



The Manatee Memo

News for Mason Families

September 1, 2019

207 Mason Manatee Way, St. Augustine, FL 32086
(904) 547-8440 – main
(904) 547-8445 - fax

Dr. Nigel D. Pillay, Principal
Mrs. Jill Hillier, Assistant Principal

Dear Mason Families,

The school year is off to a great start! We enjoy getting to see our Manatees each day. Rules, routines and procedures have been taught and students are now engaging with grade-level academic content. To learn more about what is happening in your child's classroom, please contact his/her teacher. To access district information and resources for families, please visit <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/families/>. This webpage has an abundance of information such as grade-level pacing guides for instruction, Student Progression Plan, Parent Resource Guide, and much more.

Thank you to everyone who came out for our annual Title 1 Curriculum Night. It was a packed house! Your time and support are appreciated. We hope it was a nice evening for your family!

Please check your text messages, email and the SJCS D main website for updates regarding Hurricane Dorian. The school district will communicate news about whether or not schools are closed using these methods. We expect to get our next update on Sunday. Stay safe everyone!

S.T.A.R. Wednesdays are listed in the "Important Dates" box within our monthly newsletters. S.T.A.R. stands for "Special Time at Resource". This is a day where students on the grade-level rotate through all of the Resource classes (Art, Music, Media and PE). Please make sure your child wears proper clothing on his/her S.T.A.R. day. Grade-level teachers engage in professional development, data chats, and have collaborative planning time together on their designated S.T.A.R. day. These days help our teachers learn and grow so they can be the best teachers they can be for your kids!

Please reach out to us if you have any questions or are in need of assistance. We are here to help!

All the best,
Dr. Nigel D. Pillay & Mrs. Jill Hillier
Principal Assistant Principal

OUR VISION:

The "Mason Way" is one that nurtures a passion in every child for personal success, good character, and a desire to learn, explore, and better themselves as they grow to be responsible members of our community.

OUR MISSION:

At Mason Elementary, we believe student success is fostered by a continuous commitment to improvement, which ensures well-rounded and motivated learners. We do this by maintaining a safe and dynamic learning environment, promoting high expectations for all students, nurturing determination, developing personal relationships, and involving our community.

School Hours

School Hours - 7:55AM to 3:45PM (daily)

Student Hours - 8:25AM to 2:45PM (M, T, Th, F)
8:25AM to 1:45PM (Weds.)

1st bell at 8:20, 2nd bell at 8:25

Students arriving after the 2nd bell must be walked inside and signed in by the parent/guardian.

Important Dates

9/2 – LABOR DAY – NO SCHOOL

9/4 – Wear Orange for Fairness

3rd grade S.T.A.R. Wednesday

9/9 – Yankee Candle Fundraising Kick-off

Yankee Candle Fundraiser 9/9 to 9/20

9/10 – School Advisory Council Meeting at 3:30PM in the Media Center.

Interims issued

9/11 – 2nd grade S.T.A.R. Wednesday

9/13 – Individual Picture Day

9/16 – Boy Scouts here for recruiting (during school); PTO Meeting at 3:30PM

9/17 – Boy Scout Recruitment Night – 6:30PM in the café

9/18 – 1st grade S.T.A.R. Wednesday

9/23 – Spirit Night at Tijuana Flats at 5:30PM

9/25 – WriteScore Assessment for grades 3-5

Kindergarten S.T.A.R. Wednesday

Dads Take Your Child to School Day

9/27 – LEADers with Character Celebration for Fairness – 8:45AM

Character Counts at OMES!



Announcements

IMPORTANT

Dismissal Changes –

If you are changing the way your child normally goes home, please contact the school in one of three ways: a note in the planner, written note from home or via the Dismissal Change link on our Mason homepage (top right corner if using a computer).

Visiting and Volunteering at our School –



In an ongoing effort to provide safety and security for students and staff, all visitors and volunteers MUST complete a "School Access Form" with the SJCS. The form can be found at <https://stjohns.keepntrack.com/apply>. If a person does not apply for school access or has been denied access, he/she will NOT be permitted to enter the school building or attend special events during the school day. Those that have applied and are approved must present a valid ID and wear a printed name badge to enter the building.

We are seeking volunteers for testing and in classrooms so please sign up in KeepnTrack and contact Abigail Blocker at 547-8440 for information on how you can assist our school.

School Advisory Council (SAC) -

The School Advisory Council (SAC) is a school-based group intended to represent the school, the community and those persons closest to the students. The group shares responsibility for guiding the school toward continuous improvement. The district school board is responsible, by Florida law, for establishing an advisory council for each school in the district.

If you are interested in learning more about Mason's School Advisory Council, please attend the meeting on September 10, 2019 at 3:30PM in the Media Center.

