

# Who's the best?

An



Innovative



School!



Safe

Responsible

Respectful

# Welcome to **A**ltoona **I**ntermediate **S**chool, **A**n **I**nnovative **S**chool!

Updated September 2019



Altoona Intermediate School, AIS, is made up of 4th and 5th grades (upper elementary). In AIS, we pride ourselves on the project-based and personalized learning opportunities offered to our students and are working to increase these opportunities in the future. Our amazing staff is a collaborative community of learners. We value continuous professional development and engage in learning and discussion of best teaching practices, which in turn leads to continuous improvement for our students. We value the partnership between you, the parents/guardians, and our school. This is essential for the success of our children. You know your child best and our partnership will help ensure that we create a safe/nurturing environment and help us to set high expectations for his/her success.

**Our Vision:** AIS is an innovative and progressive learning community in which all students engage in a rigorous curriculum and are held to high academic expectations. All students are provided an encouraging, safe and supportive learning environment and each child's social and emotional growth is nurtured to prepare students for their future.

## **OUR COMMITMENTS: *We Live It, We Breathe It, We Do It...***

- We commit to creating a partnership with our students, families and community members.
- Excellence isn't a destination because excellence continues to shift. Our world is changing and shifting. We commit to being a culture of continuous improvement and growth mindset. Students and staff in our school are a collaborative community of learners.
- We commit to providing student-centered, flexible, personalized learning for all students and to become innovators in public education in order to prepare each student for a rapidly changing future.
- We commit to designing and delivering a guaranteed and viable curriculum that enhances student *ownership in the learning process*. Along with staff, students set learning goals and reflect on and monitor progress to reach high levels of mastery.
- We commit to fostering meaningful personal connections, fostering character development and to providing a positive and safe learning environment to enable students to learn, grow, lead and succeed.

## **Table of Contents**

*This student/parent handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that parents and students may have during the course of the school year. Many of the official policies and administrative guidelines of the Board of Education and of the District are summarized within. Please take time to become familiar with the following information and keep this handbook available for future reference. Should you have any questions about the contents, please contact Andrea Steffen, Principal.*

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## General Information

### Contact Information:

Front Office Phone: 715-838-7111  
 Fax: 715-839-6099  
 Webpage: <http://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/schools/intermediate/index.cfm>

**School Office Hours:** 7:30 – 4:00 (See attendance for start/end of the *student* day).

**Visitors:** All visitors are asked to use the main entrance. Upon arrival/departure, please check in at the office and sign in/out.

Dan Peggs	Superintendent	ext. 501
Andrea Steffen	Principal	ext. 310
Brenda Gilmartin	Administrative Assistant	ext. 301
Brooke Kaldor	School Counselor	ext. 303
Tim Peterson	School Resource Officer	ext. 420
Alan McCutcheon	Director of Special Education	ext. 311
Robin Gardner	School Psychologist	ext. 239
Anita Schubring	School Nurse	ext. 475

### Equal Education Opportunity

It is the policy of the District to provide an equal education opportunity for all students. The right of a student, as required by section 118.13 of WI State Statutes, to be admitted to school and to participate fully in curricular, extra-curricular, student services, recreational or other programs or activities shall not be abridged or impaired based on the traits of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, ancestry, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, or any other characteristic protected by federal or state civil rights laws.

Students who have been identified as having an impairment or disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act shall be provided with appropriate educational services. Parents who have questions should contact Alan McCutcheon, Director of Special Education services.

### Extra-Curricular Activities

While formal sports are not offered through school in grades 4 and 5, there are many opportunities available in our community through Parks and Rec, (715)839-5188. Opportunities provided through our school include:

- CCF Bank
- Girls on the Run
- Safety Patrol (5<sup>th</sup> grade)
- School Play
- Tennis Camp
- Summer RAILS Program

School hours are **8:20 am – 3:35 pm** for AIS students. Unless your child participates in the breakfast program, all **students should arrive no earlier than 8:05 am**. Those students participating in the breakfast program can enter the building at 7:55 am and should report to the commons. Arrival no earlier than 8:05 am helps us to ensure that all designated areas (such as hallways and the playground) have adult supervision.

