



Parent Handbook

JEWISH EDUCATIONAL CENTER LOWER AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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JEC Lower and Middle School **Parent Handbook**

The JEC is dedicated to the best interests of our students, as individuals and as a school community. We value a strong home-school partnership, and offer frequent and respectful communication regarding our general program as well as your child's performance and progress. The JEC asks that you support our values and practices, communicate with us regularly and respectfully, and keep this partnership strong by dealing promptly and collaboratively with any situation that may arise. We look forward to a positive and constructive relationship with each family, and a successful year for each student.

1. DAILY ARRIVAL

SCHEDULE

Classes begin at 8:30a.m. daily. Supervision is available for all students starting at 8:00a.m. Before 8:00a.m. supervision is available only for students registered for early care.

Grades

Early Arrival Location

Juniors & Nursery

Juniors/Nursery classrooms

Kindergarten & Primer

Cafeteria

Grades 1-4, 5G

Gym

Grades 5-8 Boys

8:05am Minyan

Boys in Grade 5-8 are required to attend Minyan in the Reibel Beis Medrash, which begins at 8:05 a.m., Monday through Friday. Boys in Grades 6-8 will have time to eat breakfast after *minyan*. Boys in Grade 5 should eat breakfast at home prior to coming to *minyan*.

Boys who are transported by bus from other communities are expected to join the *minyan* once their buses have arrived at the JEC. Should a student need to attend an alternative *minyan* elsewhere, please consult an administrator for advance clearance.

ARRIVAL

Students who are transported by bus enter the building through the doors on Park Ave. All other students enter through the main entrance in the parking lot. To join the carpool line during arrival time, please turn onto Livingston Road, and enter the JEC parking lot on your left. Please pull up into the “safety zone” before allowing your child(ren) to exit the car. A faculty member will be present in the parking lot to welcome your child(ren) and guide them into the building until 8:30a.m. After dropping off your child(ren), please continue through the parking lot and exit onto Bellwood Place. If you arrive at school after 8:40a.m. you must park and walk your child(ren) into the school building.

2. DAILY DISMISSAL

a) Please notify the office of any pickup changes by emailing transportation@thejec.org prior to 11:30am or speaking directly with the office before 2:30pm. We cannot change dismissal arrangements without written or direct communication with the office.

b) Please wait for your Lower School children in the carpool line (in the parking lot). This will ensure a safe, clear dismissal zone and accurate accounting of, and supervision for, all students under our care. Please note that for safety reasons, Lower School students will be dismissed **only** through the door leading from the lunchroom through the parking lot.

c) Carpool forms are sent out via email before the first day of school. The dismissal carpool line moves in the **OPPOSITE** direction of the arrival carpool line. To join the dismissal carpool line, turn onto Livingston Road, continue **PAST** the JEC driveway, and turn left onto Bellwood Place. Then, make a left turn into our driveway. Please carefully follow the directions of the JEC Lower School administrative team as they guide you through the parking lot. A staff member will bring your children to your car. Please do not exit your car while on the carpool line. Cars exit through the other end of the driveway, making a left onto Livingston Rd.

d) Please note that there is no supervision in the building after dismissal time, except for students who are officially registered for the after-school program or P.T.A. clubs. Therefore, please make sure to pick up your children on time.

DISMISSAL TIMES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Lower School

Monday through Thursday

Early Childhood.....	3:15 p.m.
Grades 1, 2 and 3.....	3:30 p.m.
Grades 4 and 5.....	4:30 p.m.

Friday

Early Childhood.....	1:15 p.m.
Grades 1-5.....	1:30 p.m.

Middle School

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday

Grades 6, 7 and 8.....	4:30 p.m.*
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*optional study hall on Tuesday ends at 5:30 p.m.

