

Jacobs Fork Middle School Parent/Student Handbook

Jacobs Fork Middle School
3431 Plateau Road
Newton, North Carolina 28658
704-462-1827 704-462-2087

Administration:

Dr. Jeff Isenhour, Principal

Ms. Dawn Covington, Assistant Principal

School Mascot: Jaguar

School Colors: Purple, Silver, and Black

Electronic Sources of Communication Include:

<http://www.catawbaschools.net/schools/JacobsFork/default.aspx> (School Webpage)

Our goal at Jacobs Fork Middle School is to provide opportunities for our students to be successful each day and in their futures. We have a clearly defined work ethic where we believe that it is important to do our best in everything we do within the school environment and life's activities. As a result of this strong work ethic, Jacobs Fork continues to experience high levels of success with academics, athletics, the arts, and in the development of innovative programs. We want the individuals within our school community to be successful people and citizens that contribute to humanity.

Central to increasing and maintaining the degree of educational success we have experienced within our school community is the importance of teachers, parents, and administrators communicating openly and frequently concerning the progress of students. Parents are an integral part of our school family and the first line of educators for their children. Parental presence and participation in school activities is vital. All parents are greatly encouraged to attend school functions, communicate regularly with teachers, and be an active participant in their child's education. This handbook is important in providing information for students and parents regarding expectations and procedures. Please contact the school if you have additional questions.

Attendance

Regular attendance is an important factor in establishing a good scholastic record. Work missed from repeated absences is difficult to make up. There is no substitute for participation in daily classes. Students in grades 7 and 8 must be in attendance **90%** (any fraction thereof will be rounded down) of the days enrolled in a Catawba County middle school to be promoted.

The following reasons constitute valid excuses for student absences in the Catawba County Schools. Valid written excuses from a parent or guardian must be received. Excessive absences will result in the need for an excuse from a doctor. Absences may also be referred to our school social worker.

1. Illness or injury which prevents the child from being physically able to attend school. Illness which results in excessive absences will require an excuse from your doctor.
2. Quarantine – excused when isolation of the student is ordered by a doctor or health officer.
3. Death in Immediate Family
4. Medical or Dental Appointments – Please make every effort to schedule appointments during vacations or after school hours. Students are encouraged to return to school after appointments whenever possible.
5. Court or Administrative Proceedings – Excuses when resulting from the attendance of a child at a legal proceeding if the child is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
6. Religious Observance
7. Educational Opportunity – If it is demonstrated that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity, such as travel. Approval of such absences should be gained prior to the absence. Please contact the school office for an Educational Trip form. If at all possible, we would like to ask that you plan family vacations during the summer or on our scheduled vacation breaks.

**A note should be sent to school before or immediately after the absence has occurred. Please state the date and the reason for the absence.

Tardy/Absences

When a student has been absent or is late to school, he/she must sign in before going to class and get a “blue slip” to present to the teacher(s). The slip will indicate the student’s name, date(s) of absence, time tardy, a code (1, 2, or 3), the current date, and the initials of an administrator/counselor.

Codes:

1-Lawful 2-Unlawful 3-Suspension/Expulsion

The same reasons listed for absences are also excusable for tardies. Any absence/tardy which is not one of the above 7 reasons is coded as unlawful. No student will be admitted to school late without a “blue slip”. Prior approval is required for school absences which allow for educational opportunities. These may include: family, religious, or community trips. Please contact your child’s teacher for the required form.

Early Dismissal

We encourage you to try to schedule your child’s dentist/doctor/orthodontist appointments and family trips around school hours/days whenever possible. If this is not possible, please come to the school office to check out your child. Your child will need to check back in upon his/her return to school. For your child’s safety, the teacher and school office will not release a student to anyone who comes to the school unless written permission has been received from the parent/legal guardian.

Inclement Weather

If school is dismissed early due to inclement weather parents should plan in advance with their child what method of transportation they will use to get home. Bus students will be sent home on their regular bus. Car riders will utilize their pre-planned mode of transportation to get home. Phones usage may be limited to students during such events.

Leaving School Grounds

Students may not leave school grounds during school hours or be dismissed without written permission from a parent. Students will not be allowed to walk to the high school to meet older brothers or sisters. All students will need to be picked up at the front of Jacobs Fork. If there are any restrictions concerning the child's dismissal from school, the parent is responsible for presenting a court order or other court documents restricting the adults who are allowed to pick up the child.