#### Attendance & Absences

If your child is absent, please call (715)839-6095 (24 hrs. a day) or the AIS front office at (715)838-7111. When calling, please indicate your child's name, homeroom and reason for the absence. If you have not called in and your child is absent, we will contact you.

Attendance is essential for success. Wisconsin State Statute 118.15 established the responsibility for regular school attendance with parents/guardians. State law requires parents/guardians to provide a written explanation of the absence at the time the student returns to school, or in the case of anticipated absences, prior to the absence. Parents/guardians will be notified when a student has been absent 5, 7, and 10 days. **A parent/guardian may notify the school of a student's absence for up to 10 days** in a school year. Once a student exceeds 10 days, all further absences will require a medical note.

**Appointments & Procedures for Leaving School:** Students are allowed to leave school during the day only if accompanied by their parent/guardian. If you are picking up or dropping off your child for/from an appointment, please enter the building through the main entrance and sign your child in/out in the office. As much as possible, we ask that appointments are made during non-school hours/days. Appointments are exempt from the 10 day total mentioned above **if** the parent/guardian brings a copy of the appointment card with date/time to the office. Medical notes/appointment cards can also be faxed to the school.

**Truancy:** Students are considered truant, per Wisconsin State Statute 118.15, when a student is absent from school, without medical notes, for part of or all of 5 or more days during a semester or when the absences exceed 10 days in the school year. The school is required by law to contact the parent/guardian about a student's attendance. Communication will include a phone call, letter, and parent meeting. As stated above, parents/guardians will be notified when a student has been absent 5, 7, and 10 days. If a student becomes truant, the school will notify parents by certified mail. The school is also required to work in conjunction with local law enforcement and the county if a student is truant.

#### Picking Up Students At the End of the Day:

All students in grades 4-12 load the busses in front of the Intermediate/Middle School. We also have students who walk and many students who are picked up by parents. **If you pick your child at the end of the day**, we ask that you park in front of the school between from 5th street heading east toward the playground. There is also a lane for parents to park in the front parking lot alongside Bartlett Avenue. There are times when the line in this lane gets lengthy. If you line up in this lane, please be sure that the entrance to the parking lot is not blocked. You can park in this front parking lot along Bartlett. We also have a staff parking lot closer to the gym. We ask that parents **not** use this parking lot for picking up and dropping off. We have middle school and high school students who cross this lot to get to their bus and we have walkers who cross the entranceway to this lot to walk home. In order to keep these students safe, please do not use this lot.

We contract through Student Transit for bussing. Please call the bus company at 715-839-5116 for any issues on routes or alternate pick up/drop off situations. If your child is riding another bus at the end of the day, please provide a written note to the office and we will issue a bus pass.

**Misconduct:** We have put some proactive procedures in place to help ensure the bus ride is safe and respectful. Occasionally there may be misbehavior on busses. Bus drivers typically handle misbehavior. ***Sometimes*** misbehavior is reported to our office by students and/or by the bus company. Please report all incidents to Student Transit and our office as soon as you are aware of misconduct. This helps us to be prompt and effective in response. Note: Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right. Safety is our number one priority. If student behavior jeopardizes safety, disciplinary action may be considered including and up to permanent suspension from bus.

### **Breakfast, Morning Milk, and Lunch Program**

For information regarding menus, prices, account balances, free and reduced lunch, etc., please contact our food service personnel at 715-839-6031, ext. 434. Information about these programs is distributed at the beginning of the school year and is available on our school website. Breakfast starts at 7:55 am.

### **Communication With You, Parents/Guardians ☺**

We want your child to have an awesome school experience and truly value your input! As stated above, you know your child best and our partnership will help ensure that we create a safe/nurturing environment and help us to set high expectations for his/her success.

Formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled two times per year, in the fall and spring, and report cards will be sent home at the end of each semester (January and June). However, we want you to know how your child is doing on an ***ongoing*** basis and therefore have created a standard procedure for home/school communication in every AIS classroom. At a minimum, in addition to parent teacher conferences and report cards, you will also be able to check your child's progress/grade on each unit. Your child's classroom teacher will let you know when the unit has ended, will send that unit's assessment home for you to see, and will let you know what the next, upcoming unit of study will be in that subject. More communication about this will be provided at the Welcome Back Day in the fall.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher, our school counselor, or principal if you have any questions or concerns. Our teachers use several methods to communicate with families and parents. We email, we tweet, we send notes, we use the student's assignment book, and we make phone calls. Your child's teacher will talk to each of you more about your preferred method in the beginning of the school year. You may also receive Skylert emails (through the Skyward program we use as a student information warehouse) from the front office. We put news on our website, but one of the best ways to get information about our school is to read our newsletter which will be sent to you monthly.

