

# **Palatka Intermediate Student & Family Handbook**



2026 - 2027

Stephanie Reed  
Assistant Principal

Cathy Oyster  
Principal

Jeniffer Wilbur  
Assistant Principal

**Palatka Intermediate School**

156 Horseman Club Road  
Palatka, Florida 32177  
386-329-0700

Welcome Families!

Welcome to the inaugural school year at Palatka Intermediate School! Take a moment to let that sink in: You are the very first families in the history of our school. Together, we aren't just opening a building; we are laying the foundation for a first-class education. Every routine we establish, every tradition we start, and the vibrant school culture we create begins right here, with your children and your families, this year.

As we embark on this exciting journey, our mission is clear and unwavering: to provide a first-class education for **ALL** students.

Achieving this means anchoring our partnership with you in three values:

- **Sense of Belonging:** Every student and family who steps through our doors must feel a deep sense of belonging. We will celebrate our unique community and build a school where every child and parent feels seen, heard, and valued.
- **Equality:** We recognize that every child starts from a different place. Our commitment to your family is to meet your child exactly where they are, removing barriers and providing the specific resources, support, and encouragement they need to thrive.
- **Excellence without Exception:** A "first-class education" isn't a privilege reserved for a few—it is a promise we make to every single child in Palatka. We will hold our students to high expectations because we know that with our collective support—teachers and families working together—they will meet and exceed them.

Being the "first" comes with unique adventures, but it also gives us a blank canvas. Together, we have the rare opportunity to build the school community we've always dreamed of—one rooted in collaboration, joy, and a relentless dedication to your children.

Thank you for trusting us with your children and for bringing your passion, support, and dedication to Palatka Intermediate. Your partnership in the days ahead will shape the future of this school for generations to come.

Let's make history together. Welcome home!

Sincerely,

*Cathy Oyster*

Cathy Oyster  
Principal

*Stephanie Reed*

Stephanie Reed  
Assistant Principal

*Jennifer Wilbur*

Jennifer Wilbur  
Assistant Principal

## **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Principal – Cathy Oyster – [coyster@my.putnamschools.org](mailto:coyster@my.putnamschools.org)

Assistant Principal – Jennifer Wilbur – [jwilbur@my.putnamschools.org](mailto:jwilbur@my.putnamschools.org)

Assistant Principal - Stephanie Reed - [sreed@my.putnamschools.org](mailto:sreed@my.putnamschools.org)

Clinic -Alicia Whitehill - [awhitehill@my.putnamschools.org](mailto:awhitehill@my.putnamschools.org)

School Secretary - Cindee Tillis - [ctillis@my.putnamschools.org](mailto:ctillis@my.putnamschools.org)

Data Clerk - Kesley Collier - [kcollier@my.putnamschools.org](mailto:kcollier@my.putnamschools.org)

Data Clerk - Sue Price - [sprice@my.putnamschools.org](mailto:sprice@my.putnamschools.org)

Bookkeeper- Carrie Williams - [c5williams@my.putnamschools.org](mailto:c5williams@my.putnamschools.org)

Bus Issues and/or concerns should be directed to the Bus Compound - 386-329-0553

### **Phone Numbers**

School Office 386-329-0700

PI Cafeteria Manager, Missy Parker 386-329-0700

Newsletters and phone call-outs will be sent out periodically to keep families informed of important dates and events. We also use Thrillshare (PCSD app) to post important events. See attached for directions on how to sign up for Thrillshare (pg. 8). Parents can also follow us on Facebook under Palatka Intermediate.

Valuable parent information, such as school calendars, code of conduct, forms, etc., can be found on the district website: [putnamschools.org](http://putnamschools.org) or our school website <https://www.putnamschools.org/o/palatkais>

### **ATTENDANCE**

Before students come to school, parents should check their temperature and assess symptoms. If a student has any of the following symptoms, they will stay home, and parents will contact their medical provider.

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fever
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea/Vomiting/Diarrhea

We understand there will be times when students will need to be absent from school. Please keep in mind the following:

1. Students who have more than 5 unexcused absences per nine weeks may lose extra-curricular activity privileges. This could include any school incentives/rewards/parties, grade-level activities, and field trips.
2. Excused absences require a doctor's note or a parent-written note; however, there is a limit of five (5) parent notes per semester.
3. We will adhere to the district's truancy policy and procedures.

