



UNIVERSITY SCHOOL *of* JACKSON

**Middle School  
Student / Parent  
Handbook  
2016 – 2017**

## USJ Nondiscriminatory Policy

University School of Jackson admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and financial aid programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

***This handbook is intended to be a guide to the policies and rules of the Middle School of the University School of Jackson. All decisions regarding admission, academic progress, grade level and classroom placement, discipline and participation in programs or activities are at the sole discretion of the school's administration. Reviewed annually, this handbook may be modified only by USJ administration, faculty and staff.***

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## Guiding Principles

## Mission Statement

***We instill a passion for academic, artistic, and athletic excellence while committing to mutual respect, personal integrity, and life-long learning.***

## Identity Statement

USJ is a nondenominational, nonsectarian, college preparatory school dedicated to academic excellence and to our founding principles of faith, service, and scholarship. Based on a heritage founded in Judeo-Christian values, we provide an educational environment where students of all ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds are valued and respected. The faculty, administration, and students are empowered to nurture and embrace the Judeo-Christian values and our operating principles. Through the fulfillment of our mission and adherence to these core principles and values, we prepare our graduates to be responsible and informed world citizens.

## Values and Operating Principles

### **1. Integrity**

- A. We are firm and compassionate as we build strong character.
- B. We create an environment based on moral values and principles.
- C. We are fair and consistent with the discipline and ethical development of each student.

### **2. Honesty**

- A. We are truthful in all dealings.
- B. We honor and keep our commitments.
- C. We use facts as a basis for decision-making and problem solving.

### **3. Respect**

- A. We respect others and value each person's self-worth.
- B. We respect authority, the property of others, and the environment.
- C. We value the diversity of our student body.

### **4. Responsibility**

- A. We accept responsibility for our own actions and give credit to others for their accomplishments.
- B. We develop good work habits by striving for academic excellence.
- C. We encourage confidence and independence.

### **5. Excellence**

- A. We hire and retain the best available faculty, consistent with our mission.
- B. We set high standards and cultivate an environment of excellence.
- C. We evaluate and pursue all alternatives for enhancing the academic strength of the school.

## 2016-2017 Administration, Faculty and Staff

Head of School -	Stuart Hirstein
Interim Middle School Director -	Jim Hardegree
Dean of Students -	Jim Hardegree
Middle School Secretary -	Becky Baskin
Athletic Director -	Jody Evans
Director of Facilities -	Jack Peel
English Department -	Laura Micetich
	Ruth Ann Morrison
	Dana Simmons
Fine Arts Department -	Dian Eddleman, music
	Dr. Tammy Grant, musicals
	Tom Grant , band
	Anna McPeake, art
Foreign Language Department -	Mike Baskin
	Mark West
Library and Media Center -	Cindy Bell
MS/ US Counselor -	Debra Anton
Mathematics Department -	Mary Claire Hancock
	Bryce King
	Shay Young
Physical Education -	Rusty Bradley
	Paul Conway
	Brian Dunn
Science Department -	Billy Hight
	Marcia Moss
	Megan Thornton
Social Studies Department -	Spencer Nelson
	Tyler Paschal
	Shonda Vargason

## **History**

Officially founded on July 1, 1987, University School of Jackson was established through the consolidation of two independent schools, Episcopal Day School and Old Hickory Academy. With a rich heritage from both schools, USJ has doubled its years of experience and tradition to become the educational pacesetter for West Tennessee.

## **Accreditation and Memberships**

University School of Jackson is dually accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and AdvancEd. USJ is recognized by the Tennessee Association of Independent Schools (TAIS) and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). The school holds memberships in the following organizations:

- The American Library Association
- The College Board
- The Educational Record Bureau
- The Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce
- The National Association of College Admission Counselors
- The National Association of Secondary School Principals
- The Tennessee Library Association
- The Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA)
- The Tennessee Teachers of Foreign Languages



## Academic Life

### Daily Schedule

#### **Middle School Bell Schedule** *Rotation by Weeks*

<b>Period</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>B WEEK</b>	<b>R WEEK</b>	<b>U WEEK</b>	<b>I WEEK</b>	<b>N WEEK</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	8:00-8:50	A	B	A	B	A
Break/ Advisory	8:50 – 9:05 (assembly Fri 9:45)					
2 <sup>nd</sup>	9:10 – 10:00	B	A	B	A	B
3 <sup>rd</sup>	10:05-10:55	C	G	F	E	D
4 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 – 11:50	D	C	G	F	E
Lunch	11:50 – 12:20					
5 <sup>th</sup>	12:25 – 1:15	E	D	C	G	F
6 <sup>th</sup>	1:20-2:10	F	E	D	C	G
7 <sup>th</sup>	2:15-3:05	G	F	E	D	C
Lab/ Tutorial	3:05-3:30					

## Exams

Exam dates are posted on the school calendar and schedules are announced well in advance. Middle School students have 90-minute cumulative exams in all academic classes. Exams will count as 1/7 of the semester grade. Students absent due to illness should obtain an excuse from a doctor. Students absent due to extenuating circumstances must meet with the Middle School Director to determine procedures to make up the exams. Students who have an unexcused absence for an exam may face severe consequences, with the possibility of a grade of zero on the exam.

