



# Thomas Jefferson Middle School Parent/Guardian Handbook

**Learn\*Act\*Grow\*Together**



# Thomas Jefferson Middle School

## Parent/Guardian Handbook 2023-24

### Welcome to Thomas Jefferson Middle School – Jefferson, TJ, or TJMS for short!

Having a child in middle school can be a bit overwhelming. To help, this Parent/Guardian Handbook was created to give you a brief overview of Thomas Jefferson (TJMS) and to try to answer some of the questions many families have about the school. While the handbook is not all-inclusive, it will help answer some basic questions and guide you to other resources for more in-depth information. There is a great deal happening at the school at any given time; the resources in this handbook – especially the Communication section – will help ensure you and your student(s) don't miss any important information.

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### TJMS Basics

Principal: Ms. Keisha Boggan  
School Hours: 7:50 a.m.- 2:35 p.m. (doors open at 7:40 a.m.)  
Early Release School Hours: 7:50 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.  
Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Main Office: 703-228-5900  
Attendance Line: 703-228-5898, [Maggie Luu](#)  
Registrar: 703-228-5908, [Ana Mejia](#)  
Address: 125 South Old Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22204

**Mission:** Learning together to understand and improve ourselves, our futures, and our world.

**Vision:** Thomas Jefferson students create a better world.

**Values:** At Thomas Jefferson Middle School, we commit to...

- Ensuring that all students will learn and achieve.
- Providing learning experiences that meet each student's needs and encourage them to grow.
- Cultivating a healthy and safe environment for all members of our school community.
- Operating from a growth mindset.
- Providing a rigorous curriculum with multiple and varied means of demonstrating mastery.

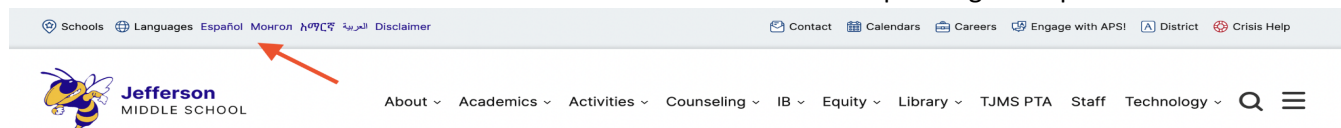
- Fostering global perspectives.
- Reflecting on our own cultural experiences to appreciate how we relate to others and view the world.
- Developing relationships among students, staff, families, and the greater school community to support students' personal and academic growth.

**School Slogan:** Learn ♦ Grow ♦ Act ♦ Together

## Communications

**If you are not fluent in English and need help with translation or interpretation:**

At the top of the TJMS website page is a link to translate which will translate the information on the page into several different languages including Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Mongolian and Bengali. APS provides interpreters for school events like Student Conferences. Staff in the main office can help arrange interpreters.



### From School

**TJMS Website:** You can find the answers to many questions as well as updates about coming events on our webpage: <https://jefferson.apsva.us>

### **School Calendar:**

At the bottom of the TJMS homepage you will find a [calendar of upcoming events](#); at both the school and APS level. It does not include after school club meetings, ACT II schedules, or sports practices. Press the “view all” button to see a full month of events and scroll through upcoming months. You can subscribe to the calendar via the +iCal and +Google links at the bottom right corner of the calendar.

### **Monthly Activities Calendar:**

In the left-hand column of the TJMS homepage you will find a link to the Monthly Activities Calendar. This calendar has a detailed list of events happening at TJMS during and after school including assemblies, field trips, club meetings, and ACT II. The second page of the calendar lists sports practices and games. The calendar is published on a monthly basis and each month is available a few days before the start of that month.

### **Morning Announcements**

Students hear daily announcements during the Teacher Advisory period (TA). Announcements include reminders about daily activities, extra curricular programs, upcoming events, and notice of whether it is an A or B day (more information in School Organization). Parents/guardians can explore them here: “[morning announcements](#)” or through our webpage menu.

**ParentSquare** is an online service that allows families to unify communication from the division, schools and classrooms to PreK-12 families under one umbrella. For questions about ParentSquare, please email [parentsquare@apsva.us](mailto:parentsquare@apsva.us) or contact the TJMS main office.

