

Walter Johnson High School

6400 Rock Spring Drive
Bethesda, MD 20814-1991



Office of the Principal

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July 27, 2022

Dear Walter Johnson Student and Parent/Guardian:

I hope everyone has had the chance to rest and spend some quality time with family and friends this summer. An old proverb asserts, "A good rest is half the work." Enjoy these precious days of summer as the school bell will ring soon and your energy, enthusiasm and commitment will be an integral part of your success in this coming school year. I am truly looking forward to this coming school year. The first day of the 2022-2023 is August 29, 2022. Students will receive their class schedules in Homeroom on the first day of school at 7:45 a.m. That schedule is the only schedule that should be used for classes this semester. Posters with the locations of each Homeroom will be posted in the hallways and are also posted online along with other important information such as bus schedules at: www.walterjohnson.com. Students should bring basic school supplies, notebook, paper, pencil, and a pen, on the first day and teachers will let them know if there is anything else needed. Welcome Wildcats!

As we continue to grow in our student population so does our campus facility. Next year, we will have 15 portable classrooms. This is an increase of 5 classrooms over last year. Additionally, we are in the process of renovating our softball and baseball fields. They will both be incredible once finished and this is a much-needed renovation. Thanks to our wonderful building services staff, our building is gleaming and ready for our staff and students. A huge thank you to our building services leaders, Mr. Shelton Neal and Mr. Donte Bryan, and their entire staff. It truly takes a heroic effort to ready such a large facility for the new school year.

You may be wondering what might be new at WJ for the upcoming school year and I am proud to bring you good news! Students overwhelmingly gave us feedback that they need some time built into the school week to accomplish a myriad of tasks. So, our school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) planned two ways for this to occur. First, we have a new daily schedule that includes an extended lunch. Lunch will now be exactly one hour between the end of 4th period and the beginning of 5th period. This will allow both staff and students to eat lunch, relax and/or take care of other needed items during the lunch period. Teachers will share their availability for assistance during lunch with their students. A copy of our new schedule is below. Additionally, every Wednesday students will have 45 minutes during one of their classes to use as they need. Think of this time as a Study Hall where homework can be completed, a project started or a student may study for an upcoming quiz or test. Each department in the school will rotate on Wednesdays to give students the opportunity to use their class time as needed. We will put out a schedule so students know which period they will have for their Wildcat Wellness time each week. Finally, we eliminated weekly homerooms with the exception of the first day of school and report card distribution. The homeroom activities will be moved to classes.

These planned changes give both staff and students an extra 1 hour and 45 minutes per week to use as they choose! So, there is the time that everyone wanted. Please use it wisely and plan ahead. In order to gain this time, we now have 5 minutes passing time between classes and 45 minutes for classes. It is critical that students move purposely to their classes and return from lunch on time. Timely attendance is one of the most important factors in student academic success. We are going to be very adamant regarding students being in classes on time. Last year, we experienced large numbers of kids in the halls in between classes. This is not allowed, unless you have a hall pass from your teacher. The learning takes place in class and not in the halls. Additionally, we had many students being dropped off late in the mornings. I am asking all families to please get your children to class on time. Classes begin at 7:45 and our campus is large. You need to allow time to safely drop off your child in one of the loops either in the front or back of the school. Make sure to allow enough time for students to come into the building and get to class **before** 7:45 a.m. We appreciate your support!

As always, our seniors, will lead the way this coming school year and we look forward to welcoming back the Class of 2023! We will host our annual Senior Picnic and Shed Painting on Thursday, August 25th at 5 p.m. This year, we also welcome the freshmen, Class of 2026. We hope to see all of our new students and families at the New Student Family Cookout on Wednesday, August 24th at 6 p.m. in the bus loop. **If you are a leader in one of our clubs or other extracurricular programs, please remember that you should have a table at the New Student Cookout.** This is an important evening to highlight one of the best ways a student can become involved at school. Our clubs welcome everyone and offer great variety to appeal to a wide number of interests. Do not forget that fall sports begin with tryouts on August 10th. The necessary forms are available online under the “Athletics” tab at www.walterjohnson.com. I hope that many of you are going to get involved with one of our outstanding athletic teams and/or clubs. The key to a great high school experience is getting involved!

Finally, I hope to see all of our families at our many school events this year. We have athletic contests, plays, musicals, instrumental and choral concerts, art shows, informational parent meetings and much more! Please take some time to enjoy events with your family or to watch your children perform. This is a wonderful way for parents to get involved. Enclosed and online, please see the Important Dates document. Don’t forget to join our Booster Club, PTSA or donate to the WJ Education Foundation. All three of these groups contribute greatly to our programs here at WJ. More information about how to join is found at our website online under the “Parent” tab. The WJ Parent Listserv is also another way to be included in communication from parent groups and the school. Directions for joining the WJ listserv are online. Please read the included documents as they have important information regarding dates for upcoming events, administer and counseling assignments, how to sign up for Free and Reduced meals, Parent Vue on Synergy, and information regarding our new online payment system.

Again, enjoy the rest of your summer and I wish everyone a bountiful 2022 – 2023 school year.
Sincerely,

Jennifer Baker

Jennifer Baker
Principal

Revised-Regular Schedule		
First Bell	7:39	
1st Period	7:45	8:30
2nd Period	8:35	9:25
3rd Period	9:30	10:15
4th Period	10:20	11:05
Lunch	11:05	12:00
5th Period	12:05	12:50
6th Period	12:55	1:40
7th Period	1:45	2:30
Buses Depart	2:37	