## Grading Periods

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter - August 5 – September 30
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter - October 10 - December 15
- **1<sup>st</sup> Semester Exams - December 12 - 15**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter - January 4 - March 10
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter - March 13 - May 19
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Semester Exams - May 16 - 19**

## Grading Scale

<b>A+</b> 98 – 100	<b>B+</b> 87 – 89	<b>C+</b> 77 – 79	<b>D</b> 65-69
<b>A</b> 93 – 97	<b>B</b> 83 – 86	<b>C</b> 73 – 76	
<b>A-</b> 90 – 92	<b>B-</b> 80 – 82	<b>C-</b> 70 – 72	<b>F</b> 0 - 64

- A – indicates excellence, substantially above usual expectations  
B – indicates good quality work above usual expectations  
C – indicates satisfactory work as a basis for further learning  
D – indicates less than satisfactory work and is a warning against failure  
F – indicates failing work  
I – indicates unfinished work due to illness or other excused circumstances

## **Homework Policy and Make-up Work**

USJ maintains high academic standards and homework plays an integral part in those standards. While teachers will strive to ensure that assignments are moderate in length and constructive in quality, Middle School students can expect an average of two (2) hours of homework on most nights. Parents may assist with selected assignments, particularly if memorization is involved; however the completion of assignments is the student's responsibility.

It is the responsibility of the student to master the materials covered during an absence from school. When a student has an excused absence, he or she will have one (1) day for each day absent to make-up all missed work for full credit. **After this time period, the possibility exists that missing assignments will become zeros.**

Tests, announced in advance, should be taken the day the student returns to school. Long-term assignments which have been announced in advance, such as research papers and major projects, must be turned in on their original due dates if full credit is to be considered.

Students missing classes for school-sponsored activities, including sports events, are responsible for getting their assignments before they leave and will not receive additional time to complete the work. If students in this category have tests scheduled, they are responsible for making arrangements with the teacher(s) to make up the test.

## **Re-enrollment**

Re-enrollment at University School of Jackson is not automatic. Students are expected to earn their place in the USJ academic community. Students who continue to have academic difficulty and/or whose behavior is deemed unacceptable may accordingly be denied re-enrollment.

## **Summer Courses or Summer Tutoring**

The Middle School Director may require summer courses, summer review or tutoring for students earning grades in the D range or below. USJ teachers will provide review materials/suggestions and a written report from the tutor will be required. All review assignments must be returned to the Middle School Director at least one week prior to the beginning of the new school year. Re-enrollment for these students will depend on satisfactory completion of the summer work. Because the nature of learning in mathematics is sequential and cumulative, a student must demonstrate an adequate mastery of the prior course work before advancing to the next sequential course. A returning student who receives a final grade of F (64 or below) in a mathematics course will be required to attend summer courses at USJ. In order to be promoted to the subsequent mathematics course, the student must demonstrate mastery of the material presented in the summer program.

## **Textbooks**

Textbooks are loaned to students by the school. Students are expected to care for the textbooks by keeping them covered at all times and by not marking in them. Parents will be charged for lost or damaged books. Report cards and final records will not be issued until lost or damaged books are paid for or returned.

## **Tutorials, Voluntary and Required**

- The Middle School teachers will be available for tutorials until 3:30 p.m. each day. Teachers and coaches with after-school responsibilities will make alternate arrangements for students to receive tutorial assistance, those teachers usually schedule their tutorials at 7:30 a.m.
- Students may voluntarily schedule appointments in advance to discuss their academic progress, the clarification of assignments, the make-up of missed work and tests, etc. Students are encouraged to email their teachers to schedule this appointment time.

**Students earning a C- or below in a specific class are required to attend tutorials at the teacher's request. Required tutorials preempt extracurricular activities.** Tardiness or absence from a tutorial shall be treated as tardiness or an absence from a class. Students requiring ongoing tutorials may be referred for outside tutoring.

## **Academic Warning and Probation**

At the end of every quarter, the Director will review each student's progress. If a student's grades are alarmingly low, the student may be placed on academic warning or probation. The student and his parents may be asked to attend a conference with teachers and the Director in order to discuss problems and solutions for the student's improvement.

When a student's academic progress is not satisfactory, the student may be placed on academic probation and his/her parents will be informed in writing. Academic deficiencies must be seriously addressed and corrected in order for the student to remain at USJ.

## **Attendance**

USJ recognizes that education requires continual instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and diligent study for students to reach their maximum potential. Tardiness and absenteeism are detrimental to academic achievement. Research has shown that there is a direct relationship between poor attendance and unsatisfactory scholastic performance. Students with good attendance records have a better chance to achieve higher grades, enjoy school, and learn the responsibility necessary for independence and success in later life.

Realistic distinctions should be made between legitimate and illegitimate absences. Therefore, USJ has established the following categories to encompass the majority of situations. All questions regarding attendance requirements should be directed to the Middle School Director. In the event of communication problems or differences of opinion between home and school, the school reserves the right to determine in which category a particular absence belongs.