**optional night seder on Wednesday ends at 5:30 p.m.

Thursday

Grades 6, 7 and 8.....	5:30 p.m.
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Friday

Grades 6, 7 and 8.....	1:20 p.m.
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3. ATTENDANCE

One of the fundamental keys to academic success is punctuality and time management. Therefore, it is essential that students start the school day on time. **Please note that the Lower School school day begins at 8:30 am; boys in grades 5-8 begin their day with at 8:05 am SHARP.** If a Lower School student arrives after carpool line finished and there is no longer an administrator escorting children to the building (~8:35 a.m) a parent must accompany the student to the security desk to sign in the student. Early Childhood students will be picked up by a teacher at the security desk, and Elementary students (1-5) will continue directly to their classes. For safety reasons, please do not drop a child off without escorting him or her to the security desk. If a 5th-8th Grade boy arrives between 8:05 and 8:45, he should go straight to *minyán*, where a faculty member will be

taking attendance. If a 5th-8th Grade boy arrives after 8:45, he is expected to sign in at the security desk and continue directly to class.

4. IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO LEAVE EARLY

If it is absolutely necessary to take a child home before the end of a school day, or if the nurse calls to report that your child is ill and needs to go home, please follow the following procedure:

- a) Please call the office to let them know you are picking up your child early
- b) Once you arrive in school please go to the security desk to sign out your child.
- c) We will then call your child to be dismissed. Please wait for your child at the security desk; do not go to his or her classroom or to the nurse's office.

If you know in advance that your child will be leaving early, please notify your child's teacher so that he or she can plan accordingly.

5. VACATIONS

Vacation plans should be made in accordance with the school calendar. If special vacation conflicts arise, they should be discussed with the classroom teachers and formally communicated with administration well in advance. Please note that work should not be expected and will not be assigned for your child to take on vacation.

6. SCHOOL CLOSINGS & URGENT INFORMATION

In the event that school is closed (e.g., snow days, etc.), information will be available the following ways:

- The JEC maintains an Alert-by-Text system that enables us to send out text messages to your cell phones in times of emergency, school closings, or when important information needs to get out. If you have not yet signed up for this system, please email the office for assistance.
- The JEC emails parents in the event of a school closing
- You may visit our website, www.jecls.org.

- You may call our weather advisory line, 908-355-4850 ext. 6299.

7. **DRESS CODE**

LOWER SCHOOL (Grades 1-5)

Colors-both boys and girls

- For both genders, students may wear navy blue, black, or khaki bottoms (denim skirts are allowed for girls), white and any shade of pink or blue tops.
- Both tops and bottoms must be solid with no embellishments (except for JEC-logoed clothes)
- Sweatshirts, sweaters, and layering pieces that will be worn in the school building must also adhere to the color code, with no logos except for a JEC logo.
- Please do not wear a sweatshirt in lieu of a shirt.
- White shirts and dark bottoms should be worn on Rosh Chodesh, Yom Ha'Atzma'ut, and Yom Yerushalayim.

Boys:

- Kippa and Tzitzis must be worn at all times
- No shorts, jeans, sweats, cargo pants or track pants.
- Collared shirts with at least 2 buttons
- Closed shoes or sneakers only

Girls:

- No pants or shorts
- No sheer or low-cut blouses or t-shirts.
- Sleeve lengths should be close to elbows; no sleeveless or capped sleeved shirts
- Girls grades 1-3 - skirts should be knee length
- Girls grades 4-5 - skirts should come to the bottom of the knee or below
- No slits on the front of a skirt that go above the knee
- Jumpers and dresses should follow the guidelines for other bottoms.
- Closed shoes or sneakers only

MIDDLE SCHOOL (Boys in Grades 6-8)

- Kippa and Tzitzis must be worn at all times
- Shirts can be solid or striped and must have a collar (no writing, large logos or neon colors)
- Pants must be either black, blue, khaki or grey. No jeans, sweats, cargo pants or track pants.
- Shoes and sneakers must have a closed back

- Sweaters and sweatshirts may be worn (inappropriate branding or slogans are not allowed)
- Hats/hoods may not be worn

Please note that the dress code applies to our students during all school activities, whether on-site or on outings, whether during normal school hours or during extra-curricular activities.

When visiting the JEC or attending school functions please help us send a consistent message to your children by modeling these standards in an effort to maintain the environment as a *Makom Torah*. We ask that all men wear Kippot and all women wear a skirt when entering the building.