### **BREAKFAST AND LUNCH**

Meals are free for all students. Parents may choose to pack meals for students to bring from home. Breakfast is served in the classroom. Lunch is served in the cafeteria.

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

School begins each day at 7:50 a.m. Students are allowed on campus at 7:20 a.m and classroom doors will open at 7:40 for students to enter and begin eating breakfast. School personnel are on duty beginning at 7:20 a.m. every morning and provide supervision as soon as students arrive on campus. To ensure the safety of all and maximize our instructional program, students are expected to walk to class on their own; furthermore, **parents should not drop children off before 7:20 a.m.** When students arrive at school, they will enter through the front office lobby. **Students arriving after 7:50 a.m. are considered tardy to school. The guardian will need to park, escort the child inside the front office, and sign the child in.**

The school day ends at 2:35 p.m. Students must be picked up by 3:05 p.m. If students remain on campus after the 3:05 p.m. deadline, they will be taken inside the office, and someone will have to come inside to get them. The school does NOT provide after-school care or supervision unless students are enrolled in the 21st Century Community Learning Center program.

### **2-HOUR EARLY RELEASE DATES (12:35):**

September 29th

October 27th

December 18th

January 26th

February 23th

April 27th



**1/2 DAYS:**

May 27th

May 28th

**PROCEDURES:****Medication:**

If a student is required to take medication during the school day, you must have proper documentation with our Health Room personnel. Forms include doctor notification, prescription information, and other documentation that is needed.

**School Nurse: Alicia Whitehill 386-329-0700**

**Chaperones:**

To become a chaperone, you will need to fill out an unsupervised volunteer application online with our Verkada system. A computer is available in the front office for your convenience. Please note that you will have to be cleared before you can perform any chaperone duties. If you have completed this process before, check with the front office to make sure you are still active.

**Special Occasions:**

Examples: Birthdays, Valentine's Day

- Deliveries are allowed. However, the delivery will not be given to the student until the very end of the day. Glass items will be turned away.
- If a student should bring items to school, please understand the buses will not permit balloons or large flower arrangements. If items become a distraction in class, the student will need to leave them in the front office until the end of the school day.
- For \$10.00, families can leave a birthday message on the electronic sign in front of the school. Please contact Carrie Williams for more information, 386-329-0700

**Fortify Florida:**

FortifyFL is a suspicious activity reporting tool that is located on every student's Chromebook. It allows you to instantly relay information to appropriate law enforcement agencies and school officials. Example: A student knows that another student brought drugs to school and wants to report it anonymously.

<https://getfortifyfl.com/>



<https://getfortifyfl.com>

**Parent/Teacher Conferences:**

As a parent/guardian, now is the time to be as active as possible in your child's life. Should you need to schedule a parent/teacher conference, please contact Mrs. Tammy Smith in Student Services at (386) 329-0700. We would advise that you schedule the conference with all of your child's teachers.

Phone calls to teachers should be returned within a 48-hour time period.

**BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:****Dress Code:**

We ask that students wear clothing that comfortably and appropriately covers the body. To ensure a focused learning environment, attire must not cause a classroom disruption or pose any safety concerns. Closed-toed shoes should be worn on days your child has PE. All sixth-grade students have PE daily. Athletic shoes and attire are highly recommended.

**Key Points:**

- ☐ Camis, strapless and backless tops, low cut necklines, and crop tops exposing the midsection are not permitted.
- ☐ Undergarments should not be exposed. Pants should be worn at the waist.
- ☐ Clothing must not display alcohol, drugs, weapons, vulgarities, racial slurs, etc.

- ☐ Shorts should have a minimum of 4" inseam.
- ☐ Hoodies are not allowed to be worn on the head. Students **may wear** beanies or hats. Hoodies draped over the head create a significant safety risk and reduce our ability to identify who the individual is.
- ☐ Per PCSD policy, facial coverings are not permitted on campus unless a physician has provided a medical diagnosis requiring a medical mask.
- ☐ Sunglasses are not allowed to be worn inside.
- ☐ Pajamas, onesies, costumes, and masks are not allowed to be worn.

### **Technology:**

Students are not permitted to have their cell phones out during the day at any time. Phones are to be powered off and stored in their backpack. The school is not responsible for damaged or stolen technology. Any student who has a cell phone out and visible during the school day will have it confiscated by the school for the remainder of the day, resulting in a guardian having to pick up the phone and disciplinary action. Continued technology violations will result in the student not being allowed to bring their device to school.