**A parent *must* notify the Middle School secretary (731-660-2110) between 7:45 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. on any day that a student is to be absent from school.**

All students returning to school following an absence, regardless of the category, must report to the Middle School office with a note signed by a parent or guardian or the parent must have already emailed the Middle School Secretary stating the reason for the absence.

### **Early Dismissal and Return**

Students may not leave campus or return to campus during the school day for any reason without permission of school officials. The following procedures must be followed when leaving and/or returning to campus:

- When a student has a scheduled appointment, parents should contact the Middle School office before **8:30 a.m.** with the intended time of dismissal, so teachers can be notified through morning announcements.
- Parents should pick up students in the Middle School office. Parents or other visitors should never interrupt a class.
- Students leaving campus during school hours **must sign out** in the Middle School office.
- Upon return to school after an appointment during school hours, students **must sign in** in the Middle School office.
- Students will not be readmitted to class without an *admit slip* from the Middle School office.

### **Excused Absence**

The following are considered reasons for excused absences:

- Personal illness
- Serious illness or death in the immediate family
- Severe weather or road conditions
- Medical or dental appointments
- School sponsored activities
- Other circumstances as determined by the Middle School Director
- Five (5) Family Days per school year

### **Unexcused Absence**

Students, who are absent for reasons other than the above mentioned, will **not** be given an excused absence. The student will not receive credit for work missed. Under mitigating circumstances and at the faculty member's discretion, the student might be allowed to make up a major test, with one letter-grade penalty.

## **Excessive Absences**

In the event that a student's absences are excessive or are jeopardizing his/her academic success, the school reserves the right to require a doctor's excuse in order for the missed days to be deemed excused. In accordance with Tennessee state law (49-6-3007) which applies to all independent schools in the state of Tennessee, when a student accrues five (5) unexcused absences from school, written notice will be given to the student's parent or guardian and disciplinary action will be taken. If the parent or guardian fails to rectify the absenteeism, the USJ administration is required by law to report said absenteeism to the appropriate local governmental authorities.

## **Pre-arranged Absence**

The school's vacations are generous in both number and length, therefore, USJ expects parents and students to observe the dates specified on the school calendar. Exceptions, which are requested in advance, will be considered. By submitting a *Pre-Arranged Absence Form* **a minimum of seven days (1 week) prior to the absence**, the following absences may be excused for students in good academic standing:

- School sponsored activities which require the student to be absent from school for the entire day
- Five (5) personal days/family days

The *Pre-Arranged Absence Form* may be obtained from the Middle School office only. **The form must be approved first by the Division Director no less than one week (7 days) prior to the trip. The student should then present the approved form to each teacher for his/ her signature, request all assignments from the teachers, and make arrangements to make up any missed tests or quizzes.**

Failure to submit the form as outlined above may result in unexcused absences or zero grades for the days missed. If a student's academic standing is in jeopardy, a pre-arranged absence may not be granted.

## **Tardy to School /Class**

Recognizing the school's responsibility to help adolescents through the maturation process, we encourage punctuality, considering it to be a virtue in one's personal and professional life.

- Students not in their classrooms at the appointed times will be considered tardy. This includes being on time to class in the morning and between classes.
- Students may accumulate a total of five (5) tardies per quarter without penalty.
- Excessive (5 or more) tardies will result in disciplinary consequences to be determined by Dean of Students.
- Students who arrive late to school or late to class must report to the Middle School office for an admission slip. All tardies will be considered unexcused unless excused by the Director.

## **Conduct**

## **Code of Conduct**

Administration and faculty hold high, yet reasonable, expectations for USJ students regarding behavior. Students are expected to accept responsibility for their behavior and treat all members of the school community with courtesy, respect and kindness. In like manner, parents are expected to support the school's policies and accept their role as partners in the education of their child. If it becomes apparent that the partnership is no longer feasible, the parent may be asked to withdraw their child from the school.

## **General Behavioral Standards**

- Be on time for classes, assemblies, and school functions.
- Be respectful to others, in word and deed.
- Comply with the dress code.
- Take part in maintaining a clean, safe campus.
- Be a productive and responsible member of the school community.
- Cooperate *immediately* with the directions of any member of the USJ administration, faculty or staff.

## **Student Expectations and Agreements**

### **I know that I have a right to:**

- be in a safe and supportive learning environment, free from discrimination, harassment and bigotry;
- know what is appropriate behavior and what behaviors may result in disciplinary actions;
- be counseled by members of the professional staff in matters related to my behavior as it affects my education and welfare within the school;

### **I agree to:**

- appear for each of my classes at the start time, ready to begin work;
- be prepared with appropriate materials and assignments for all classes;
- show respect to all members of the learning community;
- resolve conflicts peacefully, and avoid fighting inside or outside of the school or at program sites;
- behave respectfully, without arguing, and cooperate when a staff member gives direction or makes a request. I understand that I will be given an opportunity to voice my concerns at an appropriate time if I do not agree with the request;
- take responsibility for my personal belongings and respect other people's property;
- behave and be mindful of the fact that my behavior affects others either negatively or positively

## **Unacceptable Conduct**

- Chronic tardiness or absenteeism
- Vulgarity in any form, by word or deed
- Public displays of affection
- Physical, emotional or sexual harassment
- Physical abuse in any form, such as fighting or hitting
- Playing too roughly, including pushing, wrestling, running indoors
- Lying
- Abuse, theft or violation of personal or school property
- Misuse of school technology
- Disrespect toward another person, by word or deed
- Possession of anything that could be used as a weapon or can be deemed as contraband
- Use of cell phones, iPods, computer games, or any other electronic devices, not deemed appropriate or acceptable, during normal school hours
- While computers are a wonderful tool, the use of computers to play games during school hours is prohibited.
- Students must adhere to the computer guidelines set forth in the Responsible Use Policy that each student and parent signs at the beginning of each school year.

