

August 2022

Dear JBS Students and Families,

We hope you're having a wonderful summer with lots of sunshine, rest, and relaxation! We are excited to start the new school year this fall!

We'd like to welcome all our new students and their families—this year we have students joining us at every level from 7th through 11th grade (including two exchange students in the high school)! We are so excited that you are joining us and we look forward to getting to know you better.

We are also welcoming Meridith Thorpe and Rene Iannotti in their new roles as assistant principals to the middle school and high school, respectively. Many of you know Ms. Thorpe through her work as assistant director of admission, as varsity field hockey coach, and as the interim principal for the middle school in the 2020-21 school year. Ms. Thorpe will be collaborating with Ms. Churchwell-Varga as the assistant principal for the middle school while Ms. Iannotti will join Ms. Salrin and Ms. Shimabukuro as the assistant principal for the high school. She will continue to teach middle school and high school Spanish, in addition to leading school-wide initiatives focusing on global engagement and citizenship. We are so excited and grateful to have Ms. Thorpe and Ms. Iannotti partnering with us this year!

As we continue to work together to emerge from the pandemic and all its impact, our goal this school year is to reset, restore, and rejuvenate our valued JBS traditions and community spirit. We'd especially like to highlight our use of technology at school.

During the pandemic, we used technology in many new ways. Students relied on their laptops and phones to Zoom, text, email, and check Canvas throughout the school day. While we recognize that technology is and will continue to be an integral part of teaching and learning at Burroughs, we also value the opportunity to give our students restorative time away from technology. Research has shown that constant exposure to computers and phones can negatively impact students' attention, sleep, and efficiency in addition to their overall well-being and mental health. The pandemic highlighted for us how important our interpersonal connections are: when we couldn't be together at school, we realized just how much we depend upon the support we derive from being together in person. We recognized in a new way the value of our school tradition that encourages and invites students to build positive relationships with each other through meaningful face-to-face interaction by limiting the use of cell phones throughout the school day. This tradition not only gives students an opportunity to better connect and communicate face to face, but it also gives them a break from the seemingly constant barrage of texts, calls, and social media notifications so many students might otherwise receive.

As we restore this valued Burroughs tradition, we are asking for your help and support. Please review and discuss the attached revised **JBS Technology and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy** together as a family. Students will be asked to review and sign this agreement in advisory in the first weeks of school, but we know it would be valuable for families to have a conversation beforehand about our expectations and our community's philosophy.

In order to support our approach, we ask that parents/guardians refrain from texting their children during the school day. If there's an urgent matter or an emergency, please don't hesitate to call the front office and we will deliver the message or have your child contact you. If a student ever needs to contact a family member, they're always welcome to ask a faculty or staff member for permission to use their phone.

Students may use their phone before and after school but during the school day phones should be put away and stored in backpacks/bags. If a student uses their phone during school hours without permission, their phone will be taken and delivered to their grade-level principal from whom students may retrieve their phone at the end of the school day. Should there be a second infraction, students will face a court case, detention, and/or other disciplinary measures.

Airpods and earphones/headphones are also not to be used or worn during school hours, unless they're being used with the express permission of a faculty member in a designated area. Their use is never allowed in transitional spaces, the Commons, and the dining room. We're a community that has a culture of opening doors for one another and saying hello and greeting each other, and we want to ensure that we continue to foster a community in which these small moments of connection during passing periods can happen.

Because students have told us that they need technology during the school day to check their Canvas accounts and email from teachers or to do their homework, we have adjusted our technology policy to allow for laptop use. Students may use their personal laptops, school-issued laptops, or tablet-type devices throughout the day for **academic purposes** in the Commons, common spaces, and in the library. Just as in the past, teachers may also sometimes request that students use their computers and/or school-issued laptops in class. In sum, we're a school committed to thoughtful dialogue and discovery in our classrooms, and to the degree that technology helps us accomplish our pedagogical goals we'll incorporate it but we remain committed to our school's tradition of face-to-face exchange and conversation.

Enclosed you will find our revised Technology & Social Media Acceptable Use Policy along with other important information: Mr. Abbott's letter inviting you to share any information you'd like about your student's identity, the School Calendar, and the JBS Family Handbook. These items can also be found on our Principal Pages and/or through the JBS website.

We look forward to a wonderful new year and to welcoming you all back to school later this month! In the meantime, we hope you are enjoying these last weeks of summer break!

Sincerely,

Linda Churchwell-Varga  
Principal, Grades 7 & 8

Julie Shimabukuro  
Principal, Grades 9 & 10

Jennifer Salrin  
Principal, Grades 11 & 12

/dd

Enclosures