

*John F. Kennedy Elementary School*  
*Student Handbook*



228 MT. VERNON AVENUE  
WEST BERLIN, NJ 08091  
856-767-9480

[WWW.BTWPSCHOOLS.ORG](http://WWW.BTWPSCHOOLS.ORG)

Hours of Operation

Full Day: 8:55am-3:25pm  
Half Day/Early Dismissal: 8:55am-1:25pm  
2-Hour Delay: 10:55am-3:25pm

*Educating Today for Tomorrow's Success*

John F. Kennedy Elementary School  
228 Mt. Vernon Avenue  
West Berlin, NJ 08091  
856-767-9480  
www.btwpschools.org

### **Berlin Township Mission Statement**

*The Berlin Township School District enriches student learning by creating a personalized and supportive educational environment that meets the unique needs of every learner. We are committed to employing highly effective, knowledgeable, and caring staff who support the academic, social, and emotional growth of all students. We foster a school culture where students demonstrate respect, take responsibility, and lead with purpose in their lives and communities. Through open communication and strong partnerships with families and the community, we strengthen student success and engagement.*

### **School Calendar – Important Dates**

Please see the school calendar on the JFK school website [www.btwpschools.org](http://www.btwpschools.org) for current events in the school.

### **Student Attendance & Tardiness**

*Irregular school attendance can significantly hinder a student's academic progress and social growth. Missing classes may make it harder for students to learn essential skills, leading to frustration and a negative perception of school.*

Please contact the school each morning no later than **9:15 am** if a student is going to be absent to the Main Office (856-767-9164). Your communication will guarantee that all students are safe as well as **prevent an automated call to your home**. Upon returning to school the student must bring a note explaining the reason for the absence. If a student is absent for five consecutive days or more, a doctor's note must accompany the student's return to school. Students, who are absent due to a fever, must be fever-free for 24 hours prior to returning to school. Excessive absences and/or excessive tardiness may result in retention in the present grade level and/or a petition for the student and parent to appear in municipal court.

All students will enter school at **8:55 AM**. If a student enters school after 9:05 AM, he/she must report to the Main Office and receive a late pass. Late arrival to school will be recorded in the student's attendance record accordingly. Students must be in school for a minimum of four hours to receive credit for attendance for the day. Dismissal is at 3:25 PM.

### **Arrival and Dismissal -**

**Berlin Township Board of Education Regulation 5113.2**

**New Procedure ~ Please take note**

#### **Arrival:**

**Students who do not ride the school bus will enter and exit school through Washington Ave. located on the side of the school.** Doors open at **8:50 AM** and **close at 9:05 AM**. While waiting to enter school all students must be supervised by an adult. There will be no supervision of students provided by school personnel prior to **8:50 AM**. **If a student arrives after 9:05 AM they will enter through the Main Entrance and report to the Main Office for a late pass.**

#### **Dismissal:**

- Berlin Township Board of Education Policy [5142](#)

An adult who is listed on the school emergency contact for the student must accompany a student at the end of the school day. Students who must leave school early for a special appointment or due to illness may only be picked up at school by an approved adult as indicated on their emergency contact form. Parents/guardians must give the office advance notice of late arrival or early dismissal of a student due to a prearranged appointment. All parents or guardians must provide photo identification when picking up a student from school.

Students who need to make arrangements out of the ordinary for dismissal from school (i. e., go home on a different bus) must have a note from the parent/guardian. Students will not be dismissed from school in a manner

inconsistent with their usual dismissal procedure unless the parent/guardian provides advance written notice.

***New Procedure: All changes to a student's dismissal procedure must be made NO LATER than 2:45PM. After 2:45PM the student will utilize the dismissal procedure that is indicated in OnCourse.*** This will support the safety and security of all the students.

### **Make-Up Work**

Parents/Guardians should call the main office to arrange to pick up work when their child is absent from school. This will permit teachers to have make-up work ready at the end of the day after dismissal.