## Cell phones

Cell phones and other technology devices can disrupt the academic environment; therefore, USJ prohibits the use of cell phones and other telecommunication devices during the instructional school day. Students have the option of leaving phones powered off in lockers, or if they choose to take them to classrooms, they can store them in the space specifically provided for cell phones. If students receive calls, texts, emails or other communication via cell phone, such devices will be confiscated and turned in to the Dean of Students. Parents will be contacted. The Dean of Students will only return the item(s) to the parents. **Parents, PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT YOUR STUDENT via cell phone (texts or calls) during normal school hours. (7:50 a.m.-3:05 p.m.)** Any message you need to send to your student needs to come through the MS office or email your student. The MS office phone is available for students to contact you.

Failure to follow the above guidelines will result in the following:

- **First offense:** The device will be held by the Dean of Students and must be retrieved by a parent.
- **Second offense:** The cell phone is held for one week by the Dean of Students, the student is assigned a detention, and the phone must be retrieved by a parent.
- **Third offense:** The cell phone is held for two weeks by an administrator, the student is assigned an in-school suspension, and the phone must be retrieved by a parent.

Further violations of this policy will result in a conference and more severe disciplinary action.

***This policy is cumulative for all three years of middle school. That is, the enumeration of offenses does not start over each academic year.***

## Gum



The chewing of gum is not allowed at any time on the school premises.

## **Hands Off Policy**

Inappropriate touching that could be interpreted as sexual harassment or contact that is physically abusive will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of students and faculty to report such infractions.

## **Oath of Honor**

***As a student at the University School of Jackson, I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor condone the actions of those who do.***

## **Academic Honesty**

USJ attempts to provide an environment where students develop intellectually, as well as socially and emotionally. In order to accomplish our goals, values are taught, learned and practiced on a daily basis.

- Homework assignments are to be prepared independently unless a student is given permission by a faculty member to work with others.
- Tests and quizzes are to be taken independently, without seeking or giving assistance.
- Plagiarism (use of another person's ideas, thoughts, etc., without giving credit to the source), cheating on homework, tests, or quizzes, and lying are considered to be serious behavior infractions, with serious consequences.
- If a student questions whether his/her work might be considered plagiarism, a faculty member should be consulted for advice immediately, not after a work has been submitted.

Punishments and consequences to be determined by Dean of Students.

## **Locker Policies**

Lockers are provided to students as a privilege and should be treated as such.

- Students should never open or remove items from another student's locker without permission.
- Locks are not provided by the Middle School. However, if a student chooses to use a lock, the locker combination or extra key must be kept on file in the Middle School office.
- Lockers must be kept clean, inside and out.
- No food or drink is to be left inside the locker after the end of the school day.
- Students may only use the locker to which they have been assigned.
- Students are cautioned not to keep valuables or money in the lockers.
- All lockers and their contents are subject to inspection by school authorities for any reason at any time.

## **Tobacco, Alcohol, and Illegal Substance Policy**

The possession or use of tobacco (in any form) will not be tolerated on the USJ campus or at any school events held on or off campus. The possession or use of alcohol or illegal substances on campus, at school events held on or off campus, or at any off-campus location may result in severe disciplinary consequences, including expulsion from USJ.

### **Weapons and/or Threats of Violence**

Guns, knives, clubs, and any other item, which could be reasonably considered a weapon, are prohibited on the USJ campus or at any school sponsored event held on or off campus. (Law enforcement officers or those legally authorized by the state are the only exceptions to this policy.) Students found to be in possession of a weapon will be subject to immediate suspension or expulsion. Students found to have made threats of violence or harm against school property, students, employees or others will be subject to strict disciplinary action, including expulsion, and will be referred to appropriate community agencies, including law enforcement and mental health services.

### **Harassment and Bullying**

**As a school community, we want to maintain an environment where all members may work, study, and enjoy freedom from harassment or bullying of any kind.**

- Harassment may be: physical abuse; verbal abuse (oral or written); obscene or suggestive remarks; display of sexually explicit, demeaning, or offensive materials; or comments which are demeaning.
- Actions considered to be bullying are any written, verbal, or implied communication that may be threatening, intimidating, or demeaning.
- These actions are prohibited at all times and in all circumstances (including communication on the internet, on social networking sites, via email, through text message, or on personal blogs), whether or not it originates on the USJ campus.

