

# WELCOME TO WHITTIER!

We are so excited your family is a part of our school. The PTA and Whittier families pride ourselves on coming together through our school to further build the community and hope you'll enjoy being a part of that. Starting a new school can be overwhelming - full of a whole set of new faces, new experiences and it can even feel like it comes with a new language to learn. We've captured some key areas here related to Whittier, along with some detail behind them. We hope you'll find this helpful as you learn about all that happens in and around the school.

1:1 and I pads	<u><a href="#">A reference to DG58's plan to make technology accessible to every student (one device per student, or 1:1).</a></u>
Afterschool Care	There are various options for before/afterschool care. Many families utilize the Champions program (organized by an outside group, but students stay onsite at Whittier) Westmont Yard, YMCA, and the new Park District Link program (offsite programs with bussing).
Afterschool Enrichment	There are many afterschool enrichment options offered throughout the year. Enrollment for these are communicated through Whittier Weekly (the weekly online newsletter re. school news), PTA website and PTA Facebook page. Some examples are: Chess Scholars, Young Rembrandts, WRECK
Angel Fund	This fund was established to help a Whittier student who can't afford to participate in Fun Lunch, activities, or events, or who is in need of essentials like school supplies and winter boots. The PTA coordinates with school administration to supply necessary items or funds. This runs solely on donations from our generous Whittier families. If you'd like to make a donation you can do so here: <a href="http://whittierschoolpta.org/donate-to-whittier-pta-funds/donate-to-the-angel-fund/">http://whittierschoolpta.org/donate-to-whittier-pta-funds/donate-to-the-angel-fund/</a>
Back to School Social	An event hosted by the PTA just before the start of school. Details can be found on the Whittier FB page and in the Whittier Weekly.
Backpack Mail	If you put money or a form in your kids backpack that it will usually get to the intended recipient if clearly labeled with name, recipients name and cause, etc.
Birthdays at School	It's always fun to celebrate your birthday at school however birthday treats are not allowed to be sent in with your child. Their birthday is often recognized in the classroom and at any school assembly. Some teachers are open to you sending in a book or game for the class in lieu of an edible birthday treat. If interested, you can reach out to your child's teacher for details on how birthdays are handled in their classrooms.
Buddy Bench	Whittier has two Buddy Benches installed - one near the lower elementary playground and one near the upper elementary playground. The staff and families of Whittier value inclusiveness and these benches are intended to provide a visible reminder to students to look for someone that may need a friend (and include them!). Students are taught to sit on the bench if they are looking for someone to play with - or in need of a friend. Students take a pledge to be a friend to those on the bench. The hope is that this signals it's ok to ask for help and promotes inclusivity and kindness on the playground and beyond.
Calling out Absence	If your child is sick or has to be absent from school, you need to call the main office at Whittier (630) 719-5865 to report the absence.

