



Hello Everyone,

As a school, we wanted to take some time to refresh communication on logistics and routines.

We spend A LOT of time thinking about communication with you all and want to make sure it is as efficient as possible to mitigate any confusion or problems. *This is very long, but please read it carefully so we can ensure TJS-Parent communication is as effective as possible.*

### ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION:

(1) **Weekly classroom newsletters**- We put all helpful information in one weekly newsletter from each classroom, so you can stay updated on academics and the fun things happening in the classroom and at school. We understand that the academic portion of this email is fairly vague but you can at least see the areas that we are concentrating on. Other avenues of getting academic information specific to your child are listed below. The weekly newsletter is sent electronically via email. Please request paper copies if you need that instead.

(2) **Infinite Campus emails and texts**- These are directly from the administration and have the information you need to know what is going on at the whole school level. If there is ever any confusion about information from your IC account, emailing Aruna is the best way to get questions answered. You can email her at [juniperfrontoffice@gmail.com](mailto:juniperfrontoffice@gmail.com). Also, if you are thinking "what's IC?!"...we probably do not have your correct email. Contact us immediately with an updated email.

(3) **Friday Folders**- This is where we send your child's completed work back home for you to see what they chose or were asked to work on. However, please be mindful about what is being sent home because that reflects what your child is interested in, how much your child actually finished, and the skills being taught in class. Friday folders also have additional information from our electives partners, information from administration, and additional activities in the community. Read, review, empty and return Friday Folders on every Monday.

(4) **Class websites**- Go to [juniper.durangoschools.org](https://juniper.durangoschools.org) and select "Classrooms"  
<https://juniper.durangoschools.org/apps/departments/index.jsp?show=TDE>

(5) **Morning welcome hour**- We have a lot going on during our morning welcome hour but would love to chat with you about any quick concern/topic you might have. During this time, we want the kids to have the choice and independence to choose a work that they like with the idea that some days classrooms have specific projects or activities that they are working on. Over the whole hour from 8-9am, activities and work focus on skills that students are working on in class. This is also the best time to see what your child is doing and help direct their learning to an area that you feel necessary. This is a parent/student directed time...so please ask them to show you their SLC (Student Learning Contract) and to share what they are working on and what they have mastered. Ask them to show you a work that they can do to demonstrate their academic growth.

(6) **Email**- We understand pressing concerns and want to address them as soon as possible. Please use this route of communication for your more lengthy concerns that may be best expressed through writing! \*\*\*\*\* *The emails that we have for families were given to us based on the information you filled out during registration. If you do not receive our emails or anyone in your family wishes to be on our email list, please let us know directly.*

(7) **Conferences**- As a whole school we have 2 parent-teacher conferences for the school year- Fall and Spring. However, TJS school staff are always available to meet with you and your family whenever you have questions or a concern. Conferences are a great time to talk about personal concerns or even just to check in on your child's development. We love working with parents collaboratively to figure out what works best for everyone as a team. Please email us if you feel like a conference is something you would like, we are happy to accommodate this.

(8) **The Juniper School Website:** For school-wide information, upcoming events, calendars, forms, and school announcements...this is your place to visit! FYI: we are working on a school Mobile App for 2018-2019, which will allow ALL communications to be at your fingertips, on your phones and accessible when you want to see it!  
[juniper.durangoschools.org](http://juniper.durangoschools.org)

## METHODS TO SEE YOUR CHILD'S ACADEMIC GROWTH:

(1) **Student Learning Contracts:** Your child's SLC binders are located in each classroom.. **They are fully accessible and always available.** You can see which math Montessori lessons your child has been taught and which ones they have mastered, as well as other academic areas. The SLC's are accurate in reflecting the exact skills that we are targeting in each skill area. If you feel out of the loop on what we are covering, please look in these SLC binders! It is also welcome for parents to ask teachers questions in relation to SLC's if students are unable to answer those questions. SLC's look a bit different based on the age(s) of the classroom.

(2) **Observation:** During the morning welcome hour, your child has the opportunity to choose from independent work, activities and various works. While a lot of our friends choose practical life we really try to create the inner questioning in your child for them to think "is this making my brain grow?" and "Am I being balanced?". Watch what your child chooses and try to further push their reflective thinking to get them to work on the areas you find important. When your child is able to do something really well and easy, you can be assured that that skill is "mastered". If you are observing and your child is struggling to remember the procedure or how to do it, that is an indicator of where they may need extra support. If you ask your child what they should be doing and they aren't quite sure, that may be an indication that they still are having a hard time understanding our routines and making independent choices.