### **Daily Operations**

## **After-School Carpool Procedures**

Carpool procedures for dismissal will begin at 3:05 p.m. For the safety and security of the students, all students should be picked up **no later** than 3:25 p.m. Any students remaining in the carpool area after 3:25 p.m. will be moved to the front lobby of the building to wait for parents. Parents with extenuating circumstances **must** contact the Middle School Secretary or Director as soon as possible to make us aware of a late pick up time.

There is only one (1) carpool lane available. The lane closest to the building is intended for loading students ONLY. The outside lane is only used for exiting.

**No students are to load in the outside lane.**

If the student is not ready for pick up, the parent needs to move to the end of the concrete area outside the cafeteria. If necessary, please circle around again.

**Absolutely no one is allowed to “cut through” the front drive from the Lower School to the Middle School carpool lane either in the morning or the afternoon.**

**Parents may enter the front parking lot ONLY to park and come inside the building.**

**Students not picked up by 4:00 PM will be sent to After School Study Hall in the cafeteria. Parents will need to pick their students up from the MS/ US Cafeteria by entering campus at Entrance One and circling around Middle School Carpool. Parents will also be expected to pay a \$10 drop-in fee when they pick up their child.**

## **Extended Field-Trip Parking**

Parents attending and extended field trips with his/her student should avoid parking in teacher parking. Parents should ask the field trip coordinator about appropriate parking for extended trips.

## **Early Arrival to School**

Middle School students arriving at school between 7:15 and 7:50 a.m. should report to the cafeteria. Students are not permitted in the classrooms or locker room areas before 7:50 a.m. The only exception to this policy would be if a teacher grants a student permission to meet him/her for early morning tutorials.

## **First Aid and Medication**

Minor illnesses and injuries will be treated in the Middle School secretary's office. All students must have a Medical and Emergency Information Release form on file in the Middle School office. If it becomes necessary for a student to take any form of medication during school or school activity hours, a signed note from the parent must be presented to the Director. All medications will be kept or dispensed through the Middle School secretary's office.

No aspirin or stomach distress medication containing aspirin will be administered. The school has available acetaminophen tablets, ibuprofen tablets, and Emetrol, a non-aspirin stomach buffer. These will be dispensed by permission through the Medical Release form, required to be signed by a parent.

Any student receiving an injury at USJ should report the injury to the supervising faculty member immediately. Any student requiring assistance, other than initial first aid, will be taken to the clinic or hospital by local ambulance or school personnel. ***Every effort will be made to reach a parent or guardian in the event of an emergency.***

## **Food Service and Pin Numbers**

Hot and cold breakfast items are served on the Middle School/Upper School campus, beginning at 7:15 a.m. each day. Snacks may also be purchased from the cafeteria during the days that the Middle School students have break. The cafeteria serves a variety of hot and cold items for lunch. There is no fixed lunch plate; all menu items are a la carte. Also, please know that all or part of your child's lunch may be brought from home. Microwave ovens are available for student use.

USJ operates a cashless meal program. All students must make their cafeteria purchases with a four digit pin number. To deposit money onto the cafeteria debit card, please use the <http://usj.totalk12.com/> website and the account number and password assigned to your family.

## **Forgotten Items**

USJ Middle School strongly encourages the development of student responsibility. Parents are discouraged from bringing forgotten assignments, projects or athletic equipment to school. If it is absolutely necessary to bring items to school, **please know that NO items (books, homework, projects, etc.) will be delivered to students while classes are in session. Any items students have left need to be left at the "drop off table" in the front lobby. Parents can email students to let them know the items are here. Please do not bring the items to the MS office.**

## **Illness**

Parents should not send an ill child to school. In many cases, simply removing the risk of exposure best alleviates the spread of disease. Any student who becomes ill at school should report to the Middle School office so that his/her parents may be notified. A student should never dismiss himself or herself from school, and should sign out upon leaving school with a parent.

## **Lost and Found**

Students are encouraged to be responsible in keeping up with their books, clothing, and other belongings. All materials brought to school should be labeled with the student's name. The lost and found area is located in the Library. Articles remaining unclaimed by the end of each quarter will be given to a charitable organization.

### **School Closings – Inclement Weather**

If inclement weather conditions or emergencies make it necessary to close school, parents will be notified by our telephone/ texting notification system, SchoolReach, radio and/or television as soon as possible. You may also check our school website at [www.usjbruins.org](http://www.usjbruins.org).

During a tornado alert period, the school monitors the countywide warning system. The following stations are sources for USJ announcements:

#### **Radio Television**

101.5 FM (WNWS)  
WBBJ (Channel 7)

### **Telephone Policy**

Telephones are available for student use in the Middle School office and at the reception area in the front of the school. **Use of the Middle School office telephone is restricted to emergency use only.** Students may not be dismissed from class to use the telephone, except in the case of an emergency and with the permission of the Middle School secretary or Director.

### **Messages**

Only emergency messages will be delivered to students during the school day. Please make all necessary transportation arrangements ahead of time, rather than relying upon messages. If you need to notify students of a change in transportation, please email the student.

### **Visitors / Guests**

Providing a safe environment for our school family is our first and foremost priority; therefore, student visits will be limited to family members only. The Middle School Director must approve any exceptions to this rule. **All visitors** must report to the front reception area to receive a pass before being allowed to enter the Middle School area. Visitors are to check in at the Middle School office upon arrival and again when leaving.

