



## **James Otis School**

### **Parent Handbook 2023-2024**

#### Message from the Principal

I am very proud to be the James Otis School Principal. We believe that each and every student who attends the Otis receives the very best education. Our students come to school happy and ready to learn. They are taught by licensed professional teachers.

#### Our Mission

The mission of the James Otis School, working in concert with families and other community agencies, is to provide a challenging instructional program designed to promote intellectual and social development of every child.

These programs will be designed so that the students will develop a capacity and a sustaining desire for life long learning which will enable them to enjoy successful participation as productive and responsible citizens in a democratic society.

The administration and the faculty at the James Otis School will offer an atmosphere, which encourages respect, academic excellence and personal growth. All Staff will work collaboratively and are committed to the success of each and every child.

## Directory

<i>Ms. Goncalves</i>	<i>Principal</i>
<i>Ms. Rosado</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>Ms. DosSantos</i>	<i>Community Field Coordinator</i>
<i>Ms. Bakos</i>	<i>Nurse</i>
<i>Ms. Osorio</i>	<i>Family Liaison</i>

## **Teacher/Staff Directory**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Grade/Room</b>	<b>Paraprofessional</b>
<i>Ms. Thompson</i>	<i>Grade K1 /010</i>	<i>Ms. Brenda Orellana</i>
<i>Ms. Katz</i>	<i>Grade K1 /102</i>	<i>Ms. Malika El Hadeq</i>
<i>Ms. Bodden</i>	<i>Grade K2 / 100</i>	<i>Ms. Ruth Delvalle</i>
<i>Ms. Trainor</i>	<i>Grade K2 /105</i>	<i>Ms. Makayla Daly</i>
<i>Ms. Husgen</i>	<i>Grade K2 /107 SEI</i>	<i>Ms. Diana Iranzo</i>

<i>Ms. Weeder</i>	<i>Grade 1 /103</i>	
<i>Ms. Michaela Hyland</i>	<i>Grade 1 /301 SEI</i>	
<i>Ms. Katharine Pagano</i>	<i>Grade 1/302</i>	<i>Ms. Maria Crawford</i>
<i>Ms. Fetherston</i>	<i>Grade 2/ 300 SEI</i>	
<i>Ms. Ragusa</i>	<i>Grade 2/ 203</i>	
<i>Ms. Smith</i>	<i>Grade 2/ 207</i>	
<i>Mr. Prince</i>	<i>Grade 3/ 205</i>	
<i>Ms. Galante</i>	<i>Grade 3/ 206</i>	
<i>Mr. Hanson</i>	<i>Grade 3/303A SEI</i>	
<i>Ms. DiCostanzo</i>	<i>Grade 4/ 201</i>	
<i>Ms. Tuite</i>	<i>Grade 4 / 202</i>	
<i>Mr. Toscano</i>	<i>Grade 4/ 303B SEI</i>	
<i>Ms. Hyland</i>	<i>Grade 5/ 305 SEI &amp; Regular</i>	
<i>Mr. Eisele</i>	<i>Grade 5/ 307 SEI &amp; Regular</i>	
<i>Ms. Chan</i>	<i>Grade 6/ 307A SEI &amp; Regular</i>	

<i>Mr. Mallios</i>	<i>Grade 6/307B SEI &amp; Regular</i>	
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<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Subject</i>	
<i>Mr. Conlin</i>	<i>Science Specialist</i>	
<i>Ms. Pignone</i>	<i>Math Specialist</i>	
<i>Ms. Doyle</i>	<i>Drama Specialist</i>	
<i>Mr. O'Dwyer</i>	<i>Music Specialist</i>	
<i>Mr. Mallios</i>	<i>Physical Education Specialist</i>	
<i>Ms. Hamdi</i>	<i>Art Specialist</i>	
<i>Mr. Jimenez</i>	<i>Spanish Specialist</i>	
<i>Ms. Katherine Burke</i>	<i>Cluster Sub</i>	
<i>Ms. Emily Ross</i>	<i>Cluster Sub</i>	
<i>Ms. Briana Poirier</i>	<i>ESL</i>	
<i>Ms. Kathryn Emerick</i>	<i>K-2 Intervention ESL</i>	
<i>Ms. Morin</i>	<i>3-6 Intervention</i>	

