless your child is sick, please make sure that they are in school all day every day during this time.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Grades

James Jordan Middle School has developed a standards-based promotion policy in accordance with Assembly Bill 1626 (AB 1626), Ed. Code 48070.5(1)(d), which was passed into law in September 1998. Students in grades K-9 are required to meet minimum identified criteria in order to promote to the next grade. **Students must earn an A, B or C grade to earn credit for a course.** We do not offer "D" grades because students will not get into a four-year college with D grades. Students who do not earn credit for a class must demonstrate mastery of the material or repeat the course. Parents need to meet with teachers at least twice a year, but it would be very beneficial to keep in contact with teachers on a monthly basis. Students who do not earn credit for a course will need to repeat the grade. Students who have NC on a report card will need to attend Saturday school during the following trimester.

Homework

Students will have homework every night and on the weekends. Students are likely to have 30 minutes of work from each class (Math, Science and Humanities). The teachers will make sure that the homework is always recorded in the student's daily planner. **Each night, the parent or guardian must sign the planner to indicate that they have seen the completed homework.** You need to ask to SEE the homework that was done. Additionally, students will need to spend 30-60 minutes reading everyday to make sure that they are able to complete at least 20 books during the school year.

School Records

Please go to your current school and ask for a copy of the complete cumulative file of your child's records. The PAR sheet given by many schools is not very complete. You are legally entitled to a copy of the records if you make your request in writing. Please send the records to: James Jordan Middle School, 20040 Parthenia Ave, Northridge, CA 91324. JJMS will keep all student records confidential

Special Needs

Our school operates a full inclusion special education program. Our small size means that we do not provide every special Ed service at this campus. For example, we do not have an SDC or SDP class at this time. Keep in mind that not even a district school offers every possible service at every campus. **While you have the right to enroll your child at JJMS no matter what the IEP says, an IEP will be held within 30 days to determine if your child's IEP can be served at this campus.** If the IEP team determines that your child needs services that cannot be given at this campus, you will be referred to your district school of residence or to another appropriate placement.

If your child has an IEP, please send us a copy immediately so that we can find providers for all of the services your child needs. If your child has a medical condition that will make daily medication or emergency training important, please write a letter

explaining your child's needs and any information that we will need to help your child stay healthy and safe. Mrs. Nunez is certified in Advanced First Aid and all of the administration will receive training on any emergency procedures necessary. ***We do not have a school nurse.***

A SAFE AND SCHOLARLY ENVIROMENT

Discipline and Conduct

Research has shown that self-discipline can be more important than IQ or knowledge in predicting which students will be successful in school. We believe that helping students develop self-discipline is critical to helping them reach college. This leads to the highest expectations for student behavior and attention and consequences paid to even small mistakes. If we pay attention and give counseling when small mistakes are made, we can help students develop self-control and thoughtfulness about their behavior. School must be a place that feels safe and comfortable for every student. Each student must make sure that they are learning how to get along with a diverse group of friends and classmates. We talk to students about the real-world dilemma of getting along with difficult co-workers on any job. We expect that our students see school as their job and strive to have professional behavior while on campus. We emphasize an expectation that all students will be polite to everyone at school and when they make a mistake and hurt someone's feelings they will apologize and take action to make up for their mistakes. We work in counseling and guiding style as much as possible, saving serious consequences like suspension and expulsion for serious violations and students who are unable to make major improvements in their behavior. We expect parents to be our partners in the continuous campaign to get students to be thoughtful and responsible.

TYPICAL CONSEQUENCES

- For small offenses like "playing around" in line or at PE, lunch detention is common.
- For bringing junk food to school, detention at lunch or after-school to prepare a report on the dangers of junk food. Loss of free time until the report is complete.
- For chewing gum or having it at school, 2 hours of clean up duty at lunch and after-school.
- For cheating, one day suspension and no credit for the test or assignment and two weeks of "grounding" which means no free time at recess or lunch and no art classes and students must attend Saturday school.
- For lying, two weeks of "grounding" which means no free time at recess or lunch and no art classes and students must attend Saturday school. In some cases lying may result in suspension.
- Defiance (failure to obey an adult) loss of free time and other privileges including not going to the park or field trips until trust is re-established. Serious episodes of defiance will cause a suspension with a parent meeting. Repeated offenses will mean that the parent has to spend a day at school with the child.

- Failure to wear the uniform, loss of free dress and eventually meeting with parents.
- Repeating the same mistake, or making several mistakes in a short period of time will cause us to use stronger consequences.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS REPEATED PROBLEMS WITH BEHAVIOR, PARENTS MUST BE PREPARED TO TAKE A DAY OFF OF WORK AND ATTEND SCHOOL WITH THEIR CHILD.

GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

A student may be suspended or expelled for any of the enumerated acts listed below if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at JJMS or at any other school at any time including but not limited to: (a) while on school grounds; (b) while going to or coming from school; (c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; (d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

- 1) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person or willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense.
- 2) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Director/Administrator or designee's concurrence.
- 3) Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of, any controlled substance as defined Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
- 4) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
- 5) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- 6) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
- 7) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
- 8) Possessed or used tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel.
- 9) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.

10) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11014.5.

11) Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

12) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.

13) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e., a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.

14) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a or 289, or committed a sexual batter as defined Penal Code 243.4.

15) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.

16) Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property as defined in Education Code Section 48900.7.

17) Committed sexual harassment as defined in Education Code Section 212.5.

18) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence as defined in Education Code Section 233(e).

19) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and/or reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder, and/or invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This includes acts which may be generally described as bullying. Repeat offenders will be expelled from the school.

20) Cheating, including allowing someone else to copy your work, and lying to an adult in a way that interferes with the smooth operation of the school.

21) Repeated failure or defiance of the charter bylaws and principles as embodied in student and parent compact signed at enrollment in a manner that is disruptive to the learning environment. Students who are disenrolled under this clause shall be retained until the end of the school year and disenrollment shall mean that they will not be invited to return for the following school year.

Education Code 48915(c) requires that JJMS immediately suspend and recommend for expulsion any student who commits the following offenses while on campus or while attending a school function:

1. Possessing, selling, or furnishing a firearm. It is a federal mandate that a school expel, for a period of not less than one year (except on a case by case basis), any student who is determined to have brought a firearm
2. Brandishing a knife at another person.
3. Unlawfully selling a controlled substance.
4. Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or sexual battery.
5. Possession of an explosive.

Uniform Policy

Part of establishing a feeling of professionalism and equality at school is having a uniform policy. You will find the full details of the uniform attached to this handbook. ***If your child arrives at school without a full uniform, you may be required to return to school to provide the proper clothing or the child may be asked to wear one of the "borrowed" uniforms from our office supply.***

Electronic devices and other valuables

With the exception of calculators, students should not carry any electronic equipment, especially Mp3 players, games or cell phones. If your family has a serious need for your child to carry a cell phone, please send us a note and we will arrange a meeting with the student, parents and administration to discuss the responsible use of the phone. Students who have made an arrangement with the school to bring a cell phone must turn it in to the office each morning and pick up at the end of the day. Electronic devices will be confiscated and only released to a parent or guardian. Do not send your child to school with valuable items or large amounts of cash. If a child breaks this rule, the school will not investigate to find the lost item nor assume any liability for replacing the item.

Safety

Students may be suspended or expelled from school for any of the reasons established by the State Department of Education Code under Section 48900, including threats or attempts to cause harm to any person, carrying controlled substances, damaging/stealing or attempting to steal/damage school property, disrupting school or defying the authority of a school employee, any form of sexual harassment or assault, carrying or holding any knife or firearm or imitation firearm. In addition to state law, ***our charter declares that we will consider bullying and ongoing teasing to be a serious offense and repeated violations will lead to suspension and expulsion.***

DON'T BRING (there will be consequences):

- Unhealthy food, specifically any type of soda, candy, chips, mints or gum. Or any food with high sugar content.
- Electronic devices like cell phones, games, and Mp3 or DVD players.
- Liquid paper or other liquid white-out product
- Permanent ink pens (having them on campus may cause you to be held responsible for graffiti).
- Wallet chains, pocket knives, or any other object that could be easily used as a weapon.
- Any adult or offensive material, including books, pictures or magazines.
- Any other object that might distract or disrupt school routine.

HEALTH ISSUES AT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Snack Policy

Out of concern for the nationwide epidemic of childhood obesity and the negative impact on afternoon classes, JJMS does not allow sugared sodas, candy, gum or chips on campus for students. There may be rare occasions where a special celebration allows for this type of food at school, but our message to students is that high sugar or non-nutritious foods should be a special treat and not part of a daily lunch. A high sugar food is any food where one of the first three ingredients is sugar, corn syrup, dextrose or any other term for sugar. Soda, candy, gum and chips will be confiscated and will only be released to a parent or guardian. Because it would be impossible to try to check on every can or treat, this policy means that sugar free soda, sugar free mints and candy are also not allowed on campus. Students may carry cough drops when they are feeling unwell. Gum is specifically forbidden by our lease and so students with gum will face serious consequences and may be fined to pay for repairs and cleaning.

Lunch Program

We have contracted with a private caterer to provide breakfast and lunch on campus. If your child qualifies for the national lunch program, this service is free. Students who do not receive free meals will sign for their meals and be billed once a month. After the first week of school, a menu will be sent home on a monthly basis and students need to indicate which days they will purchase lunch.