Guest visits will not be permitted during semester exams.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

USJ reserves the right to reprimand or dismiss a student for conduct on or off campus that is detrimental to the reputation or best interests of the school or its students or to USJ's standards of honor and respect. The Head of School will be the ultimate authority and final decision-maker as to the meaning, interpretation and application of discipline. Mitigating or aggravating circumstances may influence a disciplinary decision. Factors considered may include, but are not limited to, seriousness of the offense, prior offenses, intent, provocation, and attitude.

The administration will report all major disciplinary problems to the parents.

Middle School students have a special obligation to meet the high standards of personal conduct at University School of Jackson. Disciplinary procedures have been established to provide guidance and training or to enforce consequences for inappropriate behavior. These procedures support USJ's goals: to maintain a positive learning environment that is physically and emotionally safe for all, to teach students that their actions have consequences, and to help students learn from mistakes.

### **Consequences for Misconduct**

Minor disciplinary issues will be handled at the student/teacher level whenever possible. Students who persist in inappropriate behavior will be referred to the Dean of Students, the Middle School Director or the Head of School. Misconduct may result in one or more of the following consequences:

- **Detention**

A detention serves as a concrete consequence for the violation of school rules. Detention is held on Wednesday afternoon from 3:15-4:15 pm. The student serving detention will be assigned specific duties, such as cleaning or yard work. If a student fails to appear, a double detention will be assigned.

- **In-school suspension**

There are times when the administration determines that a student must be suspended temporarily from the normal daily routine of school life. A suspension may last from one to five days. The student will be required to attend school, but will be isolated from the student body for the term of the suspension. The student will work on regular assignments and be expected to complete assigned tests. Credit for such work will be determined by the nature of the offense.

- **Off-campus suspension**

A student assigned off-campus suspension is not allowed to enter the campus during the term of the suspension. All assigned work must be completed before the student returns to the classroom.

- **Saturday School**

Saturday School may be assigned by the Dean of Students. Saturday School takes place at a time and for a duration designated by the Dean of Students. The student serving detention may be assigned specific duties, such as cleaning or yard work. If a student fails to appear on time for Saturday School, further disciplinary action, including the actions listed below, may be taken.

- **Expulsion**

In all matters of behavior and conduct, the Head of School has the authority to remove a student from USJ if the student is in violation of school rules and policies and the student's conduct is detrimental to fellow students, teachers, and the school community.

## **Consequences for Dishonesty**

Students at USJ need to understand that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying someone else's homework
- Giving homework to someone, so that it can be copied
- Plagiarizing – using another person's work, ideas, or a quotation, as if it were one's own
- Using unauthorized notes (i.e. a "cheat sheet" of any kind)
- Giving or receiving help on a test by: talking to another person or showing work to another person during the test or talking about the test after it has been taken to someone who has not yet taken the test.

It is the responsibility of each student in the USJ community to make sure his or her behavior is above reproach. In all cases of cheating, both the student who copies and the student who knowingly allows work to be copied will face disciplinary action.

Consequences for acts of academic dishonesty may vary depending upon the details of the offense. Students need to be aware that two or more acts of academic dishonesty could result in expulsion or a decision to not allow a student to return to USJ.

## **Oath of Honor**

***As a student at the University School of Jackson, I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor condone the actions of those who do.***

## **Dress Code**

USJ believes that standards of neatness and appropriateness in clothing encourage an atmosphere conducive to learning, work and discipline. We expect all students to dress in accordance with the Uniform Guidelines on a daily basis. Any faculty member may question whether a student's attire is acceptable, but appropriateness of dress will be decided by the administration.

USJ's policy on school uniforms is based on the principle that school uniforms:

- Promote a sense of pride in the school.
- Engender a sense of community and belonging towards the school.
- Are practical and smart.
- Prevent students from coming to school in fashion clothes that could be distracting in class.
- Make students feel equal to their peers in terms of appearance.

**All USJ parents are expected to support the school uniform policy.** Parents have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that their children come to school properly dressed and ready for their daily school work. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child has the correct uniform and that it is clean and in good repair.

### **General guidelines concerning daily attire/appearance:**

- All USJ dress code items must be purchased from Parker School Uniforms, Inc.
- All clothing items should be worn properly and should be size-appropriate.
- Shirrtails must be tucked in at all times. The only exceptions are the girl's oxford over-blouse and the girls, fitted, "fashion knit" polo.
- **Skirts must be no shorter than 3 inches from the crease at the back of the knee. Skirts must have hems.** A black or brown belt must be worn with pants or shorts designed with belt loops.
- Non-USJ outerwear may be worn outdoors, but should be placed in the student's locker upon arrival at school.
- Students may not wear hats, bandanas, scarves or other headwear inside the building.
- Socks, knee socks, tights, and leggings must be a solid color - navy, white, brown, black, red, grey, or tan ONLY. Lace on leggings are not allowed. Patterned tights or leggings are not allowed.
- Boys must be clean-shaven daily, and hair should not be worn below the collar or below the eyebrows.
- Piercings of any kind are not permitted for males.
- Piercings for females, other than the ear lobes, are not permitted. Ear piercings deemed by the administration to be excessive in number are also not permitted.
- Undershirt sleeves must be shorter than the uniform shirtsleeves. All undershirts must be white in color.
- Accessories, such as watches, bracelets, necklaces and earrings, should be appropriate and non-distracting.
- Tattoos are not permitted.
- All hairstyles should be in good taste and neatly groomed. No hairstyle should be considered distracting. Unnatural coloring of hair is prohibited.
- All dress code guidelines apply to USJ students until they have formally graduated from USJ.