<i>Ms. Madeline Doherty</i>	<i>COESS</i>	
<i>Ms. Nadine Pellicio</i>	<i>Occupational Therapist</i>	
<i>Ms. Sara Pivac</i>	<i>Speech Therapist (Eng)</i>	
<i>Mr. Alexander Cruz</i>	<i>Speech Therapist (Bil)</i>	
<i>Ms. Karina Suarez</i>	<i>Speech Therapist (Bil)</i>	
<i>Ms. Ana Velasquez</i>	<i>Psychologist</i>	
<i>Ms. Emily DeMazza</i>	<i>Social Worker</i>	
<i>Ms. Renee</i>	<i>Cafeteria Manager</i>	
<i>Ms. Elizabeth</i>	<i>Lunch Mother</i>	
<i>Ms. Carmen</i>	<i>Lunch Mother</i>	
<i>Ms. Rhina</i>	<i>Lunch Mother</i>	
<i>Ms. Elvia</i>	<i>Lunch Mother</i>	
<i>Ms. Karima</i>	<i>Lunch Mother</i>	

Welcome to the James Otis School! We are looking forward to working with you and your child this school year. We are committed to making this a successful year for everyone in the Otis community. This Parent/Student Handbook will provide you with specific information about our school.

The School Parent Council (SPC) will meet on a regular basis. ALL Parents of children in the James Otis School are automatically enrolled in the SPC and are **encouraged** to attend meetings. This is a great chance for you to voice your opinions, concerns, and comments regarding your child's education at the James Otis, as well as learn new and exciting things.

**Office Hours: 8:00 am to 3:30 pm**

**School Hours: 8:00 am to 3:00 pm**

**Breakfast: 8:00 am to 8:20am**

**Morning program: 7:15 am to 8:00 am**

**After School program 3:00pm-5:45pm**

### **Instructional Hours**

The instructional day for the James Otis School K-6 is from 8:20 am to 3:00pm. Students should arrive at school between 8:00am and 8:20am. Students arriving after 8:20 am are considered tardy. They must report to the office with the adult who transported them prior to reporting to class.

### **Dress Code**

The James Otis School has a **MANDATORY** school uniform policy. Uniforms can be purchased at the James Otis in the main office.

**Elementary Students K1-6:** White, Navy blue or Light Blue Shirts and Navy Blue or Khaki Pants or Skirts.

P. E. (Physical Education): Same colors as above but comfortable attire recommended (t-shirts, sweatpants, shorts, etc.)

## **Breakfast Procedures**

Breakfast begins at 8:00am and ends at 8:20. Walkers should arrive for breakfast at 8:00am. Bus riders will always be provided with breakfasts if their bus arrives after 8:15. Students can only have one choice of breakfast. Please follow the direction of the Otis staff. Your cooperation is appreciated.

## **Student Drop off at the School**

1st-2<sup>nd</sup> grade students should enter on Paris St. side gate. K1 students in Ms. Thompson's class should be dropped off at the classroom door. K1 in Ms. Katz will meet in the back schoolyard. All 3rd-6th grade students should enter through the Morris St. side gate. Teachers will be at both locations to meet and greet students.

## **Student Pick Up After School**

Walkers and car riders are to be picked up at the back of the school no earlier than 3:00pm. Please be prompt. Do not come too early. Parents are to wait for students at the back of the building. We often have several parents who come early because they are in the area. We will not dismiss students early unless there is a doctor's appointment or family emergency. We will ask that you bring a note from a physician. No one is allowed to wait inside the building. This is a safety issue.