### **Homework -**

#### **Berlin Township Board of Education Policy 6154**

Homework is an important part of the learning process. Homework carries the educational goals of the school into the home, improves work habits, reinforces skills and teaches independent study habits. The amount of homework assigned is in accordance with the students' grade level. All students are expected to complete homework consistently. When assigned homework is not complete, consequences may be imposed including a reduction in the child's grade or loss of privileges in school.

### **2025-2026 Trimester Dates**

1 <sup>st</sup> Trimester	09/03/2025 - 12/03/2025
2 <sup>nd</sup> Trimester	12/04/2025 - 03/12/2026
3 <sup>rd</sup> Trimester	03/13/2026 - 06/16/2026

### **Emergency Closing**

Upon entering emergency information on the Emergency Contact Form in the student information system, parents/guardians will be automatically enrolled in the automated messaging system. This system will be utilized for all emergency communication to parents via email, voicemail and/or text message at the phone number(s) and/or email address(es) of the parent's choosing. Occasionally, the school may use the automated messaging system for other essential or informational communications.

### **Dress Code-**

#### **Berlin Township Board of Education Policy 5132**

We like students to be comfortable in the learning environment and to have the opportunity to participate in all available activities. To ensure that each child has this opportunity, the following guidelines have been established:

- Clothing should be clean and age-appropriate
- Clothing should be activity and weather appropriate
- Sneakers should be worn for physical education, class trips, field day and recess
- Hats and non-prescription glasses are not permitted in the building
- Sneaker skates are not permitted
- Inappropriate graphics/slogans on clothing are not permitted

Students are encouraged to wear shoes with closed front (unexposed toes). Shoes must fasten to the foot with a strap. No slip on, clogs or flip-flops are permitted.

If a student's attire doesn't meet the established guidelines, then a parent or guardian may be contacted to bring a more appropriate outfit to school. Until then, the student may be temporarily unable to participate in certain activities, so we encourage everyone to dress in accordance with the school's expectations.

## **Colognes, Fragrances, Sprays**

To help create a safe and comfortable environment for everyone, students are kindly asked to avoid wearing strong fragrances, sprays, or colognes at school or on school buses. Some individuals may have sensitivities or respiratory conditions that can be triggered by strong scents. For this reason, using or spraying fragrances on campus or during transportation is not permitted. If a student does arrive wearing a noticeable scent, they may be asked to return home to shower before coming back to class. Please note that time away from school for this reason will be considered an unexcused absence if the student does not return. Intentional misuse of fragrances may result in further disciplinary action. We appreciate everyone's cooperation in keeping our school safe and welcoming for all.

## **Dispensing Student Medication/Medical Screening - Berlin Township Board of Education Policy [5141](#)**

The school nurse is the only authorized staff member in the school to dispense medication to students. He/she will give medicine in compliance with the following regulations:

1. Written instructions, signed by parent and physician, must be sent to the school nurse. Include the child's name, name of medication, its purpose, the time and dosage to be given, possible side effects and termination date for giving the medication.
2. The medication must be delivered to the nurse by the child's parent/guardian, in the original container, labeled by the pharmacy or doctor. Students must not carry medications to and from school.

The school nurse is the only authorized staff member in the school that will conduct medical screenings for students.

1. Height
2. Weight
3. Vision
4. Hearing
5. Dental (Preschool Only)

To ensure student health and safety, only the school nurse is authorized to determine if a student needs to go home due to illness. If a student feels unwell, they should visit the nurse, who will assess their condition and contact a parent or guardian if necessary. To keep communication clear and in line with school policy, students should not use personal mobile devices to contact parents during the school day. Thank you for helping us follow these procedures, which are in place to support student well-being and maintain a smooth school environment..

## **School Safety Drills - Berlin Township Board of Education Policy [6114](#)**

Berlin Township Board of Education Policy 6114 Fire drills and other school safety drills are conducted twice monthly as mandated by law. All school fire drills and safety drills will be conducted in accordance with state regulations.