## **Shoe Guidelines:**

- Shoes must be clean and in good repair.
- Appropriate dress or leather sandals will be allowed and must have a strap around the heel.
- **Flip flops are not permitted.**
- Sport sandals, such as Tevas or Chacos, are permitted, but they must have a strap around the back of the sandal.
- No sandals after fall break. Sandals may be worn again after spring break.
- Closed toe shoes are allowed in the following solid colors: brown, navy, black, burgundy, gray, or red.
- Casual style boots, such as hiking or cowboy boots, may be worn only with pants.
- Ugg style boots may be worn from fall break – spring break of each school year. These boots may **ONLY** be worn with leggings of an approved color. **NO BOOTS AND BARE LEGS!**

### **A violation of dress code may result in the following:**

- A call to parents to bring appropriate clothing or shoes.
- Detention/detentions for recurring violations and phone call to parents.
- In School Suspension and meeting with parents.
- Further consequences as deemed necessary by USJ Administration.

The Division Director may declare spirit days and allow students to wear school spirit shirts, or dress up days, or allow students to wear other uniforms such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, band, chorus, or athletic teams. Questions concerning uniforms should be directed to the Head of School or the Division Director.

## **Physical Education Dress**

All Middle School students will be required to dress out for Physical Education (P. E.) class. The clothing required for P.E. class is a T-shirt (in accordance with the dress code), USJ PE shorts, socks, and tennis shoes. Any additional requirements will be at the discretion of the Physical Education teacher. PE shorts are purchased through Great American Sports.

## **Extracurricular Activities / Opportunities**

All extra-curricular activities, including athletics, fine arts performances, dances, Middle School chorale, and Student Council activities will adhere to the following policies:

## **Eligibility**

Because USJ exists primarily to provide an excellent college preparatory education, academic requirements must take precedence over extra-curricular activities. In order to participate in an athletic or fine arts activity, students are expected to:

- Successfully complete the academic requirements in 5 subjects.
- Abide by USJ's high citizenship standards.
- Satisfy any additional requirements imposed by the sponsor, director or coach.

**If a student's academic performance reflects deficiencies in two or more subject areas, the student may be removed from athletic and fine arts practices, games, and performances until the student's academic average in those subject areas has improved to a C- or above grade.**

A student must be present for **at least four class periods** to be permitted to participate in any extra-curricular activity, practice, game or performance.

## **Guidelines for Athletes, Cheerleaders, and Performers**

- Students will be expected to attend all practices, performances and games, or notify the coach/director in advance if unable to attend.
- If a student misses a practice, game, or performance without notifying and obtaining permission from the coach/director, appropriate disciplinary action will be administered.
- Students must be punctual for practices, games, and performances. Tardiness will not be tolerated.
- A student should conduct himself/herself in a courteous and respectful manner at all times.
- When traveling to and from activities in school transportation, students should behave in such a manner that the safety of another person is not endangered.
- Personal headsets may be used, provided they do not interfere with the privacy of others.
- Students must always remember that they represent USJ and their behavior must reflect positively on the school.
- Abusive or profane language is not permitted at any time for any reason.
- A student will not use tobacco, alcohol, or illegal or unauthorized drugs while representing USJ.
- The proper dress for travel or participation will be at the discretion of the coach/director.
- Upon the completion of games/performances, students will not be allowed to leave the area without the approval of the coach/director.
- If a student misses class due to a school-sponsored activity, it is the student's responsibility to make up all missed assignments and tests.

- Students will not be given extra time on assignments due to athletic or performance events. Students are responsible for checking in with the teacher daily and having all assignments completed and turned in on time.
- Students are expected to follow all policies established in the student/parent handbook.
- Any student athlete returning to campus before 11:30 p.m. from a school sponsored event, **MUST** attend classes the next day. If a student does not adhere to this policy, he/she will be given an unexcused absence.

### **Athletics Try-Outs Policy**

Middle School Sports/ Grades Allowed to Play:

**7<sup>th</sup>/ 8<sup>th</sup> Grades:**

Football  
Basketball

**6<sup>th</sup>/ 7<sup>th</sup>/ 8<sup>th</sup> Grades:**

Cheerleading	Volleyball
Softball	Boys' Soccer
Cross Country	Tennis
Girls' Soccer	Golf

All Middle School sports will only be open to try-outs for Middle School grades approved for that sport. Teams will be selected from Middle School students who try out for that sport and are chosen by the coach(s).