## **Early Release of Students**

Students may not be released early from school unless the parent or other authorized adult has come to the office to sign them out. Students may not leave early other than for a doctor's appointment or family emergency. We ask that you make such appointments after school. Teachers may not release any child to someone who is not listed on the emergency care form filed in the office. The nurse will contact parents of students who become ill at school. Parents must pick up these students at school. Please make sure you always have an updated phone

number. Please call the school by 12:00PM or send a note to let us know you will be picking up your child early.

### **Communication**

Communication among administration, teachers, and parents is very important. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher, if they have a question or comment. The teacher will return the call or set up a conference as soon as possible. For any classroom based concern, the parent is expected to contact the teacher or Mara Dos Santos. Parents should be informed on a regular basis of upcoming projects and activities in school, and the teacher should be informed of any situation at home that may affect a child's school performance.

### **Procedure for Addressing Concerns**

The first step in dealing with classroom, including programs, assignments, homework, student discipline, student disagreements, and concerns specifically related to the classroom, is to make an appointment to meet with the teacher by sending her a written note.

Should the problem not be resolved by the classroom teacher, contact Ms. Mara Dos Santos either by phone at 617-635-8372 or make an appointment to come to the office.

### **Attendance/Tardiness**

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that students arrive at school by 8:20AM every day. This is the time when the teacher outlines the activities for the day, collects homework and other information, and prepares the children for the day. Those students who arrive at school late (after 8:20 AM) have missed that important part and must catch up on important activities. They must stop in the office for a late slip before going to class.

### **Absence Procedures**



In order to ensure the safety of students, you are requested to call the school by 8:15 AM every day your child will be absent from school. Any absence from school requires a written note from you or your doctor upon your child's return to school. Please remember that a student must be in school for four instructional hours to be considered in attendance. It is of great concern that each student be accounted for each day. Parental cooperation is appreciated.

### **Emergency Cards**

Emergency forms must be filled out and returned at the beginning of the school year. Parents are asked to provide work numbers and at least two local telephone numbers of people who will be responsible for the child when the parent is not available. Remember, this information is for your child's safety. The information will not be released to anyone except your child's teacher. **PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY OF ANY CHANGES ON THE EMERGENCY CARD.**

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Some of our students celebrate their birthdays during school time by bringing treats. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher for times to bring in the birthday treats to the main office. Please remember to come to the office first. No homemade treats are allowed. Also we are a peanut free school.

### **Field Trips**

Prior to any Field Trip, a note will be sent home describing the trip and explaining any fees involved. This notice includes a permission slip that **MUST** be signed by the Parent/Guardian and returned to the child's Teacher. Students will not be allowed to go on a Field Trip unless the permission slip is signed and returned.

Field trips are an extension of the curriculum and all students are expected to participate on the trips. Often there are follow-up lessons that directly relate to the field experience.

## **Volunteers**

Parents, grandparents, family members may volunteer to come on field trips. You must complete a CORI and be approved by BPS in order to chaperone on a field trip.

Please see Ms. Rosado, our school secretary for information on how to fill out a CORI form. If you wish to give some of your time, contact your child's teacher to coordinate a time. All volunteers and visitors must register in the office upon arrival and must wear a visitor's pass while on the school grounds.

## **No School, Snow Days and Delayed Openings**

In case of severe weather conditions, classes will be held unless an announcement has been made on the radio and/or television stating that all Boston Public Schools are closed. Check your local TV or radio for BPS cancellations. **Do not call the school.** If your child will bring snacks to school, snacks should be healthy in nature. Fruit, vegetables, cheese, yogurt, crackers or water are good choices. We are fortunate to have received a fresh fruit and vegetable grant that will provide a healthy snack to students three times a week.

### **Home and School Communication**

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held once a year, in the Fall. Ongoing communication between home and school is critical to your child's success. Please keep your child's teacher informed of changes that might affect your child's performance. Open house will be held on October 5, 2023 - from 4:00 - 6:00 PM.

### **School Visitation/Security**

We encourage parents to visit their child's classroom and become acquainted with their child's teachers. Contact the office/teacher in advance and upon arrival you must check into the main office. ALL visiting students and adults are to register in the office upon arrival and must wear a visitor's pass while on school grounds.

