

Welcome to  
**Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School**  
Southern Lehigh School District



**The Upper Elementary School Experience**

## A Note To Parents

The transition to intermediate school is an exciting time. As parents, you can do many things to help your child succeed academically, socially and emotionally during these years. This presentation is intended to offer you information so that you may guide your child and ensure that he/she has a great experience at JPL IS.

Welcome to the Intermediate School.

# Ready. Set. Go! Preparing for Transition

- Moving from the primary grades to the upper elementary grades is a big deal in a student's life. The thrill of growing up and moving to a new school can also seem overwhelming. So preparing kids for what lies ahead, expressing confidence in them, and staying connected is important.
- The academic work becomes more challenging in the intermediate grades and students need to be prepared for increasing demands. Organization becomes critical. Increased independence and responsibility develop over these years. So, practice giving your child more independent tasks at home, and monitor and praise their success. Gradual growth in these skill areas over the next three years is the goal.
- Students' attitudes toward school become more defined during these years as well. Kids become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and start to understand themselves as learners. Many students begin to express the subjects they enjoy most. Encouraging effort and instilling confidence is important. Expect their best, and remind them that some of the greatest learning comes from making mistakes.
- When children transition to the intermediate grades, parents experience transition too. Students become more involved in community athletic programs, clubs, scouts and the arts. You may see small but noticeable shifts in your child's focus. Friendships become important. As this shift begins it is important to stay connected. Get to know your child's friends. Help them to navigate challenging social issues with grace and diplomacy by talking and listening. Try to avoid the temptation of jumping in to solve your child's problems with others. Instead, spend the time modeling for your child what you would say and do. Keep in mind that there is always more than one side to a story.

# Attendance

*The information appearing in this section is abbreviated from the Student-Parent Handbook.*

- The Intermediate School's attendance policies are consistent with all other buildings in the district and follow PA School Code. Written notes explaining the reason for absence **must** be submitted within **three school days** of a student's return to school or the absence is coded as unexcused. Absence slips are available on the school website. If convenient, parents are also asked to call the school on the morning of a student's absence by dialing 610-861-4040 and leaving a message on the attendance hotline. We will share this information with teachers.
- Parents should realize that days of absence validated by a doctor's note or taken for approved educational trips all count toward a student's cumulative absence record. Once a student reaches 10 days of cumulative school absence in a school year, proof of attendance at a medical or judicial agency appointment is required to excuse future absences.
- Unlawful absence constitutes a violation of the PA school code. This results in a notice sent to parents. **Six unexcused** absences may result in the filing of charges with the district magistrate.

## **SCHOOL HOURS:**

Morning Drop Off:	8:35AM (before-school care is not available)
Afternoon Pick Up:	3:25PM (after-school care is not available)
Student Day:	8:50AM to 3:30PM
School Office Hours:	8:00AM to 4:00PM

# Code of Conduct

- The intermediate school attempts to ensure a safe and disruption-free learning environment by employing preventative and proactive approaches to student misbehavior. The philosophy at IS is to teach students by modeling appropriate behavior throughout our school, and ways to resolve conflicts and communicate with others. The consequences for not following school rules can range from staying in for recess to school suspension. The severity of consequence depends on the seriousness of the offense and past history of the student involved.
- As classroom managers, teachers will establish classroom rules and make decisions concerning appropriate discipline of students in class. Additionally, all intermediate staff members enforce school rules in common areas such as the halls, lavatories, cafeteria, playground, etc.
- The school psychologist, guidance counselor, assistant principal or Dean of Students and the principal will work with teachers and parents to help students understand and comply with school rules. Supportive and individualized behavior plans may be developed and used with students. Cooperation is important and helps students to see the adults in their lives as working partners.
- Parents can be assured that school administrators will discuss the disciplinary matters and actions involving your student with you only.

# Courses

In the intermediate grades, students are instructed in the core subjects of Mathematics, English/Language Arts (ELA) or in the case of Spanish Immersion students Spanish Language Arts (SLA), Science and Social Studies. Students also have art, music, STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics), physical education and health. Classrooms visit the library frequently, and students have regular contact with the School Librarian and Technology Facilitator as support educators in the school.

It is not unusual that coursework begins to present new challenges to students in the intermediate grades. The instructional concepts are more complex and the curriculum rigorous. Students and parents should be prepared for the increasing demands that come with learning in the higher elementary grades.

The IS has various ways to address the needs of learners. Support teachers and intervention specialists are available to help struggling students and those with identified learning disabilities. Gifted services are also available. In classrooms, teachers use differentiated instructional techniques that help to ensure that all students are provided with the necessary support or extension needed to grow as learners.

## **Teachers**

Students will experience multiple teachers during their years at the IS. Core instruction is provided by two, three or four teachers depending upon the student's grade and class assignment. Students gradually learn how to manage course expectations and the demands of various teachers. The slow introduction to additional teachers offered at the IS gives students the time needed to grow the organizational habits that will contribute to their future success at the secondary level.

## **School Counselor / Psychologist**

The IS has a guidance counselor and a school psychologist on staff. Both offer classroom presentations and individual student support services. Our guidance counselor and school psychologist work closely together and are available to assist students in their transition to their new school. They stand ready to help students and families with diverse needs and can help with many academic, social or emotional concerns.

## **School Nurse**

The IS is staffed with a licensed School Nurse and Health room Paraprofessional. These ladies work in partnership with you and classroom teachers to ensure that your child's health and medical needs are understood and that they are well cared for in school.