Ms. Boggan, will periodically (once to twice a month) send a [ParentSquare](#) message about upcoming events to all parents and guardians who have a phone number on file with APS. ParentSquare allows TJMS to unify communication from the division, schools and classrooms to families under one umbrella.

[Download the app for Apple IOS](#)

## [Download the app for Android](#)

ParentVUE is an online service that allows families to:

- [Update parent and emergency contact information annually](#) (Online Back-to-School Packet)
- View their student's assigned bus stop
- Report upcoming absences
- View student attendance and class schedules
- Communicate with teachers
- View assignment grades and report cards (middle and high school students)
- And more!

Once a student is enrolled at APS, families receive an activation code that is required to set up their ParentVUE account. **For questions or support, contact your student's school.** Download the app on your [iPhone](#) or [Android](#)

## **Peachjar**

APS contracts with Peachjar to provide a digital e-flyer service. Peachjar sends approved flyers directly to parents' emails and posts them online on all school websites. Every parent/guardian who has an email listed with APS receives weekly email flyers from Peachjar. Some apply to all APS families and others are specific to TJ families.

## **TJMS Student Handbook**

Each student receives a copy of the [TJMS Student Handbook](#). The handbook contains a great deal of detailed information on many of the topics shared here as well as others and is an important resource for parents and students.

## **Twitter**

The school's Twitter account is [@JeffersonIBMYP](#). Many staff use Twitter to share photos and details about projects and activities.

## **From the Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**

### **Jefferson BUZZ**

This weekly email newsletter comes out on Mondays and shares upcoming events and news. All parents/guardians will be added to the distribution list unless they return the "PTA opt-out form" distributed in the First Day Packet.

### **TJMS listserv**

The TJMS PTA email list is for all members of the TJMS community. Most messages come from the PTA and are about upcoming events and volunteer needs, but parents may ask questions or share information about anything relevant to the TJMS community.

To subscribe, send a message to [tjms-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:tjms-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

To post a message to the group, send to [tjms@yahoogroups.com](mailto:tjms@yahoogroups.com)

Messages are moderated and may take a while to be approved and to appear on the listserv.

### **TJMS PTA Facebook page**

The Facebook page for the TJMS PTA is <https://www.facebook.com/ThomasJeffersonMSPTA>

Go here to see live or archived video feeds of PTA meetings and to learn about other happenings. Note this is a public page, not a private group.

### **TJMS Garden Facebook page**

Follow <https://www.facebook.com/TJGarden> to see what's growing, to learn about garden workdays, and to find out other ways to support outdoor learning at TJMS. Note this is a public page, not a private group.

## **Who to Contact If...**

### **Your child is sick or running late:**

Call the attendance line: 703-228-5898 or email the Attendance Secretary, Ms. Maggie Luu, at [maggie.luu@apsva.us](mailto:maggie.luu@apsva.us)

### **You have concerns about bullying, academic struggles, cheating, inappropriate screen use:**

Contact your child's School Counselor. Each grade is assigned a school counselor. School Counselors rotate each year with their assigned grade, so your child will have the same counselor for all 3 years. Assignments for 2023:

6th Grade - Mr. Joseph Spencer, [joseph.spencer@apsva.us](mailto:joseph.spencer@apsva.us), 703-228-5866

7th Grade - Ms. Amelia Black, [amelia.black@apsva.us](mailto:amelia.black@apsva.us), 703-228-5897

8th Grade - Ms. Susan Russo, [susan.russo@apsva.us](mailto:susan.russo@apsva.us), 703-228-8779

English Learner Counselor - Ms. Ana Rodriguez, [ana.rodriguez2@apsva.us](mailto:ana.rodriguez2@apsva.us), 703-228-5911

### **You need help with food, clothing, or housing:**

TJMS has many resources to help families in need. Contact the TJMS Social Worker, Ms. Margarita Zwisler, for assistance: [margarita.zwisler2@apsva.us](mailto:margarita.zwisler2@apsva.us), 703-228-5867