### **Homework**

There is much research about homework, the pros and cons, and the amount appropriate at each grade level in a child's education. In AIS, your child may have *some* homework. We would like children to read at least 20-25 minutes a day five days a week. The benefits of this small amount of time spent reading cannot be emphasized enough. Students who read this frequently will progress and be more successful in reading, **every time**. If your child consistently has more than 30 minutes of homework a night, please

contact his/her teacher. Our students are working hard and spend many hours learning during the day. There is benefit for children to have down time in the evening, time for family and play.

### **Custodial/Non-Custodial Parents**

Regardless of the family situation, we desire to maintain positive communication with both parents so that they can stay involved in their child's educational program and school life. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide the school office with a copy of the most current court order affecting their child. Unless a court order specifies otherwise, both parents will have equal rights to the child, including, but not limited to the student's records, visitation and removal from school, and participation in educational decisions.

### **Student Information**

**Student Records:** The school maintains academic, attendance, behavioral and health records. It is the parent's responsibility to update or alert **the front office** of any changes in regard to phone and address, emergency contacts, contact between students and other parties, and medical needs. Feel free to contact your child's teacher about any changes as well, but please contact the front office so that we may make the necessary changes in our Skyward system/records. If there is an important issue, we don't want to leave it to chance. The front office will communicate changes with any staff that need to be aware of changes.

**Emergency Information:** In case of emergency, each student is required to have on file their parent/guardian's name, complete up-to-date address and phone numbers, the names and numbers of two friends or relatives who can be contacted if parents/guardians can't be reached, and the child's physician's name and number. Forms will be provided at the beginning of the school year for this purpose.

**Filming, Photographing, or Videotaping Students:** We are very proud of our students and love to share their success and share positive news with our AIS parents/guardians as well as the community. Throughout the year, photos and videos may be taken of students. On occasion, the local media has visited our school, both television and newspaper. We love this type of publicity, but we are also sensitive to the fact that, for reasons unique to an individual family, a parent may not wish for their child to appear in any photos, videos, or in the media. If you do not wish for your child's picture to be in media, please let the front office know.

### **Health**

**Medication:** All medication (prescription and over the counter) must be brought to the office by the **parent/guardian** in the original container stating what the medication is, the dosage, and the times. **Please do not send medication with your child in his/her backpack.** A medication distribution form needs to be completed and returned to the front office when your child has a prescription, from a doctor, that needs to be taken during school hours. For prescription medications, the parent/guardian and the doctor need to sign the form. For non-prescription medication, just the parent/guardian needs to sign the form. Forms will be distributed at the beginning of the year and available in the office throughout the rest of the year. All medication will be kept in the main office and administered by our administrative assistant or school nurse.

**Immunizations:** To keep your child protected from certain communicable diseases and serious illnesses, State Law 252.04 Wis. requires all children to have routine immunizations and boosters. These requirements can be waived only if a properly signed health, religious or personal conviction exception is filed with the school.

**Other Medical/Health Needs:** If your child has a special health concern or problem, it is important that this information be relayed to the Altoona School District nurse at 715-839-6050, ext. 475.

**Illness and Injury:** In case of illness or injury, students will be temporarily cared for by school personnel in the front office. School personnel will provide first-aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, parents will be contacted. If parents are not available, 911 will be called and the student will be transported to the emergency room of a local hospital. Please remember that an emergency telephone number where parents can be reached and the name and number of the child's physician must be on file at the school.

### **Emergency Drills, Early Release and School Closings**

**Emergency Drills:** We practice fire, tornado and evacuation drills. Detailed plans are posted inside the door of each classroom. Students practice the drills and follow the plan under the direction of the supervisor in charge. A detailed emergency plan is available in the school office.

