

The background is a dark gray gradient. There are several 3D-style speech bubbles in various colors (teal, purple, blue) scattered across the upper half. A vertical pink bar is located on the right side.

PTO Conversations

7TH GRADE

JEFF SWIATOWICZ, PRINCIPAL

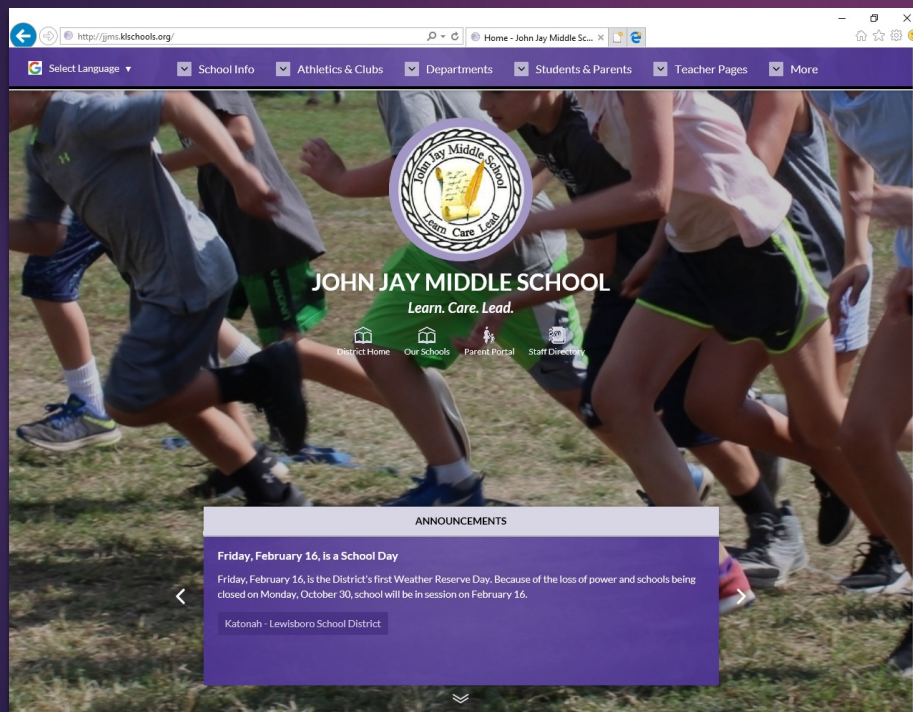
KATIE BURNS, SCHOOL COUNSELOR

DECEMBER 5, 2023

Overview

- ▶ Welcome to 7th Grade
- ▶ JJMS Communication
- ▶ Who should I contact?
- ▶ Counseling
- ▶ Effective Communication
- ▶ Homebase
- ▶ Questions?

Communication



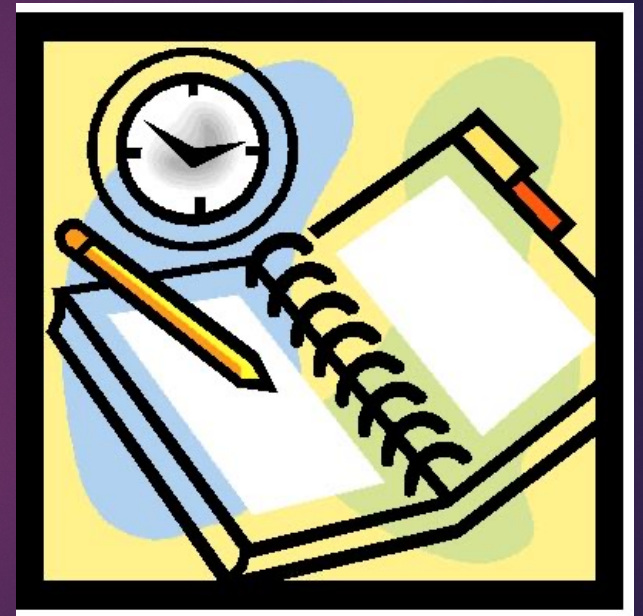
- ▶ JJMS Website- www.klschools.org
- ▶ Schoology: Teacher and Team Pages
- ▶ PTO Bi-weekly Newsletter
- ▶ ConnectEd messages: grade-level or schoolwide
- ▶ *From the Middle* Newsletter

Who to Contact?