### **You have concerns regarding bus transportation:**

Students who live more than 1.5 miles from TJMS are eligible for bus transportation. In the last week of August, eligible students will receive a letter that includes their bus route, bus stop, and pickup time. If you have questions or problems with the bus, contact the APS Transportation Call Center: 703-228-8670 (6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. weekdays) or <https://www.apsva.us/transportation-services>

### **You have questions about the yearbook:**

The TJMS Yearbook is produced by students under the guidance of a staff sponsor. Information on how to buy a yearbook is shared through announcements and the school website. For specific questions, contact Mr. Jeffery Anderon: [jeffery.anderson@apsva.us](mailto:jeffery.anderson@apsva.us)

### **You need to contact a staff member:**

Search the TJMS Staff Email Directory: <https://jefferson.apsva.us/staff-directory>

### **You need to pay for school breakfast, lunch, and Extended Day:**

See My School Bucks [Online Payment Tools - Arlington Public Schools \(apsva.us\)](https://www.apsva.us/online-payment-tools)

Register: [MySchoolBucks](https://www.apsva.us/my-school-bucks)

### **You need to pay for school field trips, yearbooks, and other school related fees:**

See APS SchoolCash Online: [Online Payment Tools - Arlington Public Schools \(apsva.us\)](https://www.apsva.us/online-payment-tools)

Register: [SchoolCashOnline.com: Welcome](https://www.schoolcashonline.com)

## **School Organization**

### **Grade Level Teams**

Each sixth grade student is assigned to an academic team and will take most of their classes from teachers within that team. This creates smaller learning communities to support sixth graders' transition to middle school. Seventh and eighth grade students are not assigned to teams, rather they are randomly assigned based on course selection as well as other factors. Each grade level plans relationship-building activities and field trips throughout the year. TA Teachers may request funds at the beginning of the year to go toward team activities and/or field trips. If financial support is needed, please contact your grade level administrator or school counselor.

**Assistant Principals and School Counselors:**

TJMS Assistant Principals (AP) and School Counselors rotate with their assigned grade level each year.

**6th Grade**

AP: Mr. Robert Hanson, [robert.hanson@apsva.us](mailto:robert.hanson@apsva.us), 703-228-8768

School Counselor: Joseph Spencer, [joseph.spencer@apsva.us](mailto:joseph.spencer@apsva.us), 703-228-5866

**7th Grade**

AP: Mr. Vincent Jarosz, [vincent.jarosz@apsva.us](mailto:vincent.jarosz@apsva.us), 703-228-8768

School Counselor: Ms. Amelia Black, [amelia.black@apsva.us](mailto:amelia.black@apsva.us), 703-228-5897

**8th Grade**

AP: Ms. Diana Jordan, [diana.jordan@apsva.us](mailto:diana.jordan@apsva.us), 703-228-8768

School Counselor: Ms. Susan Russo, [susan.russo@apsva.us](mailto:susan.russo@apsva.us), 703-228-8779

**English Learner**

School Counselor: Ms. Ana Rodriguez, [ana.rodriguez2@apsva.us](mailto:ana.rodriguez2@apsva.us), 703-228-5871

**Program Counselor**

School Counselor: Ms. Jasmine Burton, [jasmine.burton@apsva.us](mailto:jasmine.burton@apsva.us), 703-228-5864

**Intervention Counselor**

Ms. Maya Lidell, [maya.lidell@apsva.us](mailto:maya.lidell@apsva.us), 703-228-8769

**Additional Contacts:**

**Principal:** Ms. Keisha Boggan, [keisha.boggan@apsva.us](mailto:keisha.boggan@apsva.us), 703-228-5900

**Director of Counseling:** Mr. Dante Hicks, [dante.hicks@apsva.us](mailto:dante.hicks@apsva.us), 703-228-5907

**Dean of Students:** Dr. Tiffini Woody-Pope, [tiffini.woodypoppe@apsva.us](mailto:tiffini.woodypoppe@apsva.us), 703-228-5899

**School Social Worker:** Ms. Margarita Zwisler, [margarita.zwisler2@apsva.us](mailto:margarita.zwisler2@apsva.us), 703-228-5867

**School Psychologist:** Ms. Tanya Moncrieffe-Heath, [tanya.moncrieffeheat@apsva.us](mailto:tanya.moncrieffeheat@apsva.us), 703-228-5905

