

JENNINGS SCHOOL

PARENT INFORMATION – 2014/2015 SCHOOL YEAR

BEGINNING OF YEAR ACTIVITIES/DATES

Tuesday, August 26th	6:30-8:00 P.M.	P.T.A. Ice Cream Social
Wednesday, August 27th	10:30-11:00 A.M.	K, 1st, 2nd classroom visits <i>(All students invited)</i> New Student Visitation (Grades 3-5) <i>Students new to Jennings are invited to stop by and say hello to their teacher and visit their classroom.</i>
Thursday, August 28th	9:00-10:00 A.M.	PTA Welcome Back Coffee (Tears and Cheers) in Café
Thursday, September 4th	6:30-8:00 P.M.	Open House Café/Gym <i>Principal Welcome then Parents (only) visit classrooms and meet with teachers; 2 classroom sessions beginning at 7:00</i>

CAFETERIA SERVICE/OPENING DAY ARRANGEMENTS:

Full cafeteria service will begin on the first day of school, Thursday, August 28, 2014. Fairfield welcomes Whitsons as our cafeteria management service provider. Although not confirmed, we move forward with students using our electronic lunch system. This system works very well and is easy to manage for both school and parents. Please make sure your child has money in an account as it will be needed for the very first day of school. You may want to send in a check to begin an account while taking more time to determine how best to manage this throughout the year. Of most importance is that you remember to keep the account up to date as it is quite upsetting for a student to find out their account has a zero balance when attempting to purchase lunch. We will continue to send home reminders of “low” balances and will provide your child with an alternate choice if an account prevents him or her from purchasing hot lunch. A negative balance over \$25 will result the cafeteria not being able to serve your child lunch. If there is any way the school can be of assistance please do not hesitate to ask.

SCHOOL TIMES

Grades K-5	8:55 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.
Early Dismissals	1:40 P.M. – Grades K-5
Delayed Openings	10:55 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.

Please be aware that in elementary schools in Fairfield a student is considered present if he/she is in school for at least 1/2 the day. If the hours are not met, he/she is marked absent for the full day.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

If your child is entitled to bus transportation, the number of the bus he/she will take to school and a schedule of the bus stop should be posted on the district website and in the paper. Information may also be posted on Infinite Campus parent portal. Please have your child report to the bus stop nearest your home. Scheduled pick-up times for the bus stops are indicated on the bus schedule. For dismissal during the first few days of school – expect some delays as the drivers begin to get accustomed to their route. Inclement weather also can delay the buses at times. Students line up for dismissal buses inside the building and are escorted to their buses by staff. Please do not attempt to remove your child from the bus unexpectedly as this can cause confusion for the children and staff while holding up the buses from departure. Please also remember to discuss with your student(s) the importance for safety and respect for all bus rules. Our bus drivers have a difficult job and work closely with the school to ensure a positive experience for everyone.

WALKERS/CAR PICK UPS/DROP OFFS

****Supervision begins at 8:45 – students cannot arrive until after that time. ****

Please help us keep all our students safe by making sure to update your dismissal plan on Infinite Campus. It is important to update any changes immediately. We have four types of dismissals for students – busers (children riding the bus), walkers (children who walk to/from school on their own), car pick ups (children who are picked up by car), parent pick up (parents meet children in designated classrooms). Please do not ask your child to meet your car at an alternate location other than the school car loop in front of the school. We ask this for the safety of all of our children and we don't want them getting mixed messages about this very important school practice. If an unexpected situation occurs during the day that requires an alternate dismissal plan, ***please call*** the school office by 1:00 P.M. to allow us ample time to deliver the change to your child's teacher. For the safety of our students, we will only be able to honor "emergency" changes after this time. We also ask you to utilize the carloop sign to help our staff identify your car during pick up. If you need an additional or new sign, please contact Mrs. Goven in the main office.

CAR LOOP ARRIVAL

We will have plenty of adults on hand to help direct you during the first weeks of school and will have signs posted to help as well. We will follow the same procedure as last year. Our bus lane is located parallel to the primary wing of the building and our car drop off/pick up lane is the large circle located in front of the main building. Please help us keep our children safe by not crossing through these areas during arrival and dismissal times. Also, please do not allow/encourage your children to walk in between cars or buses either coming to or leaving from school. You and your children can use the crosswalk areas for this purpose if needed. Adults will always be on duty to help direct your car through the loop. It is especially helpful if you arrange to have your departing child (children) sitting on the right side of your vehicle for easy exiting with sibling car seats located behind the driver's side. This helps children exit quickly and safely and is of great help to parents behind you who may be in a hurry to get to work. Please **DO NOT USE CELL PHONES** when driving on school property-we want everyone to be safe at all times!

WALKERS

Walkers are dismissed from their classrooms and are expected to walk directly home. Independent walkers should have a permission note on file with both the classroom teacher and the main office.