## **Cell Phones - Berlin Township Board of Education Regulation [5131](#)**

Students are not permitted to carry cell phones in school. Students who have cell phones must store them in their backpacks during the school day and have them turned off. To help maintain a focused learning environment, students should keep cell phones put away during school hours. If a phone is used inappropriately, it will be held in the principal's office for safekeeping. A parent or guardian will be asked to pick it up at their convenience. In addition earbuds and headphones must be stored away as they are not permitted in school.

To support a focused and respectful learning environment, all students are expected to follow school rules as outlined in the Berlin Township Code of Conduct. As cell phone use is not permitted during the instructional day, we kindly ask that all communication between parents and students go through the main office. Direct contact via personal devices during school hours is not allowed and may result in consequences as outlined in the Code of Conduct. We appreciate your cooperation in helping maintain an atmosphere where all students can succeed.

## **Birthday Parties**

To promote kindness and inclusion, students who wish to distribute party invitations at school should invite the entire class, all the girls, or all the boys. This helps ensure that everyone feels included and respected. We also ask that any in-school celebrations be kept minimal to maintain the flow of the school day. Please remember that for the safety of all students, latex materials—including balloons—are not allowed in school. Thank you for helping us create a welcoming and safe environment for everyone!

## **Volunteers/Room Parents**

We warmly welcome parent and guardian involvement in special school events and activities. To participate—whether it's a classroom event, field trip, or other school function—all volunteers must receive ADVANCE approval prior to the event. For details on how to become ADVANCE approved, please contact the superintendent's office at 856-767-9480 (Ext. 1111). We appreciate your support and enthusiasm for being part of our school community!

If you are interested in becoming a Room Parent, we would love to have your support! Room Parents play a key role in assisting with classroom activities, organizing special events, and helping maintain strong communication between teachers and families. To serve as a Room Parent, you must also be a member of the school's PEACE organization (Parent and Educator Alliance for Child Enrichment). PEACE members are essential partners in building a vibrant school community, enriching students' experiences, and strengthening the connection between home and school.

## **Multi-Tiered System of Support**

Berlin Township Schools will implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to guide student interventions.

Students identified as academically at risk will receive targeted support and progress monitoring through the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework. For students whose needs extend beyond academics—such as behavioral, health, or emotional concerns—intervention and support will be provided through the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) process.

Prior to implementing any interventions, a multidisciplinary team will convene to review relevant data and make informed, evidence-based decisions. All interventions and student progress will be thoroughly documented to ensure accountability and continuity of support.

The overarching goal of MTSS is to ensure that every student receives the individualized resources and support necessary to achieve success.

## **Response to Intervention (RTI)**

The RTI process is a multi-step approach to providing services and interventions to students who struggle with learning at increasing levels of intensity. The RTI committee closely monitors the student's progress at each stage of intervention. Results of this monitoring are used to make decisions about the need for further research based instruction and/or intervention in general/special education or both.

The RTI process has the potential to limit the amount of academic failure that any student experiences and to increase the accuracy of special education evaluations. Information and data gathered by the RTI process can lead to earlier identification of students who have true disabilities and are in need of special education services. Parents should participate in problem-solving discussions with their child's teacher about the specific strengths and areas for improvement. Parents should also ask when the school will update them on the results of an intervention. When possible, parents should make suggestions about strategies and interventions based on what they know works at home. Finally, parents should praise their children for any improvement in the area of concern. Ultimately, a child needs positive reinforcement inside and out of school for success.

The RTI framework helps schools organize effective instruction for the benefit of all students. The program encourages early intervention services to help prevent academic and behavioral difficulties. Lastly, the program is designed to be a proactive and positive approach to educating every student.