**Early Release:** It is very busy in the school office when school is dismissed unexpectedly, and the school cannot contact individual parents to advise them of early dismissal. Notification of non-scheduled early release will be made over local radio and television stations, posted on the school's website and through our Skylert program. Please develop a plan with your child in case school is dismissed earlier than normal. This plan should also be written on the appropriate form provided in the beginning of the school year/upon enrollment.

**School closings** will be communicated to all families by a phone call through our Skylert program. Local media will also be notified (television and radio).

### **Recess**

Fresh air and exercise are important! Students have recess in the morning and at lunch. Teachers also give classes brain breaks to get students up and moving around. Our students will have recess outside unless it is raining or below zero with the wind chill. Parents/guardians, please be sure your child is dressed properly for the season of the year. Behavior at recess will be safe and respectful. Children are encouraged to play, play, play, but they must also follow the rules for safe use of the equipment and fair play for games/sports. If students misbehave, they could temporarily lose the privilege to use equipment or participate in games/sports. Our motto... "Be safe and respectful!" ☺

### **Student Behavior/Conduct and Discipline**

**Board Policy:** The intent of Altoona School District Board Policy JFC is to help students learn behavior patterns that will enable them to be responsible and contributing members of society. All students have a responsibility to know and respect the rules and regulations of the school to ensure the respect and consideration for the rights of others. All district employees are expected to be responsible for supervising the behavior of students and for seeing that they abide by the established rules of conduct.

**AIS:** We believe in helping children to grow emotionally and socially as well as academically. All staff work hard to set positive examples, to teach positive social behaviors, and to guide children to make positive choices. Positive Behavioral Intervention System, or PBIS, is a framework we use to help our students grow emotionally and to create a safe and respectful environment. Our core values are; safe, responsible, and respectful. We talk about what each means, have guidelines for what those behaviors look like and practice these as a whole group, in small groups and individually as needed. **We want AIS to be a place where everyone, students and adults alike, feel valued, safe and respected.**

We believe in using positive behavior supports to encourage students to choose positive behavior. If a student makes a poor choice, whether a minor behavior or a major behavior, we look at this as a teachable moment. All students, all adults too 😊, make mistakes. **Minor behaviors** are typically worked through with the classroom teacher. The teacher redirects the student privately. Students are given a couple of opportunities to correct their choice. On occasion, the school counselor, principal or other school personnel may work with the child.

**Major behavior** may be worked through with the classroom teacher, but will also be worked through with the principal or dean of students. Major behavior results in an office referral and parents are notified via email and a phone call home. If an office referral is made due to a major behavior, the principal and/or dean of student uses a discipline model that is progressive in nature depending on the number of times the student has been seen for this behavior. Consequences include but are not limited to verbal warning, VIC (Very Important Choices – detention), parent meeting, police referral, referral to social services, in or out of school suspension, and/or expulsion. Some major behaviors, such as fighting, may result in larger consequences, including suspension. **AIS is a profanity, drug, and weapon free school.** All in AIS have the right to attend school without fear of physical threat, harm, or verbal abuse/bullying.

**Check-In/Check-Out:** If your child is recommended for additional behavioral support (through data, the classroom teacher, or yourself) you may receive an informational letter such as the one below. The letter indicates details of the Check-in/Check-out (CICO) intervention and how you can support your child:

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Check-in/Check-out (CICO) is a behavioral support strategy that can be helpful for some students in following school-rules. Some students benefit from additional feedback throughout the day and CICO is shown to be a positive approach to help students do that. Students are given feedback following each school period that matches the AIS school-wide expectations: Be Responsible, Respectful, and Safe. During feedback conversations, a rating on how your child is doing is assigned to them, they are the following:

Rating System:

- 1 = I need to work on this
- 2 = I am working on this
- 3 = I can do this!
- 4= I could teach this!

Students are also able to connect with an adult (“greeter”) at the beginning and end of the day to further build relationships. Overall, this is meant to be a positive and supportive approach in supporting your child’s behavioral success.

The rating system indicated above is recorded online in a program called eduCLIMBER. At the end of the day, your child and their “greeter” will reflect on how the day went and what goals/expectations to focus on for the next day, as well as enter the points in eduCLIMBER. You can use the above login information to review your child’s progress.