*****Please remember there is no adult supervision at school after the last bus departs (between 3:30 and 3:40). Consequently, for the safety of the children – ALL students must promptly leave the school grounds unless accompanied by an adult.**

PARENT PICK UPS

Students are dismissed by grade to their youngest sibling's classroom. Please make sure to inform the teacher on duty once you have "met" your child.

For safety reasons we do not allow drop off (or pick up) behind the school building. We thank you for following this very important safety precaution.

CAR DISMISSAL

The dismissal process begins when the bell rings at **3:25 P.M.** Staff will be on duty to help direct your car through the car loop. If you arrive at school before 3:25 it is possible to begin lining up on the right side of the street south of the loop (as noted * on the diagram below. Keep in mind that "mini" buses and the big buses must have space available to enter through their area. At approximately 3:25, staff will begin directing cars to line up in the car loop itself. Students line up by grade level outside the main entrance (under the roof) and are escorted to their cars. It helps greatly if you prepare to accept your child to enter your vehicle on the right side. Staff will help to make sure every child is safely on board before directing you to exit. We typically board about 5-7 vehicles at one time before guiding them through the exit. If your child is not ready when you arrive, we ask that you pull up to the right past the cone and place your flashers on. This alerts staff and cars behind you that it is ok to pass on the left. For the safety of the students, this is the **ONLY** time passing on the left is permitted. It is a very speedy process that usually takes between five to eight minutes from start (at 3:30) to finish. We also ask you to utilize the family carloop sign to help our staff identify your car during pick up. If you need an additional or new sign, please contact Mrs. Goven in the main office. We greatly appreciate your cooperation in making this a stress free dismissal for our children and parents. Please be sensitive to safety and have children enter vehicles on the right side. As stated above, please **DO NOT USE CELL PHONES** when driving on school property-we want everyone to be safe at all times! If you are late when picking up your child – don't worry – we will make sure he/she is safely monitored in the office until your arrival. We do, however, appreciate your best efforts to pick up your child (children) on time.

LUNCH

Students dine with their grade level partners. Students are given 20 minutes for lunch and 20 minutes for recess. Students in grades K – 5 have recess before lunch with 5 minutes in between. Students in grades 1 & 3 dine together and students in grades 2 & 4 dine together. The schedule is as follows:

	Recess	Lunch		Recess	Lunch
Grade K	11:05	11:30	Grade 3	11:45	12:10
Grade 1	12:00	12:25	Grade 4	11:15	11:40
Grade 2	11:30	11:55	Grade 5	12:15	12:40

There was a new safety and security procedure put into effect across the district last school year regarding visiting for lunch. During the year each student will be allowed to have **1 lunch visit** to celebrate a child's birthday. Similar to last year, we ask that you alert the main office that you will be visiting so that they are prepared to welcome you. It is the district's policy and Fairfield Police Department's recommendation to limit access to the building to only those visitors we are expecting. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we work to build a welcoming environment that includes balancing the safety of our staff and students. There will be a special table identified for these visits and we ask that you sit with your child only

INCLEMENT WEATHER ARRIVAL

When there is inclement weather all children should enter through the main entrance doors. Children in grades K-2 should then report to the cafeteria before school (beginning at 8:45) and 3-5 will proceed to the gym. When dropped off by car, students can enter directly through the main entrance doors and proceed to their designated locations.

During winter months – you may call 255-TALK or log on to www.fairfieldschools.org to see if there is a school delay, early closing, or school cancellation. You may also receive an alert from Infinite Campus if you chose to set the portal up in that manner. Please make note that the Board of Education has determined that **delayed openings will again be for 2 hours**. This would mean that **school will begin at 10:55** and entry to the school building no earlier than 10:45. Unfortunately, we cannot accept students prior to this time when school is "delayed."

CALL IN PROGRAM (Student absence)

In 1985, Jennings School began a safety "Call In Program." All Fairfield Schools now have a similar program. The purpose of this program is to make sure that every Jennings School student, who leaves home each morning, arrives safely at school by 8:55 A.M. PARENT COOPERATION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE PROGRAM'S SUCCESS – and it will only be successful if you participate consistently. Therefore, we need 100% of all student absences and tardies reported by you. This means that every time your child is absent, or will be tardy (i.e. doctor's appointments), you must call and notify the school office. A telephone-recording device has been installed for this purpose.

PLEASE FOLLOW THIS PROCEDURE:

CALL 255-8413 (A recorded message will state "Jennings School. This is the absentee tape. After the sound of the tone, please state:

Your child's NAME
Your child's ILLNESS
OR Reason for absence or tardiness AND
Your child's TEACHER

*****DO NOT PUT ANY OTHER MESSAGES ON THIS TAPE***** Please make sure to call by 8:55 A.M. This will enable us to take the names from the recording machine and verify the attendance lists rapidly. We will then call any family where there is a discrepancy between parental reported absences/tardiness and teacher reported absences/tardiness. The recorder will be in operation from 3:45 P.M. until 8:55 A.M. each day. **THIS SPECIFIC #, 255-8413, WILL BE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR RECORDED MESSAGES UNTIL 8:55 A.M.** Tardy students should report to the office for a "pass" before going to class.