**School Psychologist:** Ms. Lisa Nemeth, [lisa.nemeth@apsva.us](mailto:lisa.nemeth@apsva.us), 703-228-8000 (Mondays only)

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator:** Ms. Stephanie Smith, [stephanie.smith@apsva.us](mailto:stephanie.smith@apsva.us), 703-228-5874

**Bilingual Family Resource Liaisons:**

Ms. Irma DeLeon, [irma.deleonveliz@apsva.us](mailto:irma.deleonveliz@apsva.us), 703-228-5890

Mr. Miguel Marcelino, [miguel.marcelino@apsva.us](mailto:miguel.marcelino@apsva.us), 703-228-5912

**School Health Clinic**

**Public Health Nurse:** Shineca Solomon, [shineca.solomon@apsva.us](mailto:shineca.solomon@apsva.us), 703-228-5893

**School Health Aide:** Pamela Rivas, [pamela.rivas@apsva.us](mailto:pamela.rivas@apsva.us), 703-228-5893

**Teacher Advisor Program (TA)**

Each student is assigned a TA teacher/class. Students go to TA at the beginning of every day to participate in lessons focused on social emotional learning, IB MYP expectations, productive study habits, executive functioning, and test taking skills.

**English Learner (EL)**

The English Learners program serves students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The program works to ensure that English learners (ELs) attain English proficiency in order to develop high levels of academic

achievement. Based on a yearly English language development assessment (ACCESS for ELLs), or an assessment by the Welcome Center, students receive tiered levels of English language instruction.

- English Learners with beginning proficiency (ELP 1-2) receive at least 2 instructional blocks with an English Learner (EL) teacher. (English Language Proficiency (ELP) 1 meets 4-5 periods; ELP 2 meets 3-4 periods)
- English Learners with advanced proficiency (ELP 3-4) receive at least 1 instructional block with an EL teacher. (ELP 3-4 meets 1-2 periods)
- EL Resource teachers provide ELL instruction for students (ELP 1-4) who additionally receive Special Education services. EL instruction is provided through the student's Special Education classes.
- All EL students are assigned to a grade level team.

For more information, contact **TJMS EL Lead Teacher**, Ms. Elita Jenks, [elita.jenks@apsva.us](mailto:elita.jenks@apsva.us), or visit: <https://jefferson.apsva.us/english-learners/>.

### **Special Education**

TJMS offers a continuum of Special Education services and placements. To the greatest extent possible and in accordance with the requirements for Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), students with disabilities (SWD) are educated with their non-disabled peers. However, students who need more specialized instruction can be educated in any combination of inclusion, co-taught, or self-contained classroom settings. IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings take place weekly on Thursdays. For more information, contact **TJMS Special Education Coordinator**, Mr. Matthew Gavin, [matthew.gavin@apsva.us](mailto:matthew.gavin@apsva.us), or visit: <https://jefferson.apsva.us/special-education-programs/>.

### **TA FLEX**

TA FLEX is a 30-minute period that takes place during TA (Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) and is designed to provide extra help to students in a particular subject area. TJMS instructional staff determine which students will be assigned. The first TA FLEX rotation starts mid September.

### **TJMS Garden**

The TJMS Community garden (<https://jefferson.apsva.us/pta/the-jefferson-garden/>) functions as an outdoor learning classroom and a community service opportunity. In the summer, it's a neighborhood community hub and a Plot Against Hunger for the Arlington Food Assistance Center. If your Yellow Jacket is interested in working outdoors for their community service hours, we invite them to come to the garden on Friday afternoons 2:40 - 4:00 p.m. Parents/guardians are invited to volunteer on Friday afternoons or at other times. Enid Dunbar is the staff sponsor for the garden. Questions? Email [tjmsoutside@gmail.com](mailto:tjmsoutside@gmail.com) or follow on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TJGarden/>.

### **IB Programme and Service Component**

Service to the community is a critical part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Curriculum. Click here for more on service expectations:

<https://jefferson.apsva.us/ib-programme/service-learning-community-project/>

- 6th and 7th grade students are expected to perform regular community service as part of the IB Programme and to reflect on that service. They will be given information on the expectations for service and how it will be tracked in the beginning of the school year.
- All 8th grade students will plan and implement a Capstone service project, their Community Project. Students will work with the IB Coordinator to determine the nature and scope of the project.