We thank you for granting us the privilege of partnering with you in providing a wonderful chinuch experience for your children.

8. TEXTBOOKS & RESPECTING SCHOOL PROPERTY

The JEC provides students with various textbooks to use during the school year to enhance student learning. At the year's end, all textbooks will be collected from students. If a textbook is damaged or lost, there will be a fee for replacing it.

Please help us teach and encourage respect and responsibility for personal and school property by reminding the students of appropriate care of books, supplies and all areas of the building.

9. ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

At the JEC we recognize that each child differs in their interests, abilities and strengths. We aim to teach and assess students using a variety of modalities and methods:

a) IN-CLASS EVALUATIONS

Each teacher utilizes a variety of educational assessments to evaluate the students' academic progress. These may include in-class assignments, homework, projects, presentations, tests, and quizzes. Teachers will notify parents about upcoming assignments or assessments and share the results when appropriate. When work is sent home please review it with your child. When requested, please sign and send it back in.

b) TERRA NOVA TESTING

The Terra Nova test is a standardized exam administered to students in Grades 2-8. The results serve as one measure of our students' abilities and achievements, and as a method of evaluating our current teaching practices. The Terra Nova Test will be given during the spring and you can expect to receive the results over the summer.

10. HOMEWORK

Homework serves a variety of purposes: it reinforces skills and content taught in class, affords the student the opportunity to develop responsibility and independence, and reinforces good study habits.

Relevant homework may be given nightly in both Limudei Kodesh and General Studies. On most evenings, daily homework should not exceed **10 minutes** in Primer, **20 minutes** in Grades 1-2, **30 minutes** in Grades 3-5, and **45 minutes** in Grades 6-8. This total does not include time for independent reading or studying. Homework assignments will be written on a homework sheet (P-2) or planner (3-5), as well as posted on Google Classroom (see below).

In an effort to set your child(ren) up for academic success please ensure that they complete their homework nightly. Children benefit from doing homework in a quiet environment where they can focus without distractions. If a child attempts to complete their homework but finds the assignment too challenging, please write the teacher a note explaining the difficulties and noting the amount of time spent on the assignment. While it is important that you take a sincere interest in your child's homework, please remember that it is not YOUR responsibility TO DO your child's homework. It is important for your child's teacher to see the work your child attempted but did not complete so that they know how to best support them at school.

Encouraging children to complete homework independently gives them the opportunity to reinforce their skills, feel effective, and experience the pride of "ownership" over the work product. Conversely, when a child consistently comes to school without having tried to do their homework, they often feel ineffective and unsuccessful.

11. GOOGLE CLASSROOM

Google Classroom is an easy way for parents to access clear and accurate information pertaining to their children's assignments (e.g. homework, quizzes, tests, and projects). You can access Google Classroom from a web browser, at classroom.google.com, or through the mobile app (search for Google Classroom in the App Store or Google Play). Parents will receive their children's login information within the first week of school. If you have any questions about Google Classroom, please contact Mrs. Shaindy Pinsker at spinsker@thejec.org.

12. LUNCH

- a. A hot lunch program is available through the school. For safety reasons please refrain from sending any glass bottles or containers. Students must bring lunches that are “ready to eat” as they do not have access to microwaves or hot water.
- b. Please be sure that any food sent with your child has proper Rabbinical supervision; if you are in doubt as to the validity of a certification, please feel free to contact the dean or the principal for clarification. Among the most common acceptable symbols are: OU, OK, Star-K, Kof K.
- c. All students in Early Childhood through second grade are required to wash, say Hamotzi and “bentsch” at lunch.
- d. Students are not permitted to share food.

Please note that vending machines in the Middle School and High School are off limits for all Lower School students during school hours. School hours include early care and after school programs. We appreciate your help in reinforcing this policy with your children.

13. NUT-FREE POLICY

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU MAY NOT SEND ANY PRODUCTS THAT INCLUDE PEANUTS OR TREE NUTS TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD. WE HAVE STUDENTS WHO HAVE SEVERE NUT ALLERGIES, AND WHOSE HEALTH CAN BE SERIOUSLY ENDANGERED BY THE PRESENCE OF EVEN AIRBORNE NUT PARTICLES.