Students may only have access to their cell phone in the direct supervision of a dean, administrator, or for medical purposes prescribed by a doctor.

*CS/HB 379 1003.32 F.S authorizing teachers and other instructional personnel to designate an area of wireless communications during instructional time.*

*CS/HB 379 1006.07 F.S requiring that school districts' code of student conduct prohibit student use of wireless communications devices during instructional time*

*Please reference the PCSD Code of Conduct for Electronic Devices*

### **Searches:**

A Principal or designee may search persons, briefcases, book bags, purses, and storage areas upon reasonable suspicion of prohibited or illegally possessed substances or objects (Florida State Statute 1006.09). If at any time reasonable suspicion arises that the student is unlawfully concealing any stolen or illegal property, any alcoholic beverage, illegal drugs, or any type of weapon, or any other violation of rule or policy, a member of the instructional or administrative staff may search the temporarily detained student and the student's possessions. The use of metal detectors is hereby authorized in conducting specific searches with reasonable suspicion of students. If a search of a student, or the student's possessions, reveals stolen or illegal property prohibited by law

or the Putnam County School District, the student is subject to action taken by law or School Board policy. Students who are caught more than once with a vape, drugs, tobacco, or an alcoholic product will be subject to random searches.  
If a student refuses to be searched, the student may face expulsion.

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL:**

### **Morning Drop Off and Dismissal**

We have approximately 950 students entering and leaving the campus at the same time. Therefore, morning drop-off and dismissal procedures are crucial to maximize safety.

There are two groups of students for drop off and pick up:

4. Bus/Daycare - Students who ride the school bus or daycare. These students will be dropped off at the back of the school.
5. Parent Drop off/Pick-up- Students who get picked up or dropped off will use the loop at the front of the school.

NOTE: Students are not permitted to walk to school. Do not drop your child off outside of the school and have him/her walk up.

### **Car Tags**

Students who are going to be picked up by parents will be assigned two car tags per family. Each family will be assigned a number and color for dismissal procedures. Our decals help increase efficiency and security. If someone enters the pick-up lane without their school-issued decal, they will have to park and come inside with their driver's license to pick up a child. The school-issued decal acts as an added layer of security. Please have your decal in your window during drop-off and pick-up. A family can pay \$2 for each additional tag needed.