### **Smoking**

New BPS Policy - see Superintendent Circular # SHS-18. Smoking is prohibited on school property at all times. The Board of Education follows very clear rules about students possessing cigarettes or other substances.

### **Vacations**

It is our expectation that families adhere to the district school calendar. Every day at school is meaningful to our students. **Therefore, please plan family vacations according to the school calendar.** Extended absences may result in discharge from our school; if this happens, parents will need to re-register their students and may not be readmitted to our school.

### **Medication Policy**

In accordance with state law, only the school nurse, another registered nurse employed by the district, or the student's parent or legal guardian, may administer medication to students in school. Medication must be delivered to the school nurse by the student's parent or legal guardian.

When medication needs to be given on a trip, arrangements will have to be made to accommodate that child's needs. Please contact the school nurse before the trip.

1. A doctor's note indicating the medical reason for the medication and the time medication is to be given.
2. A parent note indicating the student must take medication.
3. Medication is to be in its original container, labeled with name of child, current dosage, date of prescription, prescription number and name of doctor.

### **Immunization**

Immunizations are reviewed annually to be sure all student records are up-to-date. The nurse would appreciate your forwarding verification from the physician when any booster is given.

### **School Based Rules**

The rules for students are developed because we believe that a safe and pleasant environment is crucial to both teaching and learning. Our mission is to prepare our students to function successfully in society by providing a positive environment where Students and Staff will grow to develop a good sense of self-esteem and mutual respect for themselves and others. By providing excellent, comprehensive programs and services, and a challenging and diversified curriculum, Students will be able to think critically, solve problems, make decisions, and have the skills necessary for productive citizenship and lifelong learning. Establishing extensive communication amongst Parents, Teachers, Staff, and the Community, is crucial to best meet the needs of the Students.

It is extremely important that all members of the school community - Students, Parents, Administrators, and Staff - join forces in helping our students achieve the following behavior: respect one another; assume responsibility for their actions; respect school and public property; and have a high expectation of themselves.

## On The Bus

Students will remain in assigned seats while the bus is in motion.

- No eating on the bus.
- Do not throw any object.
- Keep arms, hands, and heads inside the bus.
- No excessive noise or shouting that could distract the driver.
- Obey directions of the driver quickly and courteously.
- Swearing, fighting, and using profanity is strictly forbidden

## During The School Day

- Treat each other with respect by using appropriate language and avoiding physical contact. (No name-calling, fighting, etc.)
- **WALK** in an orderly manner. Stay on the right hand side of the hallway or stairway. **NO RUNNING.**
- All school equipment, books, and materials will be treated with care and responsibility.
- Respect the property and belongings of others.
- No gum, candy, or food during class times.
- Remove hats upon entering the building.
- No phones, headphones, toys, electronic games, Pokemon cards, etc.
- Possession of any dangerous item is prohibited.
- Follow the rules in all school settings
- Follow the James Otis School dress code

## Homework

Homework is one way to help students learn to take responsibility for their education and develop lifelong strategies and attitudes for success. Parents can

help by checking the child's agenda and/or homework folder daily for assignments and notes from the teacher. Additionally, parents can help by providing a distraction-free environment. As a parent you can help by asking your child to explain what he/she is doing. Ask questions that prompt your child to restate what is being learned. This reinforces learning. The quality and the timely completion of homework are factors considered in assessing a child's learning. Neatness is important.

Avoid the temptation to do your child's homework and produce an error-free product. This does not contribute to your child's learning; in fact, it often gives the teacher an inaccurate assessment of your child's learning. If your child experiences difficulty in the homework assignment, it is much wiser to inform the teacher that additional instruction may be necessary.

We recognize that a child absent from school misses more than the reading and writing assignments completed during the day. It is expected that the student will make up as much of the work as possible. As is the case with all schoolwork, the assignment needs to be done within a reasonable time after the student returns to school. If an emergency arises and your child cannot complete an assignment, send a note to the classroom teacher and other arrangements can then be made. If you ever have any questions about your child's homework, please feel free to call your child's classroom teacher.