Class Parties	There are usually 3 class parties per year; Halloween, Holiday and Valentine's Day. The room parent will ask for volunteers to help by signing up to handle food (fruit or veggie only), bring paper goods, organize simple game and do a craft. The parties are short and sweet but the kids love them.
Crossing Guard	There are two crossing guards, Ms. Lois and Mr. Al, that cover Whittier; one at Blodgett and Hill, the other at Fairview and Hill. Note that as a pedestrian approaches, the crossing guard will step into the intersection, hold sign up and signal to the students that it is ok to cross the street. Students (and parents!) should not cross before this. Students are also not permitted to cross to school grounds until 8:10am. As a driver, please remain off cell phones and pay attention to the crossing guards signals. The farthest west parking spot on Hill is also reserved for the crossing guard. A cone marks this spot but please be sure to leave it available.
Curriculum Night	Curriculum Night is a parents-only introduction to the school year, during which our principal Mr. Krugman will welcome everyone in the Jaguar Jungle before parents proceed to their child(ren)'s classroom(s) to meet teachers and learn what our students will be learning and doing daily. Usually falls in September.
Destination Imagination	This is an extracurricular that takes project-based learning blended with STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) the arts and social entrepreneurship. Through our programs, students use the creative process to turn their ideas into reality and learn invaluable skills through the process. Parent volunteers organize a team (by grade level) and teams participate in weekly meetings and a spring competition. Learn more at <a href="http://www.destinationimagination.org">www.destinationimagination.org</a> and look for school information to come out in late fall/early winter.
Drop Off Procedures	Students can be dropped off at school anytime after 8:10. There will be not be adults present for anyone dropped off prior to this. Those being dropped off by car can utilize the drop off lane on Hill St. Once your car is between the cones, your student can safely exit the car on the north side of the street (please use your car doors along the sidewalk, not street side) while you stay in the car. A school staff member will help to get them out as needed, but please help to do your part to keep the line moving. Students in K-3 line up on the west side of the building, 4-6th graders on the east side. Typically students play until the first bell rings at 8:19. Then they line up and head in by 8:20.
Enrichment Classes (art, gym)	Students participate in art classes with Mr. Belonio, the art teacher, once every other week, with many classes doing in-classroom art projects with their teacher on off weeks. They participate in Physical Education with Ms. Sopron, twice a week. Be sure your child is in the habit of knowing what days of the week they have gym so they can be sure to dress appropriately for participation.
Experiences	Experiences are a fantastic way of building community among students and parents while also fundraising for the PTA. Twice a year you are invited to sign up for these Experiences (Spring Fundraiser in April and Jaguar Jog in September). Experiences are typically funded/organized by Whittier families or staff. There is a cost to sign up for them and 100% of the price for attending the Experience goes to the PTA. These Experiences range from family movie nights, father/daughter dance, Winter Wonderland party, student kickball tournaments, adult parties, etc. There are some that a few families join together to host and others that a single family may sponsor. If you aren't available to sign up for the Experience at the Spring Fundraiser or Jaguar Jog, you may often sign up at a later date for any Experiences that have remaining spaces. Typically a note goes out a few months before the sign up date for Experiences asking for volunteers to host. If you have an idea of an experience you'd like to host, please reach out to Carla Gianelli

Field Days	An afternoon of end-of-year fun in June where classes compete in friendly outdoor games (think tug of war, relay races, etc). Each grade typically has a designated tshirt color that will be communicated so they can wear their "team" colors. Your child can wear their own shirt of this color or order a Whittier one through the Spirit Wear website at <a href="http://www.promoplace.com/putitoutthere/stores/whittier">http://www.promoplace.com/putitoutthere/stores/whittier</a> . A pizza lunch is provided by the PTA on this day as well.
Field Trips	Field trips vary by grade level and include everything from a walking field trip to the fire station or Downers Grove museum, the Brookfield Zoo, Chicago, and more. Some of these field trips provide opportunities for you to volunteer. Your child's teacher will touch on the grade's field trip plan at Curriculum Night in the fall.
Forgotten Item Drop Off	Left home in the morning without something important for your child? No problem - if you are able to you, just drop the items into school entryway by 9am so they can be brought to classrooms by 9:15am. iPads can be brought into the office. Leave lunches in the entryway by 11:30 and supervisors will bring them into the gym and put on the stage for kids to retrieve.
Fun Lunch	Because Whittier does not have a standing hot lunch program, the PTA organizes Fun Lunch (typically 1-2 times per month). Signup for this occurs two times per year; once in August at the start of the year and once in December before the start of the second semester. You'll see prompts to sign up on the PTA FB page and in the Whittier weekly email. This is an optional program where you can sign up for as many days as you want - you simply pick your child's lunch options for a designated Friday and the Fun Lunch committee coordinates getting lunches delivered and served. Fun Lunch rotates between various local quick serve restaurants like Potbelly's, Great American Bagel, Uncle Bubs and McDonalds. It's a great way to get a break from making lunch and the kids love it too! Please note that if you do not sign up during the registration window your order can't be accomodated.
Girl Scouts	This is a club organized separate of school. If a parent volunteer wants to start a troop they can typically ask for classroom space to host weekly meetings.
Half Days	There are various half days/early dismissals throughout the year for teacher inservice or other reasons. Be sure to look at the school calendar to find out when these are.
In-School Volunteering	There are many ways to volunteer in school - some more formal than others. Some examples include: Fun Lunch duty, Masterpiece of the Month, Classroom party help, library staffing, field trip chaperone, etc. Reading the Whittier Weekly and being in contact with your child's room parent is a great way to stay updated on the opportunities to help.
Jaguar Jog	The Jaguar Jog is the big fall fundraiser hosted by the PTA. This typically takes place at the end of September and is a morning of family fun. There is a 1 mile fun run for the kids and a 5K race for adults and students. You'll receive emails about registration in early September. Sign up for Fall/Winter "Experiences" occurs this morning and there is a DJ, food, photobooths and more. It's a really fun community event open to all.
Jaguar Journal	A monthly student-written newspaper that touchses on the various happenings at Whittier. You can pay for your child to receive a copy of this.
Lost and Found	There is a box located just past the vestibule of the main doors on Hill where lost and found items are located. A great first place to check if a water bottle, jacket, etc goes missing!

