



James Irwin Charter Middle School

5525 Astrozon Boulevard
Colorado Springs, CO 80916
Phone 302-9000
Fax 591-9993

September 1, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It's hard to believe that the first two and a half weeks of school are completed! Thank you so much for getting your student(s) to school each day. Thank you also to those of you who made it out in the rain last Tuesday for our Back to School Night. We had a great turnout, and the teachers were excited to meet so many of you. ☺

The teachers have been putting in a lot of effort to see that the students get off to a great start academically. Additionally, many of our students are now involved in fall sports. Please make an effort to come support the students, especially for our home games. We're looking forward to a great year. ☺ Please note the following items of information and refer to them as needed over the next weeks.

- **September Character Trait: Respect**

- Look for opportunities to model and discuss respectfulness with your student(s).
- Refer to the Student Handbook for this JICMS Core Value:

I will respect others and myself and show courtesy to everyone. This includes the following:

- Show self-respect, including personal boundaries, personal hygiene, and self-worth.
- Treat others as you wish to be treated; help others in service by sharing your talents.
- Show respect for teachers and the learning environment through active listening, respecting school property, and following class rules.
- Show respect for authority in school and out.
- Have a Win-Win attitude; help others and develop a school and team spirit.
- Listen carefully to ideas and perspectives different from one's own; agree to respect others' ideas and beliefs.

- **Carpool** – Thank you so much for your patience as we work out all the “bugs” in our carpool system since adding the elementary traffic this past week. Please note the following procedures to keep things running smoothly.

- **Use only the two center lanes.**
- **Students are to cross where the cross guards are ONLY.**
- **Please do not park or pickup on Astrozon.**
- **Please pick up your students while you are parallel to the yellow striped area to avoid a gap in the line.**
- **If there is ever a gap in front of you, please pull up as far as possible to keep things running smoothly.**
- **When exiting the carpool area, please only turn left onto Astrozon. This will help prevent congestion between the MS and ES.**
- **If you have both an elementary and MS/HS student, please go to the elementary carpool and instruct your MS/HS student to wait for you on the sidewalk in front of the elementary building. If you prefer, you may**

park in the elementary parking lot, go in to get your ES student and have the MS/HS student(s) meet you on the sidewalk or walk to the car.

- **If you have students in more than one of our schools, please plan your pickup time to make your trip as efficient as possible.**
- **Refer to the carpool sheet (sent home two weeks ago) for other information not mentioned here.**
- **Thank you so much for your understanding and participation as we work to run things in a more efficient manner. ☺**

- **Dress Code**

- The purpose of our uniform policy is to “set a higher standard of excellence, not only in dress but also in conduct, safety, and achievement. This policy is in force to facilitate the education of the JICS students, to ensure their safety, and to allow our teachers to focus on the education of our students.”
- Several of our girls have been observed to have the wrong style of pants. The requirement is not just tan or navy blue. The pants must also be a cotton blend and uniform styling. Please check to make sure that your daughter is not wearing pants styled like jeans (outer pocket stitching or embroidery) or of jean material. Students will be notified over the next week or two if their pants do not fall under the category of uniform style.

- **Tardies**

- Please make every effort to get your child to school on time and to pick them up in a timely manner. Just being one minute late to class can translate into five minutes before the student is truly engaged in the instruction. If this is a regular habit (two-three times per week), the student has lost over nine hours of instructional time by the end of the year.
- Also, many students are showing up late to class. Now that we are in the third week of school, the students should have their routines down. Mrs. Shilling, our attendance secretary, is tracking these tardies, and consequences will be issued for those who have reached four or more tardies to this point. Please refer to p. 15 of the Handbook for further clarification.

- **Meeting with the Dean or the Principal**

- Please understand that it is not always possible for Mr. Roots or I to have **unscheduled** meetings.
- For that reason, we have established a protocol for the Front Office to follow to help us prioritize the situations we deal with on a daily basis. Please read the following:
 - If you tell the receptionist that you'd like to see the Dean or the Principal, she has been instructed to ask questions like the following:
 - Is this a student issue? If so, is it in regards to a teacher, a class, another student, etc.?
 - Is this a teacher issue? If so, have you already spoken to the teacher?
 - These questions are necessary to direct you to the right administrator.
 - Mr. Roots deals only with student discipline issues. I work with parents/guardians in regards to teacher, academic, and family situations.
 - It has always been a James Irwin policy that when a parent/guardian has an issue with a teacher, that they respectfully go to that teacher *before* getting administration involved. Please know that our staff and

faculty are very approachable, and that the goal of every one of them is to do what is best for your student.

- If an issue arises that makes you uncomfortable going to a staff member alone, I will be happy to go *with* you to meet with that staff member. The staff member is always to be a part of the “loop.”
- Thank you for your understanding both with the Front Office and the Administration as we try to make things run as smoothly as possible.

- **Infinite Campus**
 - If you have not yet accessed Infinite Campus to track your student’s grades, behavior referrals, missing assignments, and attendance/tardies, please plan to do so within the next week. This is one of the most detailed and efficient ways that we communicate with you.
 - If you do not have an access code (These were distributed at Back to School Night for new parents.), please go on the James Irwin website (www.jamesirwin.org), click on the link for Tech Support, and make your request there.
 - We still have the paperwork from Back To School Night, for new parents we have your access codes printed out; for returning parents we have your **CSAP** scores.

- **Sports Teams at Schools other than James Irwin**
 - If you have a son or daughter who plays sports on another school team, please email his/her name, grade, sport, and school name to our school Athletic director, Mike Darlington. Mike.darlington@jamesirwin.org.

- **Back to School Dance**
 - 6th-8th grades, chaperoned by MS teachers.
 - Students may change, but must be in modest attire. Jeans worn must meet regular Friday jeans requirements.
 - Only James Irwin students are permitted. Student IDs may be checked.
 - \$2.00 per student, from 2:15-4:15 p.m. – Please pick up your student ***no later*** than 4:30 p.m.
 - Concessions will be available for purchase.

- **Labor Day, Monday, September 7 – NO SCHOOL**

- **Next Jaguar Friday** – September 25th; Students may wear tops that are only school colors (navy blue or gray) or class colors (6th – purple; 7th – red; 8th – light blue). Of course, class t-shirts and anything James Irwin may be worn. ☺

Please be sure to refer to this information often throughout the next month. We are so proud of our students for the great start to this new school year and look forward to helping them learn the skills and character that will cause them to “dream big” for their futures. ☺

A copy of this newsletter, written in Spanish, will be available at the front office by Friday, September 4.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Holly Varnum
JICMS Principal