- ▶ **Teacher** - questions about subject-specific curriculum, grading, classroom expectations, extra help, and homework
- ▶ **Team Leader** - general academic questions, arrange a parent conference
- ▶ **School Counselor** - support with social/emotional concerns, scheduling, recommendations, peer issues, academic plans
- ▶ **Assistant Principal** - discipline, recess, school rules and procedures, afterschool activities
- ▶ **Principal** - faculty/staff concerns, DASA

Counseling

- ▶ Transition from 6th to 7th Grade
- ▶ 7th grade expectations – what makes it different from 6th grade?
- ▶ In-Class Lessons from Mrs. Burns:
 - ▶ Course selection presentation for 8th grade - January
 - ▶ Circle Activities - Spring
 - ▶ Yoga at Recess – throughout the year



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Effective Communication for 7th Graders

Why is Your Child's Independent Communication Important?

Nurturing your child's independence at an early age helps to build their ability to become self-reliant.



"The more risks you allow children to take, the better they learn to take care of themselves."

Roald Dahl, *My Year*

Why Can Fostering Independent Communication Feel Hard?

We don't want to see our children struggle, feel difficult emotions, or fail

Sometimes it is easier to communicate FOR our children

Short term relief vs. Long term benefits

We do things for our children because it relieves distress in the CURRENT moment.

Tolerating the distress teaches our children the skills they need to become independent LONG TERM.

Challenges at the Middle School Level




Keeping track of daily materials

Managing differing expectations of several different teachers

Uncertainty about when/how to prepare for assessments or long-term projects

Following up about missed work

Managing and maintaining relationships with peers



Future Expectations for Communication (High School and Beyond)

- ▶ Make and keep appointments with teachers & counselors
- ▶ Plan and coordinate community service hours, part time jobs, sports schedules, etc.
- ▶ Complete applications for clubs, organizations, colleges, trade schools, scholarships, other post high school programs
- ▶ Reach out to outside organizations with questions (ex: calling their college admissions representatives for questions about applications, etc.)

Communicating with Teachers: Sending an E-mail

Sending an email may feel hard or new to your child at the Middle School level and it is the PERFECT time to learn!

Common Challenges:

- ▶ "I don't know how to."
- ▶ "I don't know what to write!"
- ▶ "It is going to take too long" or "It is going to be too hard."

How YOU can respond:

- ▶ TEMPLATE: "It's okay. I can give you an example that will make it easier."
- ▶ DRAFT: "Feeling stuck can feel hard. Jot down your thoughts on the page, and I will come help you in ____ minutes."
- ▶ LOWER DEMAND: "I know it can feel hard. I want you to sit with me and I will type while you talk."

Email Template and Example

Greeting,

Optional friendly opener/small-talk. Reason for emailing – suggest a solution if also presenting a problem.

Closing,

Name

Dear Mr. Jay,

I hope you are well. I was absent yesterday and noticed that I need a packet to complete the homework assignment. I was wondering if I could come to you during homebase tomorrow to get a packet, or whether you might be able to email it to me?