Withdrawal Procedures

If you plan to move away and withdraw your child from school, please send a note or come by the office before the last day of attendance stating the last day your child will be in our school. All library and textbooks must be returned and any outstanding charges will need to be paid. We will send your child's record to his/her new school after the child is enrolled.

Student Information Forms

On the first day of school, your child will bring home an information sheet. Having this information returned promptly and correctly is very important. Please make sure all information is completed accurately and clearly. An emergency contact person and telephone number must be listed in case you cannot be reached. Be sure to discuss with this person what you expect should we have to contact him/her. Please notify the school office if any information changes during the school year.

Medication

If a medication (either prescription or nonprescription) is to be taken at school, Jacobs Fork must have the following:

1. A signed order by a physician with specific directions.
2. Prescription medicine must be in a bottle with pharmacist's label containing patient's name, instruction for administration, name of drug, and name of physician.
3. Nonprescription medicine must be in original bottle.
4. All medication must be accompanied by a form signed by a doctor. This form is available from the school office. All medication is stored and administered from the office.

Accidents

Accidents should be reported to the office immediately by the supervising teacher. Every possible effort will be made to contact the parents to ascertain their wishes in the matter. Parents are asked to update their child's information whenever a change occurs designating an emergency contact person. If you or none of the emergency contact persons can be reached and emergency care is necessary, a school employee or ambulance (if necessary) will transport your child to the nearest hospital facility.

Student Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in an appropriate and respectable manner each day. Dress and grooming should never interfere with the learning environment. Students and parents should reference the code of student conduct for specific dress code violations.

Homework Policy

Homework is an important tool for reinforcing the daily classroom instruction. It is understood that some students may take longer to complete assignments while others may finish more quickly. Teachers and staff members work together to balance the amount of homework given so that students are not overloaded. Please contact your child's teachers if there are any questions regarding assignments.

Student Responsibilities Regarding Homework:

- Get all assignments and ask for help if assignments are not clear
- Copy all assignments into student agenda/planner carefully recording due dates and important information
- Set a time each day to complete homework
- Check over completed assignments and ask an adult to check also
- Maintain the highest quality work on all assignments (In and out of class)
- Take home all necessary resources and tools (packets, textbooks, notes, study guides, calculators, etc.)

- Bring completed homework to school when it is due
- Be responsible for getting assignments when student has been absent from school
- Be responsible for taking care of, and returning, any borrowed resource materials

Parent Responsibilities Regarding Homework:

- Promote a positive attitude toward homework as part of the learning process
- Understand and reinforce high expectations for all student work
- Provide an environment of structure to help child complete assignments
- Be available when possible to provide supervision and support, but do not do assignments for students
- Communicate often with teachers when there are questions or concerns
- Learn strategies for helping students with homework through curriculum events and sessions conducted with parents by the school

Teacher Responsibilities Regarding Homework:

- Identify the purposes of homework assignments for students and parents
- Establish objectives and guidelines for special projects, including any expectations for parent participation
- Follow the guidelines for the amount of time designated for homework
- Communicate expectations to students and parents
- Post assignments and allow adequate time for recording
- Model homework strategies
- Review homework, provide feedback, and return in a timely manner
- Establish a system for recording and reporting student progress
- Ensure that resources and materials required for homework are easily obtained by students and cause no undue burdens
- Provide ways for parents to communicate with teachers regarding homework and progress
- Notify parents early and often regarding homework problems and missing assignments
- Assign long-term projects so that the completion time includes adequate time to complete and does not interfere with weekends or vacation periods
- Discuss homework practices with school colleagues so that homework is consistent with time and assignments across subject areas and disciplines

Absentee Homework Policy

If students are absent from school for less than two days parents/students should contact teachers to get assignments and materials. Homework assignments can be located on teacher web pages or communicated with students and parents through phone or email.

Grading

Report cards will be distributed on a nine week grading period. Progress reports are administered every three weeks between report card periods. Parents are expected to sign report cards and progress reports and return them to the school as soon as possible. If a parent has questions regarding their child’s grades or assignments, they should contact the teacher as a first line of communication.