Direct questions about IB to **IB Programme Coordinator**, Mr. Kip Malinowski, [kip.malinowski@apsva.us](mailto:kip.malinowski@apsva.us) 703-228-5911.

### **Math Progression**

Each June, a countywide team of mathematics specialists, teachers, counselors, and administrators meet to determine the mathematics course recommendations for all rising TJMS students. The team considers multiple measures linked to students' knowledge of content, reasoning ability, and readiness for instruction. The recommendation is shared with families and students through ParentVue at the end of June or early in July. Parents should contact **TJMS Math Coach**, Ms. Melissa Cobbs ([melissa.cobbs@apsva.us](mailto:melissa.cobbs@apsva.us)), if there are any questions regarding the recommendation. The math course progression for middle school and high school are described here: <https://www.apsva.us/curriculum/mathematics/>

### **Advanced Academic & Talent Development (AATD)**

AATD Information Night is held in October. This session will provide in-depth information on how services are provided at TJMS. Students identified as gifted in a subject area are grouped together within the regular classrooms. The Advanced Academics Coach works with classroom teachers to provide differentiated instruction for the gifted learners. For more information, contact **Advanced Academics Coach**, Ms. Megan Detweiler, [megan.detweiler@apsva.us](mailto:megan.detweiler@apsva.us), 703-228-2249.

### **Act II Classes**

Act II is a graded semester class that is included in a student's schedule as well as on their report card. The classes meet after school on Tuesday and/or Thursday from 2:40 - 4:00 p.m. Students are expected to attend all sessions. Classes are offered in Art, Drama, Chorus, and Technology. Information on which classes are offered each semester will be available on the homepage of the TJMS website. Students will have the opportunity to sign up for fall Act II classes a few weeks after the semester has begun by turning in a form to their school counselor. These forms must be signed by the parent/guardian.

### **SOLs**

Students take the following Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in the Spring. Scores are mailed to families in August.

6th Grade: Reading, Math

7th Grade: Reading, Math, Civics & Economics

8th Grade: Reading/Writing, Math, Science

### **Homework and Homework Assistance**

Homework varies by teacher and team. Study Hall is offered from 2:40-3:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Study Hall is a quiet classroom space for students to work, staffed by teachers who can answer questions or support students in completing homework. Students can attend on an as-needed basis.


Arlington Public Schools has partnered with **Paper** to provide unlimited access to trained tutors so every student in grades 6-12 can ask questions, work through problems, and grow their confidence—at no cost to families. **Paper** is an online, on-demand academic support service that provides students with unlimited, 24/7 academic support. Whether students are stuck on homework, studying for a test, or need someone to read and make suggestions to their writing, there will always be experts available online to assist students one-on-one in [all](#)



[subject areas](#) and in more than 4 languages. See [Paper FAQs](#) to learn more or visit the [APS website](#).



**PAPER**

-  Chat with a tutor 24/7
-  Writing feedback
-  All academic subjects

Login through Clever

Paper login: [paper.co](https://paper.co)

Paper APP login: [app.paper.co](https://app.paper.co)

### **High School Credits**

A few classes at TJMS (including some advanced math, world geography, and world language classes) receive high school credit. The credit and grade will appear on your student’s high school transcript and be part of their grade point average (GPA) unless you request otherwise.

### **Health and Physical Education (H.P.E.)**

All students take P.E./Health. P.E. uniforms (shorts and t-shirt) are available for purchase at the beginning of the year and are highly recommended to ensure TJMS students are readily identifiable indoors and outdoors. No uniforms are required during the health units. Only tennis or athletic shoes are allowed (**No crocs, sandals, boots, or open-toe shoes**).

### **Lunch**

Each grade level has a separate lunch period. After school has been in session for a few weeks, students will have the option to go outside for recess at the designated time upon completing their lunch. Staff supervision is provided.