## **SPECIFIC CLASSROOM WORK**

Each classroom has some work that is unique to their classrooms. For example:

### **Kindergarten:**

**TS GOLD reports:** We have three checkpoint times for kindergarten "report cards". You all received the results in October, March, and a final one will be sent in May. These reports show our educated opinion about your child's growth as a whole (physical, cognitive, etc.). TS Gold uses statistical data to show you where your child "should" be (the purple band) and that allows you to see any areas of concern as well as the areas of strength! Read these carefully to understand your child's development and also ask us questions when necessary! **Take-home Reading:** While we are still struggling to keep consistency in our volunteers and in our schedule the take-home reading program is still in effect. This is the perfect time to realize where your child is at in this area. If your child has been on the same level book for the past month, this is an indication that either your child has not been putting their book in

the bin for parents to check-in with them OR that your child may be struggling. Check in with us about what you are noticing and

we can make an effort to address your concerns (like reminding your child specifically to put their reading packet in the bin to be checked!)

### **First Grade:**

**Sight Word Packets:** Each child has their own sight word packet and cards that we work on in class. The basket that houses the sight words is in the Reading center. Feel free to practice these with your child in the morning. These packets are to stay at school so we can practice each day with your child. **Take-home Reading:** While we are still struggling to get all of the packets back on a daily basis, the take-home reading program is still in effect. This is the perfect time to read with your child at home. If your child has been on the same level book for the past month, this is an indication that either your child has not been putting their book in the bin for parents to check-in with them OR that your child may be struggling. Check in with us about what you are noticing and we can make an effort to address your concerns (like reminding your child specifically to put their reading packet in the bin to be checked!)

### **2nd Grade:**

**Spelling Lists:** These incorporate the phonics rule our decodable readers focus on in the classroom that week, plus second grade high frequency words also associated with text we will be reading that week. In class, we practice these words in authentic ways, through fun active lessons and to get the students comfortable. A spelling test is given on Friday mornings before assembly on these words. **Math Homework:** This homework will come home intermittently based on student need in reinforcing the skill covered that week and as a quick, independent check. **IXL:** This online math support program allows students to be placed at their mathematical level and then practice on skills of need. Research states that practice for 30 minutes per week is most effective. Students are able to access this program at home for areas other than Math as well. **Take Home Readers:** These leveled reading books are related to the subject we are studying and come home weekly for parents to see what their child is reading and working on. **Inquiry:** In student binders, Inquiry work is recorded and tracked through various documents including graphic organizers. **Rocket Math:** A fast facts math game that students use to practice math with each other and also with pencil and paper...all of these materials are kept by the teachers but are accessible to parents if asked.

### **3rd Grade:**

**Take Home Folders and Reading Logs** Students are expected to be bringing home a folder and reading log every night and back every morning. Any uncompleted work from the day is sent home as well as communication with parents. If work is not sent home students are still expected to take some quiet mindful time, 20 minutes, every night to read with their families or independently. This skill of responsibility for their work and habit of nightly reading builds lifelong learners.

### **4th Grade:**

**Reading Logs in Friday Folders:** At this age we are actively working on fostering a love of reading. Students are sent home a weekly reading log every Friday in their Friday folders. They are expected to read for 20 minutes or more, 5 days a week and then record some of their thinking in a reading comprehension log that changes weekly.

**Google Classroom:** Extension activities, math practice, and fun learning websites and videos are posted to Google Classroom throughout each unit and are available by choice for students to access and explore at home. While many of the activities are also explored during class time, our hope is that students are taking their learning to a deeper level and exploring these options outside of school as well if they have internet access.

### **5th Grade:**

**Planners:** Planners are filled out daily with learning goals, important dates and work deadlines. **Google Classroom:** students should be logging in during the learning day and they are welcome to log in from home as well.

### **K-5th Grade:**

**Walk To Read:** Each child “walks” to a different reading group four days a week for targeted skills instruction. This is done in addition to their regular hour block for reading. We also do a read aloud for 20 min in our classroom every day.

### **TAKE AWAY→**

We are a brand new school and so much thought is going into our practices and methods. It is such an awesome opportunity for you all as families to be able to voice your opinions and help us create the practices and methods that you all think are best. We are flexible and open and want to work together to create strong routines that can be continued and built upon as Juniper grows.

In regards to academics, TJS has numerous forms of record keeping happening EVERY DAY! We use a standards-based checklist, a Montessori math progress checklist, informal notes and observations, informal assessments, finished work, etc. to see where each child is. We individualize everything to make sure each child is getting extra help in the area that they need. The “Walk-to-read” groups are specialized based on skills so that they are getting the focused help they need with literacy and phonics. In math, we give small or individual lessons to meet each child where they are. EVERY child is being supported to the capacity we see fit. Outside of the above modes of communication, we contact families when there is a real issue that we want to help with in order to be preventative. That means after we have done our normal focused instructional help and see very little to no growth we will contact you.

**\*\*\*Please know that we want our School to be the best it can be.**

**TJS is composed of 123 awesome kids and their amazing families.**

**So, to make it the best it can be we need to hear your ideas and opinions.**

**If you have any suggestions or concerns, the only way we can help is by discussing them.\*\*\***

Thank you for taking the time to read this in full.

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