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

John Jay

Communicating with Teachers In-Person

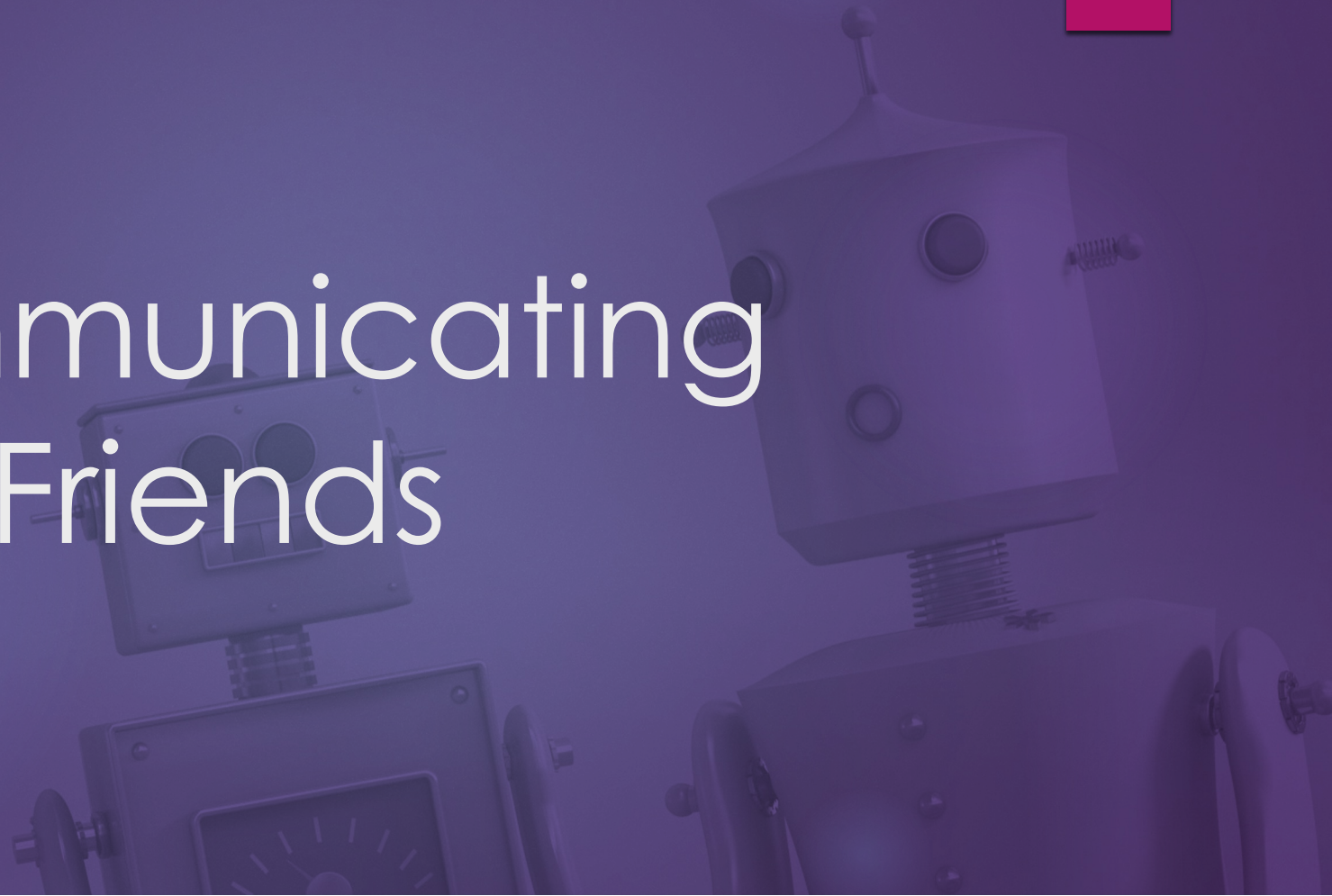
Common Challenges:

- ▶ TIME MANAGEMENT: I don't know when to talk to them/I don't have time
- ▶ UNCOMFORTABLE FEELINGS/WORRY THOUGHTS: I am worried they will be upset with me/My friends may hear me.
- ▶ PERCEIVED LACK OF SKILL: I don't know what to say.

How YOU can respond:

- ▶ "Let's look at your schedule together to see when would be the best time."
- ▶ "It makes sense that you feel worried about this. Your teachers have told us that they want you to ask them questions and communicate with them more!"
- ▶ "I know it can be hard to know what to say. Why don't you write out some ideas and then we can role-play it?"

Communicating with Friends



Communicating with Friends: Text vs. In-Person

Text is best for:

- ▶ QUICK QUESTION: (Hi! Do you know if the math quiz is tomorrow or Friday?)
- ▶ MAKING PLANS: (We'll meet you at the mall at 2 on Saturday – my mom said she can drive us!)

In person is best for:

- ▶ COMMUNICATING FEELINGS: (I've been feeling lately like we're not as close as we used to be. Can we talk about what's happened and how we can move forward?)
- ▶ PROBLEM SOLVING with a group (Let's all talk this out...)
- ▶ APOLOGIZING: (I am sorry that ____ happened and that you felt____.)