## **How to Know How Your Child Is Doing In School**

### **ParentVUE (<https://vue.apsva.us/>)**

ParentVUE is an online tool that provides parents/guardians with access to the latest information about student attendance and classwork. Families can view class assignments, scores, report card grades, and course history with ParentVUE. This is an extremely helpful way to regularly check to see how your child is doing. The Grade Book page allows you to see if your child is missing homework assignments or tests before it is too late to make them up. Students have access to the same information through their StudentVue accounts.

**If you do not have an existing ParentVue account**, you should receive a letter with a Parent Account Activation Code from TJMS. If you never received the code, you can get a new one from the **TJMS Registrar**, Ms. Ana Mejia: 703-228-5908, [ana.mejia@apsva.us](mailto:ana.mejia@apsva.us). Once you have the activation code, instructions for getting your account set up can be found at [HERE](#)

**Need Help?** TJMS staff will also hold several information sessions (many in languages other than English) to help families set up their accounts.

### **[Basic Guide to Navigating ParentVUE](#)**

### **Student-Led Conferences**

Conferences are held twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Parents/guardians meet with their child and their child’s TA teacher. The conferences are student led, meaning that the student has prepared information to present to her parents/guardians. TA teachers will help guide students through their presentation.

**In 2023-2024, the dates are October 20 and March 15.**

**How to sign up**

Instructions will be sent out via email on how to electronically schedule your 20-minute conference. To schedule meetings with teachers other than your child's TA, contact the teacher directly. If you need additional assistance, contact your child's school counselor.

### **Interpretation**

APS will provide an interpreter for the conference, if needed. You can request an interpreter when you schedule your conference appointment.

## **Technology**

### **iPads**

Every student receives a personal iPad and charger cord. 6th and 7th grade students keep the iPad during the summers and return it to the school at the end of 8th grade. Students use these devices all the time in their classes, do much of their homework on them, and often use them to take tests. Students are expected to charge their iPads at home and bring them to school every day. They will receive a list of guidelines for appropriate use of their iPads and the consequences for misuse. Currently, students are allowed to use their iPads during a portion of their lunch period. For some suggestions on how to manage iPad use at home, see [Technical Support for Parents](#)

### **Personal Phones**

Students are allowed to bring personal phones to school but are not allowed to use them during school hours (including lunch period). During school hours, personal phones must be turned off and out of sight.

### **APS Acceptable Use Policy**

The [APS Policy on Acceptable Use](#) provides guidelines on student expectations for devices.

## **After School Activities**

**Act II Classes** - See School Organizations

### **Clubs**

TJMS offers a great variety of optional after school clubs. These include clubs focused on activities (such as chess, and art), service, academic interests, identity and issues, music, and drama. Club and activity meeting days and times vary. Clubs are a great way for students to meet others who share their interests or to learn new things. Clubs are listed by day on the TJMS website under the "Activities" tab.

### **Music & Drama**

**Band, Orchestra and Chorus** occasionally schedule after school rehearsals. Students will receive a schedule from their teacher with all rehearsal dates. Parents/guardians with children in the music program will also be invited to sign up for the Charms program, an online resource with a calendar and ways to sign up to volunteer. There are also optional music programs that meet weekly after school such as jazz band and advanced chamber music. **Drama** productions are held twice a year (fall play and winter/spring musical) and have regular rehearsals after school. Students audition for these productions. Typically, there are more roles open for the spring production than the fall production.

### **Sports Choice**

Sports Choice is a voluntary after-school intramural program that meets Monday -Thursday. Students play basketball, volleyball, flag football, soccer and other sports in a non-competitive environment. No registration is needed; students just drop in to the gym after school before 2:40 p.m.

### **Late Buses**

Late buses depart at 4:21 p.m. Only students who stay after school under TJMS staff supervision for clubs, tutoring, study hall, sports and other school related activities may ride the late bus. Students participating in the

Thomas Jefferson Community Recreation Center teen program are not permitted to ride the TJMS late bus. Late buses stop at almost every regular bus stop, but combine multiple bus routes so will not be identical to the student's regular bus assignment. TJMS students can view late bus stops on their grade level Canvas page.

### **Check-In: Extended Day**

Open from 2:35 - 6:00 p.m. Monday - Friday (September - June); **Fee based program**

The Check-In program is Extended Day's after school program for middle school students. The Check-In program provides students with a structured, supervised environment that allows them to participate in a variety of Check-In activities and the extracurricular activities at TJMS. Students who are enrolled in Check-in must sign-in at Check-in before they go to a school activity. After the activity they must return to the Check-in program.