HYW 19 Tag



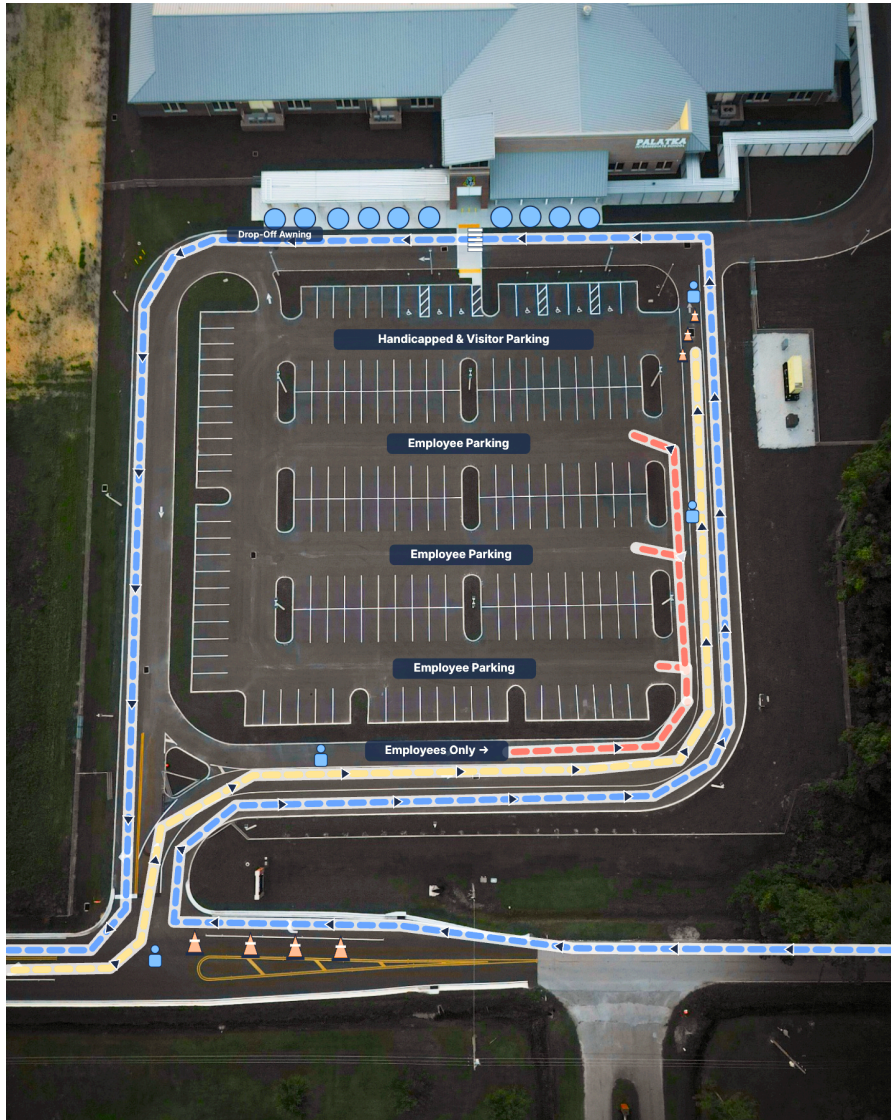
HWY 20 Tag

Families entering the school from Highway 19 will be assigned a blue tag and blue lane. Families entering the school from Highway 20 will be assigned a yellow tag and yellow lane.

### Morning Drop-off

7:20-7:50 am

Place your car tag in your rearview mirror upon entering the turning lane. If you are coming off Highway 19, you will be assigned a blue tag and the blue lane. If you are coming off of Highway 20, you will be assigned a yellow tag and the yellow lanes. Please follow the traffic patterns. Use your turn signal when on Horseman Club Road so we can clearly identify through traffic versus drop off. For a more efficient line, please have your child ready to exit the vehicle when they get to the unloading zone. They should have ALL their belongings in their possession and ready to exit to keep the traffic flowing.



**Morning Drop Off Traffic Pattern**

### **Tardy Students**

All tardy students will have to be escorted in by their guardian and signed in. Families will need to park, walk their child in, and sign the child in. The tardy bell rings at 7:50 am.

## **DISMISSAL**

Once you enter the turning lane on Horseman Club Road, please have your turn signal on and your yellow decal on your rearview mirror. Families entering from Highway 19 will be assigned a blue car tag, using the blue lane and blue loading zone. Families entering from Highway 20 will be assigned a yellow car tag, use the yellow lanes, and the yellow loading zone. Please pay attention to the colored cones, vinyl markings and vests that employees are wearing. This will help you clearly see the traffic patterns for your assigned color.

Families who enter the flow lane **without** a car tag will have to park, go into the front office, and wait for dismissal to conclude to have their child called to the front. Our school-issued decals are a layer of security verifying you are the guardian who is supposed to pick up your child, and are **required**.

No one will be permitted to walk up to the school to drop off or pick up their child during dismissal.

Remember, these procedures are in place in an effort to keep our children safe. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this may cause – we believe our children's well-being outweighs any inconvenience.



## Dismissal Traffic Patterns



## Change of Transportation

If you change the way your child/children leave school, please send a note to the teacher and/or the office by **12:30 p.m.** with that information.

### Key Points:

- ☐ Have your car tag on your rearview mirror in the morning and afternoon as soon as you enter the turning lane.
- ☐ Use your turn signal on Horsman Club Road so we can clearly determine who is turning and who is driving through.



- ☐ Have your child ready to get out of the vehicle. Students should have all their belongings in their hands. Do not wait to gather the belongings when it's time to exit the vehicle.
- ☐ Pull all the way up behind the vehicle in front of you. Do not stop at a door to shorten a walk.
- ☐ Please be patient and kind. Our employees do their very best to provide a smooth, efficient, and positive experience for pick up and drop off. Be respectful of the employees and their families.
- ☐ Respect our neighbors. Do not block driveways. Do not turn around in their driveways or their subdivisions.
- ☐ Do not drop your child off outside of the school. Walkers are not permitted.

### **VISITORS**

Access to the campus other than the main office during the regular school day will be limited to students and staff members only unless pre-approved by the administration. Parents may eat lunch with their child during their scheduled lunch time at the picnic table area. All parents must sign in with ID and wear a visitor sticker at all times while on campus.