- a. Products labeled “produced on **machinery** that may process nuts” are also prohibited.
- b. Products labeled “produced in a **facility** that also handles nuts” are permitted.

14. PARTIES

- a. Any Lower School class party must be coordinated in advance with the homeroom teacher. When sending in food for a class party send in only food that has proper Rabbinical supervision and adheres to the school’s nut-free policy. In case of uncertainty, please speak with an administrator. **Home-prepared or home-baked goods are not allowed for distribution to a class.** Please do not send in candy or soda.

- b. When planning a party for your child outside of school, please send out invitations through the mail. You can send invitations to school for the teachers to distribute **ONLY** if the entire class is invited or all of one gender in the class is invited. In an effort to foster a safe and inclusive environment at school, please make sure to include either the entire class, only one gender, or less than 33% of the class when creating a guest list for your party.
- c. When choosing entertainment for a birthday party, please make sure to be consistent with the JEC standards.
- d. In order to minimize disruption of learning, we do not permit siblings from Elementary School to leave class to attend birthday parties.

15. ASSEMBLIES

- a. Throughout the school year, parents are often invited into school to watch classwide performance. In order to minimize any disruption of learning, we do not permit siblings of performers to leave Elementary or Middle school classes to attend these programs, with the exception of Early Childhood graduations.
- b. Please note that there is no advanced reserved seating for performances. If you wish to sit in a specific location, please arrive early, in person, to occupy your preferred seats.

16. HEALTH REGULATIONS

- a. Each student must have a yearly physical examination on file in the nurse's office, as mandated by the state. State law mandates that the school have complete immunization records for each student. Legally, the school has no choice but to deny attendance to students whose records are incomplete. In addition to having a complete immunization record on file, students aged 4-6 must have a current Mantoux (tuberculosis) test on file in the nurse's office.
- b. Please note that state law mandates that no medication may be dispensed from the school office at any time, even with parental consent. If a child needs medication, please contact the school nurse for guidelines.
- c. It is imperative that you submit one emergency home contact card per family to the office, and that they be updated regularly as changes in personal information occur.
- d. If a student is absent because of illness for **more than two days**, please notify the school office as soon as possible.
- e. A student who is under the weather and stays home from school for morning classes may be coming down with an illness and should remain home for the day. Please do not send the child to school, even at the expense of missing an exam or a

project. By erring on the side of caution, you help ensure the wellbeing of both your child and all our students.

- f. **Please do not send your child to school with a fever of 100°F or higher, until at least 24 hours after the fever has dissipated or with written clearance from a doctor. Also, please do not send children with active stomach viruses or gastric distress until you are certain they are better.**

17. MANDATORY LICE CHECK PRIOR TO SCHOOL OPENING

Mrs. Rachael Katz will be checking all students prior to the first day of school. There is a small fee to cover this check and two other lice checks that will be done during the course of the year. Any students who have lice or nits will be sent home to be treated, and will be readmitted **once they are certified lice-free by a professional provider.**

For your reference, we rely on the following providers to certify that our children are indeed lice-free:

- 1) Mrs. Ruth Kolb- Nits Not - Elizabeth 908-418-3306
- 2) Mrs. Randi Hershkowitz – West Orange 973-234-9093
(after 5:00pm – checking only)
- 3) Lice Busters NYC- 877-613-1143
www.licebustersnyc.com

Should you wish to use another provider, please call our school nurse, Mrs. Rachael Katz, at (908) 355-4850 ext. 150, or email her after hours at rkatz@thejec.org, to ensure that the provider meets school standards.

If your child has or has had lice, please let the school nurse know so that she can take steps to prevent the spread of lice.

Mrs. Katz passes along the following pointers that are useful for us all when it comes to preventing the spread of lice:

- a) Long hair should be tied back in a braid or bun etc.
- b) Please remind your children not to share brushes or headgear with their friends.

18. PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

If you have any questions or concerns please reach out directly to the classroom teachers. Each teacher has an e-mail address that you can find on the school website. If your question or concern persists please reach out to an administrator. Parent-Teacher Conferences take place on designated Sundays in November and March.