Hygiene

Middle School students can be too casual about personal hygiene. They need to brush their teeth everyday and bathe on a regular basis. Discuss the changes that take place in their body at this time of life. With older students body odor becomes an issue. Your children are very active, and we live in a warm environment. Please do not hesitate to provide antiperspirant/deodorant for your child. When children come to school unclean, others notice. This can lead to teasing and avoidance by other students. **Please do everything possible so that your child can have positive social relationships. We do not want any student to feel left out or avoided.**

Sleep

It is very important for your children to get the appropriate amount of sleep. They are all growing and need to be well rested before they come to school. When a child is going through a growth spurt, they require more sleep than normal. Children generally require anywhere from 10 to 12 hours of sleep nightly. Young adults require at least 8 hours of sleep. **Please help your child get the right amount of sleep.**

Illness

If your child is ill, please call and inform the office. *For your own child's protection and the protection of others, please do not send him/her to school sick.* If your child complains of feeling sick at school, depending on the severity, you may be contacted to pick him/her up. If at all possible try to get a copy of the homework your child missed during his/her absence.

Immunizations

New students will not be enrolled unless a written immunization record provided by a physician or the health department is presented at the time of enrollment and immunizations are up to date or unless written communication is provided to waive this requirement for specific reasons. There are new requirements for Hepatitis B and Measles-Mumps-Rubella vaccines (MMR) immunizations for new enrollees and 7th grade. Students who require additional vaccine doses or who lack a written record are no longer allowed a grace period. All students new to the school must show that they have received all currently required immunizations in order to be enrolled. The immunization status of all students will be reviewed periodically. ***Those students who do not meet the State guidelines must be excluded from school until the requirements are met. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease for which they have not been immunized may be excluded from school at the discretion of the school.***

Lice

Outbreaks of lice in Los Angeles are very common. The School follows the suggested preventative routines outlined by the Los Angeles County Health Department. These routines include periodic head checks and disinfecting of all necessary areas in the school. If you discover that anyone in your family has lice, please notify the school immediately. If it is discovered that your child has lice eggs and/or lice in his/her hair, you will be notified and you must use a special comb to remove the lice by combing the hair for two-four hours. Don't share brushes, combs and hats with other students!

Ringworm

Ringworm is an infectious disease characterized by scaling or cracking of the skin. In severe cases vesicular lesions appear on various parts of the body. Students with ringworm will be sent home and require a doctor's note indicating that the ringworm is not contagious to readmitted.

Chickenpox

An effort will be made to notify parents/guardians about school exposure to chickenpox. The parent/guardian of a student for whom chicken pox presents a particular hazard should contact the school to facilitate communication. Students at risk include those with conditions affecting the immune system and those receiving certain drugs for the treatment of leukemia or organ transplants.

Other Illnesses

A student returning to school with sutures, casts, crutches, brace(s), or a wheelchair must have a physician's written permission to attend school and must comply with any safety procedures required by the school administration. A student returning to school following a serious or prolonged illness, injury, surgery, or other hospitalization, must have written permission by the health care provider to attend school, including any recommendations regarding physical activity. An excuse (less than 10 weeks) from a physical education class may be granted to a student who is unable to participate in a regular or modified curriculum for a temporary period of time due to illness or injury. A parent's written request for an excuse will be accepted for up to 5 days; thereafter, a written request is needed from the student's health care provider. *A current Emergency Information card must be on file at the school so that parents/guardians can be notified promptly in case of accident or illness involving their child.*

Medications at School

Students may not carry or use medication on campus without written consent. A student who needs to take medication during school hours must have a statement to this effect on file at the school, signed by the prescribing physician and the parent/guardian. Self-administration of medications may be permissible by special

arrangement with the school administrator. The required forms are available from the school office or administrator. School personnel do not administer, prescribe or give advice regarding any kind of medication. If a child is taking medication, it is in his/her best interest to arrange a schedule so that a parent or legal guardian can administer the medication if that is possible. ***We do not have a nurse on campus.***

Treatment of school related injuries

It is the policy of the school to treat minor injuries (scrapes, paper cuts, bumps, etc.) with ice packs, cold compresses, or band-aids as needed. Parents will be notified about minor injuries at the discretion of the administration. When confronted with more serious injuries/illnesses, school staff will contact parents, and, if required, transport the student to the nearest hospital emergency department or call 911. It is the responsibility of the parents to update school medical and emergency information. ***Students who do not have working phone numbers on their Emergency Cards may be excluded from school until a working number is provided.***

Speech, Hearing, Scoliosis and Eye Examinations

Students will receive hearing, scoliosis and vision screenings as mandated by California State Law. Where applicable, a qualified nurse or other health professional will be brought on campus to perform these services. Notices and consent forms will be sent to you prior to the screening.

Chronic Conditions

For your child's safety, the school must be aware of any special needs your child may have, such as asthma, allergies, or any other persistent medical conditions. You are required to notify the office and your student's teacher.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Textbooks/materials

Students will be issued textbooks and other school property to use during the year. The family is responsible for paying the cost of any book which is lost or damaged. Students should cover their textbooks with removable covers and should keep reading books in a plastic bag to reduce damage to the pages and covers.

Homework

Parents must sit down every night and review the agenda book to ensure that students have completed their homework.