## **I&RS (Intervention and Referral Services)**

### **Berlin Township Board of Education Policy [6164.1](#)**

The I&RS process is a supportive and proactive approach to helping students who may be struggling in the general education setting. The I&RS team works collaboratively with parents and school staff to identify and address barriers to learning and development that students may be facing. This process involves gathering information, developing individualized action plans, and implementing strategies to support student progress. We believe that by working together, we can help all students reach their full potential.

If a student is referred to the I&RS team, parents will be notified and invited to participate in the problem-solving process. The team, comprised of school staff and potentially the student's parent or guardian, will work together to:

- Gather information about the student's challenges
- Identify specific barriers to learning and development
- Develop an individualized I&RS action plan with targeted interventions
- Monitor the student's progress and make adjustments as needed
- Collaborate with parents to ensure the best possible outcomes for the student

The goal of the I&RS process is to provide a supportive and effective framework for addressing student needs and promoting their academic, social, and emotional well-being.

### **Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)**

At JFK, we are committed to creating a supportive and respectful school environment where every student can thrive. To promote positive behavior at the school-wide, classroom, and individual levels, we implement Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)—a research-based approach that encourages collaboration and consistency in setting clear expectations for all students. Through PBS, students are taught what it means to be safe, respectful, and responsible in every area of the school. When additional support is needed, the Behavior Referral Team works closely with students to understand their needs and create a personalized plan that helps them grow and succeed.

**Expectations:** All students are expected to abide by the following:

- Be respectful to others
- Be responsible for oneself
- Be safe at all times

These expectations and guidelines are in place to support student success not only during the school day, but also while traveling to and from school and at all school events. When students need extra support in meeting these expectations, appropriate guidance and consequences will be provided to help them make positive choices moving forward.

### **School Counselor**

JFK Elementary has a full-time counselor on staff. During the school year the School Counselor will arrange for whole class mini-lessons on various topics of typical social-emotional development concerns for middle school students. In addition the School Counselor will provide small group sessions for students with common interests (such as students of recently divorced parents or who have suffered a death in the family). Individual counseling sessions will be scheduled on an “as needed” basis or as mandated by a student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. The School Counselor will be available to conference with students on current situations as they arise. Students also have access to complete an online request form to request a visit with the School Counselor. The School Counselor will locate the student for a conference to address the current matter. Parents who would like to conference with the School Counselor are required to contact the school to set up an agreed upon date and time.

### **Code of Conduct**

#### **Berlin Township Board of Education Policy 5131**

**Goal:** At John F. Kennedy Elementary School, our goal is to help students develop self-control, self-discipline, and strong social skills—essential qualities for a productive and respectful learning environment. We value and encourage collaboration, both in academic work and in play, as it helps children build positive relationships with peers and adults.

Our school-wide expectations—to **be safe, respectful, and responsible**—serve as guiding principles that support positive behavior and a strong sense of community. These expectations are shaped by New Jersey State Law, Berlin Township Board of Education Policy, and other important guidelines, all with the shared goal of creating a safe and supportive school environment for every child.

The purpose of our discipline code is to ensure that students, families, staff, and the broader school community have a clear understanding of behavior expectations and how we respond to situations in a fair, consistent, and constructive manner.

We kindly ask parents and guardians to partner with us in reinforcing these expectations at home. If you have questions or concerns about a discipline referral, we encourage open communication with the staff member involved. This helps build mutual understanding and ensures we are all working together in support of your child’s growth.

It's important to note that discipline referrals are not meant to punish, but rather to help students reflect on their choices and learn from them. Everyone makes mistakes—what matters is how we support students in learning from them.

Parental support plays a vital role in shaping student behavior. When school expectations are supported both at school and at home, students are more likely to make lasting, positive changes. On the other hand, inconsistent messages may lead to ongoing challenges.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and partnership. By working together, we can ensure a successful, respectful, and enriching school year for all students.