# Bullying & Social Media

## **Bullying & Cyber Bullying:**

- Sometimes bullying becomes more prevalent as students grow. Talk to your child about what to do if he or she witnesses a student being bullied. Know what bullying is and what it is not so that you can offer proper guidance and advice to your child. If your child shares that they have been bullied or harassed, find out as much as you can about what has happened and share that information with your child's teachers, counselor, or the school assistant principal or principal.
- Students of IS age often become users of social media sites. These sites are not accessible to students using district technology. Should your child experience or be engaged in problematic communication using social media sites, it is recommended that you disable or restrict their access. Control your child's personal accounts and assign consequences for misuse. This is an important parent responsibility.
- Students found breaking school rules with regard to bullying or cyber bullying during school hours and/or which interfere with the school environment will experience appropriate disciplinary consequence.

# Standardized Tests & Common Assessments

- Students at the IS will participate in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment or PSSA. Please refer to the school website for annual PSSA testing dates.
- Students in each grade and course will also participate in periodic subject specific testing. Some assessments are designed for individual classroom use while others are common, or given to all students in a grade level. Assessments are designed to measure what students know and should be able to do after instruction. They provide meaningful feedback to teachers and parents about student learning. Parents should realize that common assessments, because they are used grade-level wide, may not be sent home for review.

# Activities

- Students in the intermediate school have opportunity to join the chorus, band and orchestra. These activities meet as a grade level group during school time on a special day in our schedule (Spartan Block). The chorus, band, and orchestra prepare for school concerts and occasionally perform at community and competitive events.
- Although students in the elementary grades are not yet eligible for school-sponsored athletic programs, there are many athletic opportunities in our local community. For more information, please visit the school's website, Community Athletics.
- We encourage parents to get students involved in extracurricular activities. Research shows that students who are involved enjoy school more and do better academically. Your child will make new friends and gain social skills and confidence.

# District & School Communications

## **SCHOOL WEBSITE**

The Southern Lehigh School District maintains a website for informational and communication purposes. Please visit the website often to stay up to date with the school calendar and news. Teacher webpages provide helpful links and resources for students.

## **SAPPHIRE COMMUNITY WEB PORTAL & ELECTRONIC REPORT CARDS**

The IS issues student report cards by electronic means. In order to access your child's report card, parents will need to sign up for a Sapphire Community Web Portal account. Teachers also use electronic grade books, giving parents the opportunity to view student progress in real-time using the portal. Go to the Parents tab on the district website, click Sapphire Community Web Portal, create an account, enter the keyword 'spartans' and follow the directions. Don't forget to mail your completed, signed Community Web Portal registration to SLSD, 5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034 or fax to 61-282-0193.

## **BLACKBOARD CONNECT**

Blackboard Connect is the district's electronic communication and alert system. It allows parents and families to receive news of weather alerts, school closures, emergencies, as well as other important school and district announcements. You may ask for communication by telephone, text and email. We highly recommend that you ask to receive information by telephone and email. Directions for establishing an account are available on our school website.

# Parent Teacher Group (PTG)

- The IS Parent-Teacher Group is a recognized tax exempt, non-profit organization. This group helps to bring our school together by supporting the education of IS students and fostering relationships in our district community. Through fundraising, the IS PTG helps to afford assembly programs and other enriching classroom and school wide resources. Your participation and support of the IS PTG is appreciated.
- Spartan Service Corps is a PTG sponsored, parent lead student service group that meets periodically after school. The focus of their work is community outreach projects. The 'Corp' is a terrific place for students to practice philanthropy.

# Encouraging Growth & Independence

- Upper elementary students need to be encouraged to do and be their very best. For many students, a parent's approval is often enough and the best reward. However, if a change in behavior is what you are seeking, external rewards are still successful with this age group.
- Set goals with your child (homework completion without complaint, household chores, packing one's own backpack, etc.) Talk about motivation, taking personal responsibility and natural consequences. Ask your child how they plan to achieve their goals. Make it a point to monitor progress, recognize good effort, and praise their step accomplishment. Positive growth takes patience, practice, persistence.

# Homework

- Homework is the practice that makes perfect – or almost. The importance placed on homework directly correlates to the value placed on education. It is imperative for the adults in a child's life to communicate the importance of homework, and seek ways to promote a positive attitude toward schoolwork. Instead of homework, call it practice!
- Keep in mind that students may need your assistance with homework from time to time. They may require your help for something simple or need you to re-explain a concept newly introduced in class.
- Students need a place to study and supplies that will allow them to accomplish their job successfully. Students at IS will be given an agenda book at the start of the school year. Also, check the school and teacher websites for information and sign up for teacher reminders. Before school begins, check our website for specific teacher team supply lists.
- Finally, remember that the practice levels required to become proficient with school concepts differs from student to student. Do not compare your child to another. Rather encourage each child to persist. If it takes one longer than another to reach understanding, so be it.

# We R Spartans

We R Spartans is a school-wide citizenship building program designed to encourage positive behaviors and social responsibility at JPL Intermediate School. Citizenship behaviors are intended to promote student awareness, accountability, and success across the larger school environment (in classrooms, common areas, on the playground, and during school travel). The six R's communicate and remind students and staff of the ideals that help to ensure a school atmosphere where all can learn.

## **BEHAVIOR R's**

Respectful	Spartans are respectful of people and property.
Responsible	Spartans are responsible in word and deed.
Rule Abiding	Spartans follow rules to help ensure a safe and orderly school.
Ready	Spartans are always prepared and ready to learn.

## **ATTITUDE R's**

Rigorous	Spartans are rigorous workers willing to give their very best.
Resilient	Spartans are resilient in spirit and approach all challenges with a winning attitude and a readiness to overcome setbacks with determination.

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