As a parent, you can help your child by doing the following:

- Review their daily progress report after school everyday
- Acknowledge your child’s efforts as they work toward their goals
- Problem solve with your child on how to meet their goals if they are having difficulties
- This is a positive, supportive approach to increase your child’s success. Reward your child for the positives and refrain from consequences. Everyday is a new chance and new opportunity to reach their goals!

If you have any questions, please contact your child’s teacher, counselor, or principal. By working together, we can make AIS a positive learning environment for all students!

### **Safety Drills**

Throughout the school year students practice various safety drills. Approximately eight times per year we practice fire drills, during which all students evacuate the building. Twice a year we practice tornado drills, during which teachers direct students to a more structurally sound place in our school, and students practice kneeling on the floor with their heads covered.

We practice these drills for the following reasons:

- Practice provides an opportunity to correct any problems in drill procedures prior to an actual emergency.
- The more we practice these drills the more ‘routine’ they become for students, allowing them to feel safe and calm.
- In the event of an emergency situation, it is vital that staff and students know exactly what to do, and are able to react quickly and appropriately.

We also practice what to do in the event that an unsafe or armed person enters the school. While it saddens us that this is a drill we need to practice, we recognize the importance of doing so. Much has been learned about these situations and how to **better** prepare and react in such situations over the past two decades. In an effort to continue to improve school safety, we have partnered with our local police department and have trained all school employees in **ALICE**. ALICE stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. Students will practice these drills just as they would practice a fire or tornado drill. Federal and state guidelines support this proactive approach/response, and ALICE is supported by research. For more information about ALICE, please do not hesitate to contact your building principal, Ms. Steffen.

### **Property**

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Per School Board Policy JFCB, students should share in the responsibility of keeping our schools in their best possible shape. Any student who intentionally or negligently damages school property shall be held responsible and shall make restitution to the school in the amount determined by the administration. When a student is unable to make restitution, the parent/guardian shall be held liable.

### **Personal Dress and Hat Policy**

Students are expected to dress appropriately. District Policy JFCA: Responsibility for the personal appearance of students enrolled in the District shall normally rest with the students themselves and their parents/guardians. Student dress and grooming shall not affect health or safety, disrupt the learning process, or be destructive to school property.

Hats or head coverings are not allowed in the building during student school hours (8:20-3:35) unless there is an exception such as hat day.

### **Toys and Fidgets**

Students are discouraged from bringing personal toys and fidgets to school. Due to the limited recess time during the day, students are encouraged to use this time to play, exercise, and interact with other children. Recess toys will be provided by the school. Unless a parent/guardian gets permission from his/her child's classroom teacher, students should not bring fidgets to school. The school has fidgets that can be provided for those students who need them.

### **Animals**

We do have some students who are scared of animals. Animals are not allowed in school unless permission is given by the classroom teacher and principal.

### **Field Trips**

Occasionally a field trip or outing is offered. In order to participate in such an activity, a permission needs to be signed by a parent/guardian. Students who have demonstrated that they have had difficulty following school rules may not be allowed on a field trip. This will be considered on an individual basis by the administration, and parents/guardians will be informed in advance regarding this possibility.

### **Chromebooks**

Our students each have a personal Chromebook for use. These devices are used only in school. More information about use of the Chromebook is available in the Chromebook handout which is distributed at the beginning of the year/upon enrollment.

For more specific information regarding Policy adopted by the School Board, please visit <http://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/district/policies.cfm>

☺ Quotes from our kids ☺

*"I like the classes they provide."* Lily

*"Learning is so much fun."* Jonathan

*"AIS is one of the best schools I've ever been to!"* Jayla

*"I enjoy coming to this environment every morning."* Isabella

*"School is fun because the teachers make it fun."* Bianka

*"We have really good technology and specials. We have Tech. Ed.. Some schools don't have this. We have a great education."* Addie

*"Our teachers care about our health and safety and take it very seriously. As we do fire drills to keep us safe and so we know what to do when there is a fire or a natural disaster."* Lidia

*"We have excellent teachers that care for us."* Taylor

*"Our teachers put us in deep care."* Kaden

**We look forward to an AMAZING year with your child and with you!!!!**

**Who's the best? .... AIS ☺**



-----Please detach and return to school-----

I have read the information in this handbook and agree to follow all guidelines within.

Parent Name

Parent Signature

Date

Student Name

Student Signature

Date