Consequences are one of the tools staff members may use to help guide students toward making better choices. When determining an appropriate response, staff consider both the nature of the behavior and whether it has occurred repeatedly. A combination of strategies may be used—for example, guiding students through corrective actions while also involving parents or guardians in the process. When needed, support staff such as counselors, social workers, or school psychologists may be involved to help create a plan for positive behavior and continued growth (see *Positive Behavior Supports* above).

### **Computers & Technology - Berlin Township Board of Education Regulation [6142.10](#)**

To ensure safe and responsible use of technology, all students must have a signed Acceptable Use Agreement on file before accessing school computers or being assigned a personal Chromebook. This agreement helps students understand how to use technology in a respectful and appropriate way. If a student does not follow the guidelines, access to school devices may be limited, and additional support or consequences may be provided in accordance with district policies. Our goal is to help all students become responsible digital citizens.

Furthermore, the Berlin Township Board of Education considers use of the school district's technology resources to be a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in disciplinary consequences, including possible cancellation of the privilege, suspension or expulsion and even, in serious situations, legal prosecution. The Board of Education policy in regards to Technology Internet Access will be provided to parents in its entirety and will be available on the Berlin Township School District website [www.btwpschools.org](http://www.btwpschools.org).

Note: Acceptable Use Policy extends to the Remote Learning School environment.

### **Bus Rules & Regulations - Berlin Township Board of Education Regulation 5131**

- It is a privilege for students to ride the bus to and from school.
- All students must adhere to the bus behavior expectations listed below.
- All students must ride their assigned bus and enter and exit at the assigned stop.
- Students who violate bus behavior expectations may be subject to suspension of bus riding privileges including field trips.
- If your child is not eligible for bus transportation, he/she may not ride the school bus. If your child wants to go home with another student, the parent/guardian must provide transportation. Your child's homeroom teacher and the main office will need a note from each parent/guardian to change normal dismissal procedures for your children who wish to go home together. (see *Dismissal Procedures* above for additional guidelines)
- Students who miss the bus in the morning must be transported to school by their parent/guardian.

### **Bus Behavior Expectations - Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible**

Examples of what this looks like:

#### *Be Safe*

- Stay out of the street
- Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before getting on and off
- Remain in assigned seats
- Fasten seatbelt properly
- Keep hands/feet/objects to self
- Get on and off the bus at the designated bus stop

#### *Be Respectful,*

- Use kind words and actions
- Use quiet voices while on bus
- Follow the bus driver's directions

*Be Responsible*

- Clean up after yourself
- Take your belongings with you when you leave
- Be on time
- Be ready
- No eating or drinking on the bus

**\* Consequences for misconduct on the bus will also be addressed through the Code of Conduct**

**C.A.R.E Program**

Berlin Township Children's After-School Recreation and Education (CARE) is an extended day program providing children with an environment that is safe, warm, friendly, and stimulating. The program includes time for rest, play and learning as well as an opportunity for the child to develop intellectually and to interact with adults and peers through a variety of activities. CARE is sponsored by the Berlin Township Board of Education and is open to any school-aged child (grades pre-kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup>) enrolled in the district provided the program can meet the needs of that child.

**Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying**

**Berlin Township Board of Education Policy [5131.1](#)**

The Berlin Township Board of Education emphasizes the importance of maintaining a safe and civil environment in schools to facilitate learning and high academic standards, outlining policies and procedures related to harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB). Expectations are set for appropriate behavior from students, staff, volunteers, and board members, with consequences for disruptive or violent conduct. Consequences for acts of HIB vary based on severity, with measures ranging from counseling to suspension or expulsion. Responsibilities of school leaders, staff, and volunteers include preventing and addressing HIB along with implementing procedures for investigating reported incidents. Retaliation, reprisal, or false accusations against individuals reporting HIB is prohibited and there are consequences for such actions. Ongoing training on HIB prevention, bullying prevention programs, and annual reviews of the effectiveness will be completed each year. Reported acts of HIB will be investigated in accordance with the current New Jersey Anti-Bullying law and subsequent consequences and actions will be administered according to Berlin Township policy and regulation.