Masterpiece of the Month	This in-school program relies on parent volunteers for supplemental learning about famous artists, art history and artistic techniques. Parents come into the classroom on a monthly basis to teach about a specific artist and lead the classroom in a project related to that artists technique.
Mr Krugmans Weekly Emails	A weekly email sent by Principal Krugman that lays out key information for the week ahead. These lay out spirit days, in school assemblies, days off, testing dates, etc.
Open House	Everyone—students, parents, grandparents, neighbors, friends—is encouraged to visit Whittier on Open House, an evening when teachers are in their classrooms and student work is on display. It’s an exciting opportunity to see what’s happening in your child(ren)’s classroom(s), and students are typically excited to brag to you about their work. Usually falls in April; often combined with a Book Fair.
Parent Ambassadors	Even with this information compiled, you're bound to have a question about something. Hopefully you feel you can ask any parent, but these specific parents have raised their hands and said they'd welcome the chance to help any of you as you get acclimated at Whittier: Melissa Rausch, Corinne Potter, Geeta Wood, Val Hardy, Sarah Bogaczyk and Amy Cable
Parent Teacher Conferences	Parent Teacher conferences formally occur twice per year with 30 min conferences (Fall and Spring). There is an online system for signing up for these called Squirrel. Read up on Mr Krugman's weekly emails for instructions and heads up on when signup occurs. Some time slots fill quickly so if you have limited flexibility in your schedule - we encourage you to sign up promptly when registration opens. For students in fourth grade and up, they also attend the conference.
PTA Meetings	The schedule for PTA meetings can be found on the PTA website and is emailed out in the Whittier Weekly email. They typically happen about once every other a month and, when possible, free childcare is provided during the meeting. These meetings are a great way to better understand how funds are sourced and allocated within the PTA, learn more about programming and meet various staff members. We encourage you to join anytime - no need to have to participate at the meeting (although we hope at some point you will!) - feel free to come, listen and observe!
PTA Roles	<u>There are so many ways to get involved with the PTA - to help the school and to meet other families. A good place to peruse these options is at this site: <a href="http://whittierschoolpta.org/volunteering/committees">http://whittierschoolpta.org/volunteering/committees</a> . You'll find options for ways to help big and small - and ones that are flexible for any schedule.</u>
Reading Games	This is a reading program that was created by our very own Whittier teachers – Mrs. Gergits and Mrs. Krygeris! The games are open to all District 58 students in grades 3 through 8. The primary goal is to get students to READ! Teams of students, up to 8 per team, read though a list of 15 books and then gather together for the big tournament to answer trivia-style questions about these books. Information on sign up will be communicated via the Whittier Weekly. Sign up spaces are limited so organize your team and be prepared to register!
Recess	Whittier students typically have two recesses per day. Be sure your child is in the habit of having weather appropriate gear so they can enjoy this time. In the winter, many students carry their snowpants, boots, etc in a separate bag for convenience.
Room Parents	Each classroom will have 1-2 room parents. This volunteer coordinates other parent volunteers for classroom parties (see above), may do a collection for birthday/holiday gifts for the teacher and handle any other communication from the teacher to the parents that is requested.