Communicating Feelings Script

- ▶ Start with "I" statements instead of "You" statements
- ▶ Suggest a solution for the problem if you can
- ▶ Script: I feel ___[feeling word]___ when ___[state reason/situation]___ and I would like ___[provide suggested solution]___.
- ▶ Example: "I feel sad when there aren't enough seats at the lunch table and then I'm left out. Maybe when that happens, you, Jill, and Joe can come sit with me at the other table?"



Communicating at Home

Using Specific Language & Labelled Praise

When you ask your child, "How was your day?" it is a quick and easy escape for the child to say "good" or "fine".



Try re-framing your questions to be more specific:

"What did you do in
ELA and Math today?"

"Who did you sit with at
lunch today?"

"What was the high
and low of your day?"

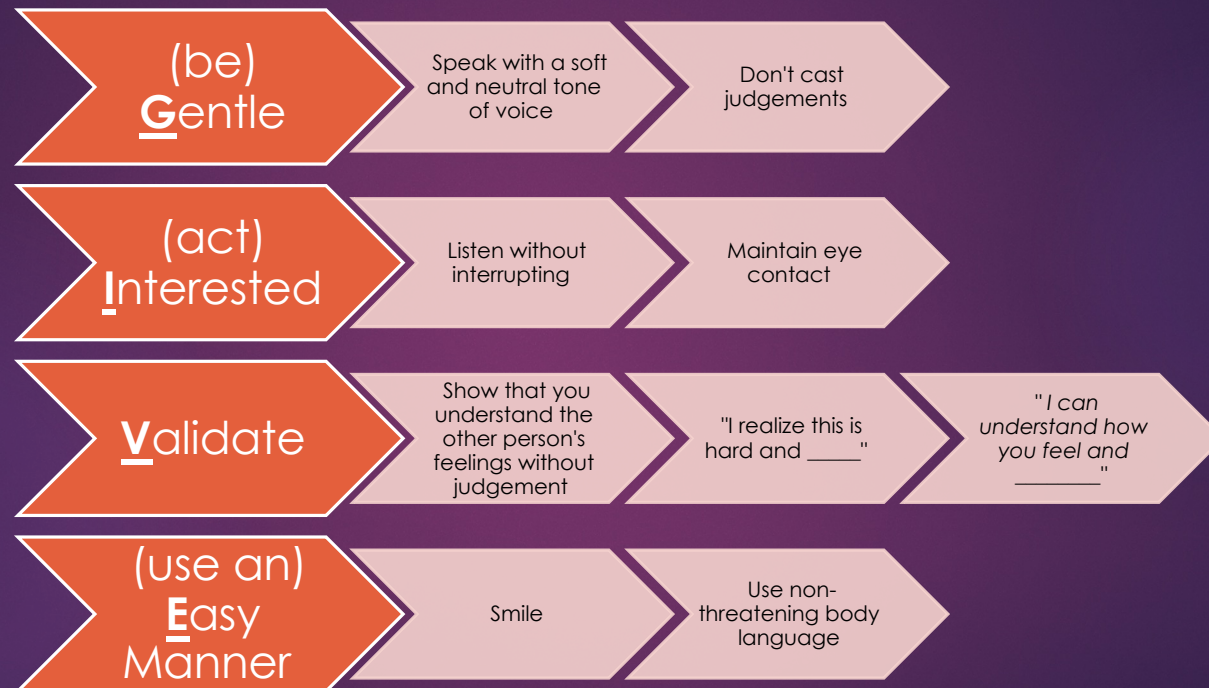
"What homework do
you have tonight?"



When your child answers a specific question, provide them with labelled praise

"Thank you so much for telling me who you sat with at lunch. It helps me understand your friendships and I care about that!"

GIVE Skill to Maintain Relationships



Resources

- ▶ *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk* - Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
- ▶ *How to Talk So Teens Will Listen & Listen So Teens Will Talk* – Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
- ▶ *Tips for Communicating with Your Teen*
 - ▶ <https://childmind.org/article/tips-communicating-with-teen/>
- ▶ *Friends and Socializing*
 - ▶ <https://childmind.org/topics/friends-and-socializing/>
- ▶ *Teens Need Their Parents*
 - ▶ <https://parentandteen.com/qa-ken-ginsburg-teens-need-parents/>



Homebase

- ▶ What is it? Start to the day, use the time to incorporate mindfulness activities and community building.
- ▶ Homebase Leaders



Questions?