Check-in students, with parent permission, are also able to sign themselves out and leave the school campus.

Once a child has signed out for the day, they cannot return to the Check-in program.

To Register: <https://www.apsva.us/extended-day/registration/>

### **Thomas Jefferson Recreation Center Teen Program**

Open from 2:35 - 6:00 p.m. Monday - Friday (September - June) **Free program**

This is a free after school program for teens to have fun, make new friends and develop skills. Programs can include music, dance, games, cooking, art, sport games, and activities chosen by teen participants. Teens are expected to participate in activities. To register, download the registration form and drop it off in person or email to [OFT@arlingtonva.us](mailto:OFT@arlingtonva.us). Questions? Contact 703-228-7780.

English: <https://parks.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2013/11/Official-Teen-Registration-form.pdf>

Spanish: <https://parks.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2017/03/TeenRegistrationform-Spanish.pdf>

Students who attend other school sponsored activities after school can enter the Rec Program at 3:35 with a pass from a teacher/staff member. With parent/guardian permission, students can check themselves out but cannot return to the center after they have checked out.

## **TJMS Sports**

The following sports are offered at TJMS. Sports marked with \* are no-cut sports; all students may participate.

**Fall:** Girls and Boys Tennis, Girls Soccer, Boys Soccer, Boys Ultimate Frisbee\*, Girls Ultimate Frisbee\*, Cheerleading (tryouts required for Winter)

**Winter:** Girls Basketball, Boys Basketball, Wrestling\*

**Spring:** Swimming\*, Diving\*, Track\*

### **Tryouts and Game Dates**

Tryouts and game dates will be provided at the beginning of the year through the Monthly Activities Calendar and on the TJMS website under the "Activities" tab.

### **Team Practice**

Most sports have daily practice from 2:40 - 4:00 p.m. The swim team and diving team practice at the Washington-Lee pool. Coaches will disseminate schedules. Students eligible for busing can take a late bus home after practice.

### **TJMS Sports Banquet**

A sports banquet is held at the end of each season (fall, winter, spring) to recognize athletes. It is a dessert reception and athletes and family are invited to attend.

### **Medical forms**

All participants of non-club teams must submit a doctor-signed VHSL physical form to Mr. Siegel before attending tryouts or practices. Any physical dated past May 1 will be good through the end of the NEXT school year. Your

child can pick up a sports packet from Mr. Seigel or access it here:

<http://jefferson.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2017/08/2018sportspacket.pdf>

### **8th Grade Students**

8th grade students can participate in sports at their “home” high school IF the sport is not offered at the middle school level. Any eighth grader who intends to play a sport at the high school level must also have sports injury insurance or medical insurance. APS offers School Accident Insurance for those students who do not have private insurance. See Mr. Seigel for details and forms.

### **Transportation to Matches**

Transportation is provided by APS to all matches. Transportation home to athletes' bus stops will be provided after matches end. Matches typically begin at 3:15.

**Questions?** Contact Mr. Jeremy Siegel at (703) 228–5904 or [jeremy.siegel@apsva.us](mailto:jeremy.siegel@apsva.us)

## **Important Events**

### **Harvest Festival - October**

The Fall Harvest Festival is a major community event. It takes place outside the main entrance on an evening in October and brings together the TJMS community including students, their families, neighbors and TJMS staff. Participants can explore the TJMS garden and listen to the chorus perform and enjoy seasonal treats. Kids have fun watching a movie outside on hay bales. Pumpkins are raffled off at the end of the evening. The event is free with the option to buy pizza by the slice.

### **International Night - April**

International Night takes place on a Friday evening in April in the TJMS gym. The event is for the whole family and is a fantastic celebration of the international flavor of our IB community. There are student performances, a student fashion show of clothing from around the world, an art display, professional entertainment (usually music or dance), face painting, henna tattoos, and more. Throughout the evening, the PTA holds a basket raffle fundraiser. The baskets are a joint effort between TJMS families and the PTA. Families donate items based on themes chosen by the TAs (movie night, spa day, cooking, etc.). The PTA solicits additional donations from local businesses and combines all the items to create beautiful baskets. Raffle tickets are sold during the event.