19 . VISITING SCHOOL

- a. All visitors entering the building will be given and ID tag that they are required to wear throughout their stay in the building.
- b. If you need to communicate with your child during the school day, please contact the office.

20 . CELL PHONE POLICY

Students may not use **cell phones, iPods, hand-held games or other electronic devices** during school hours. Middle School students are expected to leave their phones in their lockers throughout the day. If **any** student has a phone or electronic device out of their locker, it will be confiscated and given to the office, to be retrieved at the end of the day. If there is a second violation, it will be returned only to a parent. Alternatively, parents may choose to have the student pick up the phone or device at the end of the following school day.

21. EARLY CHILDHOOD BATHROOM POLICY

Children in Nursery and Kindergarten will be taken to go to the bathroom, as a class, twice daily. All throughout the day, a teacher or assistant is available to escort children to the bathroom.

Nursery–Kindergarten:

All children entering these these classes must be toilet trained.

Bathroom Accidents :

If a child has a bathroom accident, a teacher will send home a note letting you know that your child was changed. If multiple accidents occur, the parents and teachers will meet to discuss finding solutions or determining if the child may not be ready for the program.

Juniors: While in the Juniors program, all children will have their pull-up or diaper checked once per hour and as needed based on teacher observation. Juniors will be changed as necessary with supplies that the parents have provided, and soiled clothing will typically be sent home. **Teachers will wear gloves when changing children.**

For those in our Juniors programs that are in the midst of potty training the teacher will maintain *frequent* communication with the parent to assess progress and ensure cooperation between the parents and school.

22. LOWER AND MIDDLE SCHOOL BULLYING POLICY

Value Statement

The Jewish Educational Center recognizes the Torah's view of the inestimable value of each individual. As such, it is a bully free zone which has a no-tolerance policy for bullying, including harassment or intimidating behaviors. Most common negative behaviors occurring between students present themselves as conflict, and less commonly as bullying. While any and all instances of bullying will not be tolerated, and will be responded to accordingly, conflict between students is expected and will be used as a learning opportunity for growth and development of conflict resolution skills.

Bullying Defined

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means: any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that includes:

- A reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic
- Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students
- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Bullying is a persistent pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behavior that often involves an imbalance of power, and/or the intention to harm or humiliate someone.

Conflict is a disagreement, argument or difference in opinion between peers who typically have equal power in their relationships, and is an inevitable part of a group dynamic.

Types of Bullying

Physical Bullying

- Using physical actions to gain power and control over a target
- Hitting, punching, slapping, shoving
- Kicking
- Biting

Verbal Bullying

- Using words, statements, and name-calling to gain power and control over a target
- Name calling
- Insulting
- Teasing