School Supply Ordering	Let's be honest, school supply shopping can be maddening! If you love the thrill of the hunt for a very specific type of folder or pencil - more power to you! But if this is one back to school chore you'd rather outsource, the PTA has your back. Starting in the Spring, a PTA committee collects supply lists from teachers for the upcoming year and has partnered with a local company to package these supplies for us. What does that mean for you? You simply logon to the website provided in Whittier Weekly emails, enter your child's information and order your school supply kit. The kit will arrive with most items needed in August. You will be assured that what your teacher has requested will be included and all you have to do is come pick it up at Whittier on a TBD day (or pay to have it shipped to your home). This is not a fundraiser, so we don't markup materials at all. It is intended to be a service to Whittier families.
Science Fair	District 58 sponsors a Science Fair for students in 1-6th grade. Registration for the science fair is typically in December with the actual event taking place in January. Emails will go out in Mr Krugman's weekly email regarding registration. These projects can be as involved as your child wants them to be. If you don't participate in the Science Fair, students and their families are still welcome to visit the Fair and explore all of the fascinating and fun science experiments done across District 58.
Sign in/out procedures	If you are bringing your child in to school late or signing them out early you can simply head to the main office and Leslie can help you.
Snack Policy	Your kids will learn this one quickly! A midday snack break is offered to students. They must pack their own snack from home and it has to be a fruit or vegetable that has not been processed in any way (no applesauce, raisins, fruit cups).
Spirit Days	Whittier's student council plans many spirit days throughout the year. These are all completely optional - no pressure if one is missed! Mr. Krugman's weekly email is the best place for you to learn about these, but your child should also hear about them at school.
Spring Fundraiser	The Spring Fundraiser is just that - the second of Whittier's big fundraisers that help us to fund our PTA budget. Typically occurring in April, this event is an adults-only night held at a local venue and often includes activities like trivia, raffles, and sign up for Spring/Summer "Experiences". If you can't attend, you can still participate in raffles to show your support!
Team Time	DG58's Leading to Reading literacy program, through which students are grouped by fluency for reading classes (called Team Time by students).
Variety Show	This is a wonderful Whittier tradition! The timing of when the Variety Show occurs can vary between fall and winter and usually takes place at the Tivoli on a Saturday (with a student only performance at Whittier typically the Friday before). About 8 weeks before the show you'll see emails and notes come home about the Variety Show. This is a completely optional event sponsored by the PTA. Students can join as a group (particularly common for younger ages) or perform a solo talent. There is a schedule of formal rehearsals (dress, tech, stage time, etc) run by the Talent Show parent volunteers, but otherwise all talent selection, practice, team names, costumes are the responsibility of the student. This is a particularly fun event that, depending your group's/individual plans, can take some time committment but pays off in spades. If your child chooses not to participate, we still encourage your family to come to the Variety Show at the Tivoli (it's free!) to cheer on their friends. For Kindergarten parents or parents with children new to Whittier - performing with a group can be a great way for your child to get to know new friends.

Visiting the school	If you come to the school during school hours for a meeting, to volunteer, etc, you must enter through the main entrance and press the doorbell just inside the double doors. Once buzzed in, you sign in at the office just inside the doors on your left and get a nametag. Unplanned classroom visits are not allowed. Don't forget to sign out when you leave.
Water Bottle Rules	This may vary from teacher to teacher; but many teachers allow water bottles in class and they can easily be refilled at the water fountains.
Whittier Weekly	A weekly email newsletter that includes various school and PTA related information. You will receive these if you have joined the PTA. A great source of information!
Winter Wiggle	A school dance that takes place in the winter at Whittier. This usually happens for about 45 mins after school one day. No fancy dresses or clothes needed - kids just have fun in the gym after school with a DJ and their friends.
Yearbook	Whittier compiles an annual yearbook filled with class pictures and assorted highlights from the year. Sign up to purchase this will go out during the year with a deadline clearly communicated. Yearbooks are distributed the last week of school and students have the opportunity to sign each others yearbooks if they'd like to.