## **Transitioning to Middle School: Supporting Your Child**

- Encourage your child to get involved in areas that interest him/her and to try new things. After school activities are a good way to meet other students with shared interests.
- Set Technology guidelines and monitor your child's use.
- Make sure your student gets enough sleep, exercises, and eats a healthy diet.
- Check ParentVue regularly to identify academic problems before they go too far. Encourage your child to check StudentVue regularly as well.
- Help your child find/develop ways to cope with stress (art, yoga, sports, listening to music, meditation, gardening).
- Help your child develop organizational skills. Students will work on learning these skills at TJMS, but it will help them if you work on it at home as well.
- Help them learn to problem solve, self-advocate and develop independence. Encourage your child to talk directly to his teachers if he has questions or problems with assignments. Don't jump in right away to fix it or to get the answer. Help him/her brainstorm/roll play interactions with adults or peers.
- Contact your child's School Counselor if you have questions about how to handle any specific issues or concerns (screen use, bullying, drug use).

## Thomas Jefferson Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The PTA is a national volunteer organization with local branches at many schools. Membership is open to all parents/guardians and staff. At TJMS, the PTA's goals are to:

- Serve as a two-way information link between families and the school administration.
- Help support an excellent learning environment for our students through mini-grants to teachers, recognition of honors students.
- Advocate for students and families.
- Build a sense of community by supporting events like Harvest Night, International Night, and restaurant nights.
- Provide support and appreciation for our wonderful teaching staff through teacher breakfasts, grants for educational opportunities, etc.
- Encourage outdoor learning and community service through our garden.
- Inform the TJMS community on topics of interest such as the 1:1 device policy, school boundary issues, drug use awareness, gifted program.

### **2023-24 TJ PTA Officers**

President, Allison Stewart, [tjmspta@gmail.com](mailto:tjmspta@gmail.com)

Secretary, Jimisha Releford

Treasurer, Kelly Ryan, Treasurer

Fundraising Chair, Patricia Garcia

### **Join the PTA**

Membership in the PTA helps parents/guardians engage in their student's education, meet other parents, teachers and staff in the TJMS community, and support the PTA's goals.

Join online at <https://jefferson.apsva.us/pta/> or complete a membership form (included in your First Day Packet) and submit it with payment (check made out to TJMS PTA) to the PTA mailbox in the main office. The membership fee is \$15/family per year.

### **Monthly Meetings**

For 2023-24, monthly meetings will generally occur on the **third Thursday of the month**. Meetings are hybrid (in-person and virtual) **7:00-8:15 p.m.** Meetings are held in the TJMS library. All PTA meetings offer simultaneous translation in Spanish.

### **Support the PTA**

**Donations:** You can make a donation when you complete your membership form, or at any time. Make donations by check (made out to "TJMS PTA") and leave them in the PTA box in the main office or by credit card through our Square account <https://squareup.com/market/thomas-jefferson-middle-school-pta>

#### **Amazon Smile:**

Begin your shopping on Amazon <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1494367>. TJMS gets money for every purchase made. To support TJMS, bookmark this page and always start shopping from here.

**Grocery Stores:** Link your loyalty card to TJMS

**Giant Bonus Card:** Register (Code 02007) at <http://giantfood.com/savings-and-rewards/rewards-program/aplus>

**Harris-Teeter Card:** Register (Code 3905) at <https://www.harristeeter.com/together-in-education>

**Box Tops Program:** Collect Box Tops and drop them off in the TJMS main office.

### **Fundraising**

The PTA holds several fundraising events during the year to support the goals above. These events may include restaurant nights, a no-fuss fundraiser, Bingo Night, the Used Book Fair, International Night Basket Raffle and a Read-A-Thon.

**Volunteer**

We have many opportunities to volunteer from chairing a committee to baking cookies for teacher appreciation or helping in the Thomas Jefferson garden. Please complete the volunteer interest portion of the PTA Membership Form, or e-mail the PTA President to share how you can help! You can also respond to requests that will be sent out in the weekly BUZZ and/or via the listserv.