## **Tips for Parents**

### ***I. You are part of the Educational Team!***

- Always feel free to ask questions - it is your right!
- Visit the school. Please call first to schedule an appointment.

- Get to know your child's Teacher(s) and maintain communication throughout the school year.
- Check your child's school bag **every** day for homework, notices, Calendar, Lunch Menu, etc.
- Attend Parent meetings, workshops, Open Houses, etc.

## ***II. You are your child's teacher, too!***

- **Believe** that your child can learn. Encourage his/her efforts to do well in school.
- Avoid questions with "yes" or "no" answers. Ask instead: "**what** did you learn in Math today?"
- **Encourage** your child to express ideas & opinions. **Listen** with interest and respect.
- **Help** your child make a serious effort to complete his/her homework assignment(s) on his/her own.
- **Read** with your child **every** day.
- Limit excessive TV time (including video games).
- Visit your local Library. Get a Library card for each family member over age four.
- Visit museums. (Children's Museum/Science Museum/Computer Museum/Sports Museum/Museum of Fine Arts/Aquarium) Ask the Librarian which museums have free or reduced-fare passes.
- Demonstrate that learning happens all the time. (A trip to the grocery store can be lessons in math - learning about money, sizes, shapes, colors, numbers, etc.)

## ***III. Your child needs your help to do his or her best!***

- Make sure your child comes to school EVERY day, **on time**.
- Make sure your child has a consistent scheduled bedtime and is well rested for school.

- Make sure your child has a substantial breakfast at home or in school.
- Make sure your child comes to school *clean* (teeth brushed, hands & face washed, hair combed, etc).
- Make sure your child comes to school dressed appropriately for the weather. The children may go outside for Physical Education or recess, even in the snow.
- Make sure that your child's belongings are labeled in case they are misplaced.
- Make sure footwear is properly secured and appropriate for days that Physical Education is scheduled.
- Make sure your child has regular medical check-ups.
- Make sure your child is healthy **before** coming to school.

### **Cell Phones**

The use of cell phones for any purpose - including telephone calls, text messaging, listening to music and other functions- is not permitted at any other time on school grounds.

Students in grades 5 & 6 must put their Cell phone in the Yondhr Pouch which will be given to them on the 1st day of school. At the end of the day, they will unlock the pouch and take the phone out. All other grades cell phones must not be visible during the school day.

Cell phones must be turned completely off (not simply on silent or vibrate mode) during school day.

### **Enforcement and Penalties**

Penalties for students found to be in violation of the policy will be as follows:

- First offense: Student's cell phone will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day.



- Second and subsequent offenses: Student's cell phone will be confiscated and returned only to the student's parent or guardian. The student will be prohibited from bringing a cell phone to school for the remainder of the school year.
- Students committing repeated violations of this policy may be subject to additional disciplinary action, consistent with the Code of Discipline.

### **Disciplinary Guidelines**

The administration and staff will apply the following guidelines for the consistent administration of discipline. Decisions regarding disciplinary matters will depend upon the following:

1. A complete investigation of the matter
2. Consideration of the severity of the offense
3. Consideration of the developmental age of the child
4. Consideration of repetitive behavior of the student
5. Fairness in light of mitigating circumstances
6. Guidelines as set forth in the Code of Conduct.

Consequences may include, but may not be limited to the following: warning by the teacher, parent communication, conference with principal, central detention, and/or suspension.

[BPS Code of Conduct Link](#)

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(We will include a copy of this page in the emergency forms packet the first week of school. Please sign and return to school. Thank you!)

I have received an electronic copy of the James Otis School Parent Handbook by email and agree to it. Please sign and return to school.

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Teacher's Name

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Grade/Room

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Student name

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Room

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Parent signature

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Date

We look forward to meeting you and hope you have an enjoyable school year.