Reading Scholarship Accounts –

Reading Scholarship Accounts are available for students in grades 3 through 5 who are enrolled in a Florida public school and scored a Level 1 or 2 on the grade 3 or grade 4 statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment in the prior school year.

For the 2019-2020 school year, the amount of the scholarship is \$500 per eligible student. Step Up for Students will be the only Scholarship Funding Organization administering this scholarship program.

The eligible expenditures for reimbursement are:

- Instructional materials.
- Curriculum;
- Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services. The services shall be provided by a person who holds a valid teaching certificate pursuant to s. 1012.56, F.S.; a person who holds a baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject area; a person who holds an adjunct teaching certificate pursuant to s. 1012.57; or a person who has demonstrated a mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant to s. 1012.56(5);
- Fees for specialized summer education programs designed to improve reading or literacy skills; and
- Fees for after-school education programs designed to improve reading or literacy skills.

1002.411 Reading scholarship accounts:

(1) READING SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNTS.—Reading scholarship accounts are established to provide educational options for students.

(2) ELIGIBILITY.—Contingent upon available funds, and on a first-come, first-served basis, each student in grades 3 through 5 who is enrolled in a Florida public school is eligible for a reading scholarship account if the student scored below a Level 3 on the grade 3 or grade 4 statewide, standardized English Language Arts (ELA) assessment in the prior school year. An eligible student who is classified as an English Language

Learner and is enrolled in a program or receiving services that are specifically designed to meet the instructional needs of English Language Learner students shall receive priority.

Please contact Jill Hillier, Assistant Principal at Jill.Hillier@stjohns.k12.fl.us if you have any questions or would like more information.

P.E. News –

In order to promote healthy food snack choices, the Physical Education (PE) Department needs your help. To provide a reward system in PE for the Manatee money students are earning at school, we will be giving out "healthy snacks" that the students can "buy" when they come to PE class. Everything will be in self-contained small packaging and will not require refrigeration. We are looking for the following donations to make this reward system work:

- *Trail Mix
- *Cereal Bars
- *Popped/Baked Snacks (pretzels, chips, popcorn, Cheetos, etc.)
- *Sweet & Salty snacks
- *Gummy Fruit Snacks

Thanks very much,
Coach Hollister, Coach A. and Coach Norm



Chorus and Steel Band (Grades 3-5) –

Mr. Bennett will be starting chorus on Wednesday, September 4th. Chorus will meet on Wednesday mornings from 7:30AM to 8:20AM.



Steel band auditions will take place the week of September 3rd. There are enough spots for 20 students right now. The group will meet after school from 3:00PM to 4:00PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

Students may obtain permission slips outside of the music room.

Media Center News –

Please mark your calendars. Our Fall Book Fair is November 7th to November 15th. Volunteers are always needed. Be sure to register in Keep'NTrack to join us for this festive event. If you want more details or questions please contact Mrs. Bendt, Leslie.Bendt@stjohns.k12.fl.us.

Clinic News from Nurse Baxa -

Just some quick reminders that students are not permitted to carry medication of any kind in their backpacks. This applies to over the counter medication like Tylenol and cough drops as well. This is a district policy established for the safety of students. If you would like your student to have medicine available for headaches, colds, sore throats, etc. please call the clinic and we can make the proper arrangements. Thank you for keeping our students safe!



Please visit our Clubs and Activities webpage to learn more about extracurricular opportunities that are offered at Mason beyond the school day <https://www-mes.stjohns.k12.fl.us/clubs/>.

The Good News Club starts Wednesday September 18th. The club meets from 2:00 – 3:30PM in the Media Center. Students may pick up an application in the front office. An application must be turned in before September 18th.



Children may enter the building at 8:00AM and our school day begins at 8:25AM. Please make sure your child arrives at school by 8:20AM so that he/she can be in his/her classroom ready to learn by 8:25AM. If your child is absent, please send a note or email to the classroom teacher within 48 hours of returning to school.

Research shows that attendance is an important factor in student achievement.

Repeated Announcements

School Pay –

We are pleased to offer parents *SchoolPay* as a convenient option to make electronic payments for school-related fees.

SchoolPay offers several benefits:

- Pay online via VISA, MasterCard and Discover cards
- Make payments from your secure parent account with just a few clicks
- A full history of your St. Johns County School District payments searchable by date and child
- Enjoy the convenience of paying at any time (24/7) from your home

You are always in full control of your account and can make a payment at any time that is convenient for you. **No payments will be allowed without your knowledge and authorization through this secure payment system.** Each payment you make is followed by an email notification informing you of the student's name, the purpose of the payment, and the amount of the item each time a payment is to be processed.