In addition, it is essential that you send your child's teacher a written note explaining the reason for any absence. This note should accompany your child on the first day of return to school after an absence. There will be information shared at Open House regarding the state legislation regarding attendance.

It is essential that you do your best to make sure your child attends school regularly and arrives to school on time. It is very disruptive and upsetting for a child to enter a classroom that has already begun. On behalf of our students, we greatly appreciate your efforts to keep tardies to a minimum. If your child has been tardy for 10 or more times, you will receive a notice from the office alerting you to this in order to be of help to your child.

VISITORS

We openly welcome parents to our school and especially appreciate their wonderful efforts as volunteers. In an effort to remain ever vigilant in our efforts to keep all our children safe, we ask all visitors schedule their visits through the main office. We must have this information in advance to properly welcome you. If it is a last minute visit please call the school prior to your arrival to alert the secretaries of your presence. Upon arrival you may ring into our camera entry system and our secretaries ask that you state your name and reason for your visit. We then ask you to go directly to the main office to sign in and pick up a visitor's badge. This is an imperative step to take if there is going to be a visitor our staff may not recognize. We have instructed our staff to approach all visitors at Jennings not wearing a staff or visitor's badge. Please do not be offended by this as we are all simply doing our best to maintain a safe environment for all. We also ask that you always use the main entrance of the school when entering and refrain from going outside during recess. All volunteers must sign a volunteer registration form kept in the main office. If you have any questions regarding visiting the school, please do not hesitate to ask the main office.

BIRTHDAYS/CLASS CELEBRATIONS/FOOD ALLERGIES

Past practices will remain for the upcoming school year. We love celebrating occasions with our students; however, it is essential that we all take precautions to ensure the safety of our children with food allergies. Of special concern to us are our students with potentially fatal allergies. If your child is placed in a classroom with a student with serious food related allergies you will receive specific information relating to conditions that may be necessary in that class. We have designated "nut-free" lunch tables in the cafeteria where students invite their friends to join them for lunch when their lunch is free from nut products. Our students are well aware of the importance of keeping all our students safe and they are extremely considerate of their peers. We ask for your continued help by working with us to monitor the food sent to school as we work towards celebrating events without an emphasis on food. Don't forget to monitor holiday cards and please refrain from sending in those with candy items attached.

If you would like us to celebrate your child's birthday at school, you may send in a special snack for ***your child only*** and a non-edible treat to pass out to friends. This works very nicely here at Jennings and helps us minimize interruptions to instructional times while celebrating such a special event.

CLASS PARTIES

We strongly discourage class parties that involve food within the classrooms. Please work with your room parent and teacher to develop ways to celebrate special events without food. We greatly appreciate your help in keeping all our children safe in this way.

EMERGENCY SLIP

Please be sure to continuously update your Infinite Campus account as all emergency contact information is gathered from this data base. If you need any help feel free to call the main office and the secretaries will gladly assist you.

JENNINGS MONDAY MEMO

This publication is in conjunction with our PTA. It helps to consolidate all important information in a weekly bulletin format. In an effort to go paperless, you can view the Monday Memo on line. (For parents who do not have access to a computer, a hard copy of the Memo will be provided. (Please let your child's teacher know.) The PTA is also excited about the updated website. Please take the time to browse the site at www.jenningschoolpta.org It has many new features that will enhance communication and assist families with their planning.

VACATION POLICY WHEN SCHOOL IS IN SESSION

The staff of the Fairfield Public Schools emphasizes the importance of regular school attendance. We urge you to plan vacations only during the time school is NOT in session. If you must take a family vacation during school time, the following will be the responsibility of both the parents and child:

1. Send a written note to your child's teacher at least a week before you will be away requesting schoolwork to be covered during that period. To the extent that the teacher can provide work, which the child can do with little or no direct teaching instruction, it will be provided.

During the vacation, parents should set aside regular study/reading time and whenever possible assist the child with his/her work.

2. Upon the child's return to school, make up work must be handed in **WITHIN TWO WEEKS** of the return to school.
3. If the child cannot understand the work, it is the responsibility of the parents to provide tutorial assistance outside of school to help the child. While teachers do help youngsters after school, that time is most properly reserved for children absent from school for illness, family emergency or a holy day or for pupils who attend class and still need extra help to grasp difficult concepts.

Family time is extremely important and we can understand the circumstances that might result in missed school days. On behalf of our faculty and administration, however, we seek your understanding and cooperation in working with us to ensure that your child's education is prioritized even during these times. New state legislation is very clear in the regulations regarding attendance. The school will communication with families regarding this important issue.

CONCERNS

If you have any concern about your child, please make sure to directly contact your child's teacher. Feel free to send in a note or leave a message through the main office. All of our teachers make sure to return phone calls promptly. Don't let a little problem turn into a big one – make sure to stay in close communication with your child's teacher regularly. Please do not ever hesitate to e-mail or call.

HAVE A WONDERFUL 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR!!!