Cyber Bullying

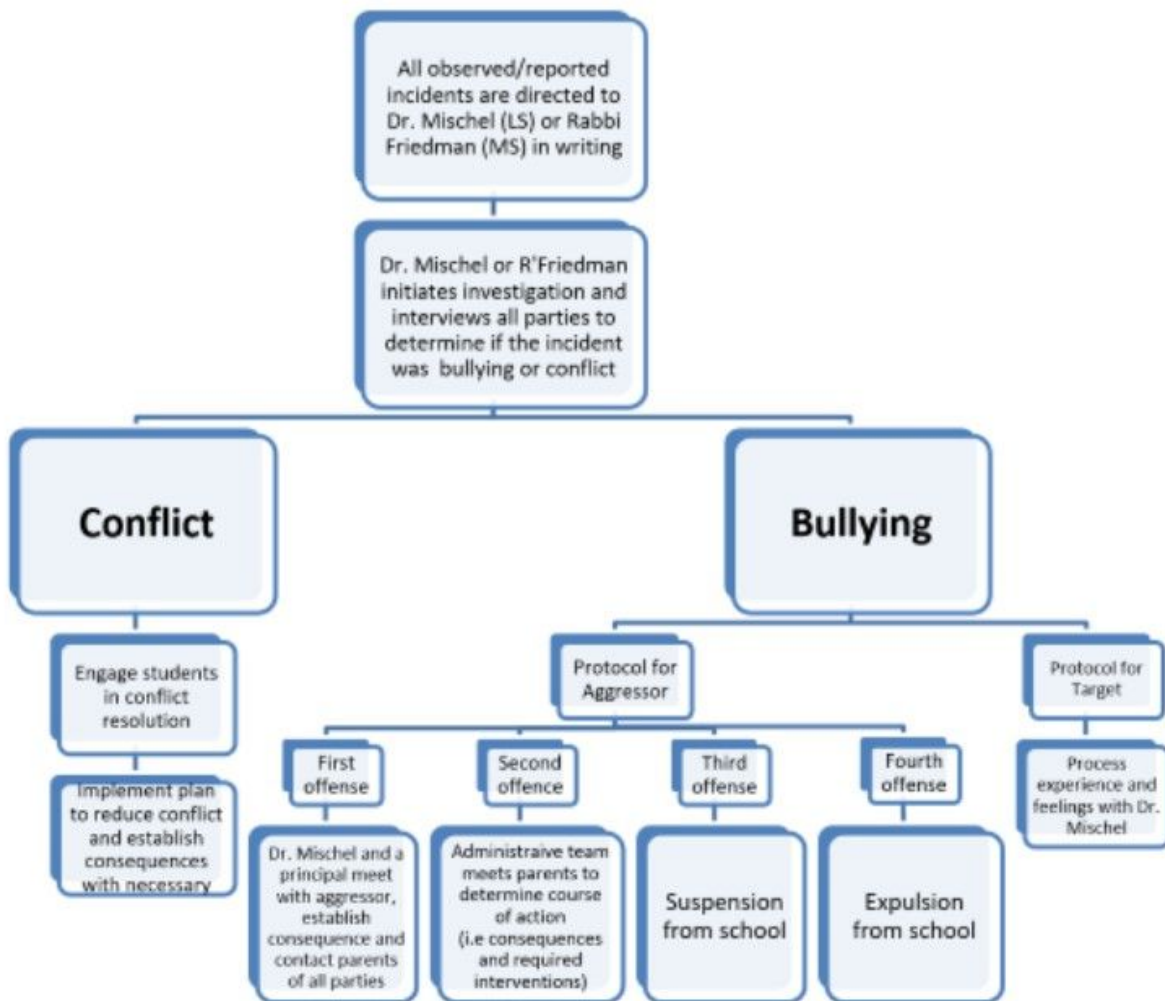
- Using the Internet, a cell phone, or other technology to harass or embarrass a target
- Posting hurtful messages
- Making online threats
- Sending hurtful emails or texts

Relational Aggression

- Hurting peers and sabotaging their social standing by manipulating relationships
- Ostracizing others from a group
- Spreading rumors
- Breaking confidences
- Manipulating situations and controlling another person to increase one's own social standing

PROTOCOLS

A student who is experiencing bullying or believes that another student is experiencing bullying, should report the situation to a school employee. A school employee who becomes aware of or suspects that a student is being bullied must notify Dr. Mischel for Lower School and Rabbi Friedman for Middle School. Dr. Mischel or Rabbi Friedman will document that report and activate our bullying protocol outlined below as soon as possible. All students and parents should feel safe reporting incidents of bullying: retaliation for reporting will not be tolerated by the JEC.



Note: The disciplinary actions for violations of the bullying policy will be determined by the school administration. Disciplinary actions for violations of the bullying policy will balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. The severity of the disciplinary action shall be aligned to the severity of the bullying behavior as determined by the school administration.

23 . JPO- JEC PARENT ORGANIZATION LOWER AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Our incredible JPO has done a tremendous amount to enhance the educational environment of the school and foster school spirit: arranging and sponsoring after-school clubs and special assemblies, providing early childhood equipment and audio-visual materials, and spearheading other projects and initiatives. If you have any ideas or programs that you think can benefit our children, please feel free to contact the JPO at JPO@thejec.org .

BEST WISHES FOR A WONDERFUL YEAR OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT FOR OUR CHILDREN!