To sign up, please visit: <https://www.schoolpay.com/login/>

SchoolMessenger -

This system allows schools and District staff to quickly and efficiently communicate both general and emergency messages to parents/guardians and staff using email, text and voice mail. Parents and staff who wish to receive text messages from this system must (1) Opt-in from their mobile device and (2) have their mobile number on file with their child's school (for parents/guardians) or on file with Employee Online (for staff/employees). Please visit <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/schoolmessenger/> for more information.

Home Access Center (HAC) –

Home Access Center (HAC) allows students and parents/guardians to view their child's educational information such as grades, test scores, bus route information, etc. via a secure, password protected website. Please visit <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/hac/> to learn more about HAC.



Dress Code Reminders –

- Hats, sunglasses, etc. must be taken off and put away upon arrival (except in case of medical necessity or special events authorized by administration). These items may only be worn outside.
- Shoes must be safe and appropriate. They must have a back – no flip-flops, heels, etc.
- No tank tops, spaghetti straps, or shirts/dresses that are cut out at midriff.
- Clothing must be free of logos or sayings with profanity, violence, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco or anything that would be disruptive to the learning environment.
- Skirts and shorts must be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee. Leggings are permitted to be worn under a skirt or long sweater/skirt. No yoga pants.
- Hair should be a natural color and styled in a way that is not distracting.
- No excessive make-up.

For more information please visit <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/schoolservices/conduct/> to access the St. Johns County School District Student Code of Conduct.

Fridays are Spirit Days at Mason! Students and staff are encouraged to wear Mason gear or colors every Friday.

Interpreter Requests –

If you are in need of an interpreter for an event at Mason, we ask you to send a request in writing at least two weeks in advance of the event. The school and/or district will arrange for the interpreter but we need your help in asking to notify us as far in advance as you can. Please communicate these requests with your child's teacher and the Assistant Principal (Jill.Hillier@stjohns.k12.fl.us).

We also ask that you let us know as soon as possible if you need to cancel a prearranged interpreter. This is an additional expense to the SJCSO so we appreciate your consideration and helping us to be conscious of these costs.



Special Celebrations –

We love to celebrate when there is a special occasion! However, we ask that you please follow these guidelines if your child is celebrating while at school:

- Treats must be cookies, brownies, or anything sweet that is ICING FREE. No cupcakes, regular cakes or cookie cakes will be permitted. Icing is too messy and contains too much sugar!
- Treats may only be shared with your child's classmates and teacher.
- If needed, napkins, plates and/or utensils should be provided to the teacher.
- Communicate with your child's teacher about when you would like to bring something in, what you will be bringing and check if there are any allergies in the class.
- No balloons or banners are permitted. Special shirts or buttons are allowed.
- Birthday invitations must include everyone in the class if they are being handed out at school.

From the Mason PTO

What is PTO (Parent - Teacher Organization)?

The purpose of the PTO is to encourage parents/guardians to assist with various activities/functions/services, provide financial assistance where needs are identified within the school, foster a community atmosphere, and support the mission and vision of the school and district.

Funds raised by the PTO can be used for a lot of things, like updated technology, field trips, school improvements, playground equipment, and more. Some funds are used to supplement school curricula, pay for extra activities and projects, classroom materials, online resources for teachers and more.

Want to get involved?

Please feel free to come to our monthly meetings or give us your information to get on the PTO update email. Our next meeting is Monday, September 16th at 3:30pm in the Mason Media Center.

Our 1st spirit night of the school year is coming up!!

Monday, September 23rd 5pm-8pm at Tijuana Flats

**Otis Mason gets 20% of your purchase, can't wait to see you there!!!

Fall Family Fun Night – Thursday October 24th 5:30-7:30pm

**We are still in need of volunteers to make this a GREAT event! Please email OtisMasonPTO@gmail.com.

Miscellaneous PTO Update:

Pre Order Spirit Wear: We are getting ready to place our hoodie and long sleeve shirt order. Please get your pre-order form in today so we guarantee your size.



Shirts	Long Sleeve	Hoodie	Socks
\$10	\$15	\$20	\$8

Box Tops and Coke Codes: We are off to a GREAT start!!! Leading so far this quarter: Strauss, Cothron, Turner, Morrison, and Bryant. Keep them coming. Don't forget Box Tops is going digital – you can download the Box Top App and start earning without clipping!

Like us on Facebook and keep up with the latest happenings – Otis Mason Elementary PTO.

If you would like to get involved in the PTO, there are a few openings that don't consume a lot of time but are key to a successful PTO. If you have any questions or are interested in filling a spot please contact us at otismasonpto@gmail.com.

Thank you!

~ *Mason PTO*