The ONLY exception to opening tryouts to a grade below the approved grades for that sport is if, and only if, the number of students trying out from the Middle School grades is not enough to field a team (a set number for each sport). In which case, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade students may be allowed to participate in tryouts to fill only the remaining positions.

**\*\*Any situation where a student/athlete has been actively involved with Harassment, Hazing and/or Bullying could lose the privilege or any further participation in the total athletic program or activities for a calendar year\*\*** This is in addition to any punishment which might also be deemed necessary by our Dean of Students, Division Heads and Head of School.

### **Middle School Student Council**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the Student Council is to give students opportunities for leadership and service to the school community. The Student Council is led by students who are elected in the fall by their homerooms to serve a one-year term.

**Process:**

Students interested in running for a Student Council office position must complete the required forms, attend all informative meetings, and follow the guidelines and procedure exactly as are required. Failure to correctly follow the guidelines may result in that student's forfeiture in the election.

**Duties of the Homeroom Representative:**

The representatives will be divided into a Spirit Committee and a Community Service Committee to help organize events and activities for the middle school. Students' suggestions and grievances will be brought to the Student Council for consideration by representatives of each homeroom. Student Council members will also help in hosting prospective students on their visits to the school.

**Officers of the Student Council**

**Individual Duties:**

- 1. President:** The President will conduct the meetings of the Student Council. He/she will assist the MS Director/Assistant MS Director with school assemblies and other events. He/she will chair of one of the committees – Spirit or Community Service. The President must be a rising 8<sup>th</sup> grade student.
- 2. Vice President:** The Vice President will chair one of the committees – Spirit or Community Service. He/she will assist the President. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President will assume the leadership role of the Student Council.
- 3. Secretary:** The Secretary will keep attendance for meetings. He/she will write the minutes of each meeting.
- 4. Treasurer:** The Treasurer will keep records for events sponsored by the Student Council.
- 5. Chaplain:** The Chaplain will give a prayer or inspirational reading at weekly MS assemblies and other events where it is appropriate to have words of encouragement. Prayers and/or inspirations will be used to further the mission of our school, which is grounded in Judeo-Christian values.

**Honors and Awards**

Middle School students at University School of Jackson are recognized for outstanding accomplishments during special ceremonies at the close of each academic year. Honors and awards are given to those students who, through their effort and ability, choose to meet and exceed the challenges offered in the USJ programs. Selections are based on criteria established by faculty, sponsoring organizations, and administrative committees. New students must be enrolled for the full second semester in order to be eligible for an academic award.

The following is an example list of the awards presented each year (this list is not guaranteed to be comprehensive):

Subject Certificate Top Students in Academic Subjects

Duke Talent Search – for 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who participate in the Duke Talent Search and test.

President's Award 8<sup>th</sup> Graders with high academic honors, outstanding Leadership qualities - teacher recommendation required

Youth Character Awards Students who demonstrate admirable character traits such as respect, responsibility and concern for others

Head of School Scholar Students earning all A's

USJ Scholar Students earning all B's or better

Student Council Officers and class representatives

Math Teams Outstanding Participants

Middle School Choir Outstanding Participants

Physical Education Outstanding Participants

Art Outstanding Participants

Music Outstanding Participants

Computer Outstanding Participants

Band Outstanding Participants

## **Publications and Communications**

### **Test Calendar and Homework Page**

The test calendar for all MS grades is available on the [www.usjbruins.org](http://www.usjbruins.org) website under Academics, Middle School, Test Schedules/ Homework Page (under Favorite Links on the right of the page). The test calendar is updated each Friday, and the Homework Page is updated each day by the end of the first period.

### **Monthly Calendar**

Students and parents should check the USJ website frequently for updated information on the monthly calendar.

### **NetClassroom**

NetClassroom is a convenient, secure and effective way for parents and students to instantly be informed of assignments and grades from home. For new families, a personal user ID and password may be obtained from the division office.

### **USJ Website ([www.usjbruins.org](http://www.usjbruins.org))**

The website for USJ is an excellent resource for all students and parents.

## **Whom to Call**

**The Middle School office is staffed from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. on a daily basis.** It is impossible to provide an exact chain of command of whom to call for every situation. A general rule of thumb should be to begin at the level closest to a particular problem or situation.

***Absences*** (call before 8:30 a.m.), emergency messages for students, assignments for a sick child: Becky Baskin, Middle School Secretary (731) 660-2110

***Athletics*** Jody Evans, Athletic Director (731) 664-0812 ext. 43  
Rusty Bradley, Athletic Coordinator (731) 664-0812

***Cafeteria accounts*** Tammy Smith, Cafeteria Student Accounts (731) 664-0812 ext. 42

***Academic concerns*** Academic teacher (731) 664-0812

***Disciplinary issues*** Jim Hardegree, Dean of Students (731) 664-0812 ext. 34 or  
Interim Middle School Director, Jim Hardegree (731) 664-0812 ext. 15

***Field Trips*** Shay Young, Trip Coordinator (731) 664-0812

***General/Personal*** Jim Hardegree, Interim Director (731) 664-0812 ext.15

***Other Concerns, including psychoeducational evaluations*** Debra Anton, MS/ US Counselor  
(731) 664-0812 ext.145