Grading Scale

93-100	A	85-92	B	77-84	C
	70-76	D	0-69	F	

Promotion/Retention

Students are encouraged to perform at their best in all subjects. Jacobs Fork will follow the guidelines for retention set forth by the Catawba County School Board and the State of NC. Notification of progress will be sent to the parents at the end of each nine weeks and every three weeks in between report cards.

Lockers

Each student at JFMS will be issued a locker. Lockers are to be used for the storage of books, clothing, or other school items. **Students should purchase a combination lock to secure their lockers.** All combinations must be given to homeroom teachers. Locker combinations must not be given to other students. The school cannot be responsible for loss or damage to materials in the lockers. Periodic locker checks will be held for all students. Lockers are school property and the principal or designee may open lockers in the presence of a witness to examine the contents when there is a reason to believe that the locker may contain unlawful items.

Lost and Found

Any student who has found an item in the school building or on school grounds should bring it to the office. Items lost should also be reported to the teacher or school office. Please make sure all items are labeled with your child's name. The school is not responsible for lost items.

School Counseling/Guidance

School counseling and guidance services are available for every student. Services offered are social, emotional, academic, career, group, and individual counseling. In addition, our counselor can assist in locating outside agencies. Parents may contact the counselor by calling the school at 704-462-1827.

Junior Beta

The purpose of the National Junior Beta Club is to promote the ideals of character, service, and leadership to reward meritorious achievement, and to encourage and assist students in achieving a college education. Membership in the Jr. Beta Club is by invitation and is based on academic performance, citizenship, positive leadership, and a commendable attitude toward staff and peers. Membership is limited to students who are working at grade level. Please contact the school for specific information on the selection process.

Textbooks

All textbooks are loaned to students for their use during the school year. Textbooks are to be kept clean and handled carefully. Students will be required to pay for lost or damaged books, including library books.

Computer and Internet

Students must have parent/guardian sign an Acceptable Use Form before they are allowed to use the Internet at JFMS. Students must use the school's computer equipment and Internet service in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner and must be in support of the educational objectives and student behavior guidelines of Catawba County Schools. The privilege of Internet use will be withdrawn from users who do not respect the rules and regulations established by Catawba County Schools.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Parents are encouraged to support the school PTO. A goal of the PTO is to increase parent involvement and work toward helping students reach their highest academic potential. Parents interested in taking an active role with this organization should contact the school for additional information.

Parent Volunteers

Jacobs Fork is fortunate to have parents who volunteer their time and effort to work for the benefit of our students. The presence of parent volunteers has greatly enriched the program our school can offer students. If parents are interested in working as a volunteer, please contact the school administration or your child's teachers.

Visitation

All visitors, parents, and guests must report to the school office immediately upon arriving at school. A visitor's pass will be given to all visitors after signing in to the office. Former students are asked to visit on workdays only. High school students are not allowed to visit during the instructional day. Visitor badges must be worn at all times while on school grounds.

Field Trips

Field trips to points of interest are scheduled by various classroom teachers throughout the school year. These trips are designed to supplement certain aspects of the classroom curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the community. Parents will receive notice of field trips in advance of the date and will be asked to sign a permission form. Field trip fees may be requested from each student to help defray transportation or admission cost. Students may go on trips with their class only.

Fire Drills/Tornado Drills/Safety Drills

A variety of safety drills involving students will be conducted periodically throughout the school year. Students will be given instructions regarding these activities and must comply with directives during these times in order to ensure that students are safe in the event of actual emergency situations.

Physical Education

Students are required to participate in physical education unless the school has an excuse from a physician due to medical reasons. If a student needs to be excused due to a temporary illness or medical problem, parents should send in a note from parents or doctor. Students are expected to dress out every day with appropriate gym attire as directed by the physical education teacher.

Student Athletics

To participate in Jacobs Fork Athletics, students must meet the following criteria:

- Maintain passing grades in all core academic classes (Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science)
- Maintain passing grades in two rotation courses
- Eighth graders must maintain passing grades in computer courses
- Meet all attendance requirements and be in good standing as a student

Sufficient insurance coverage must be obtained by students – either family accident or school policy. A physical examination is required prior to tryouts. A player must have been in attendance 90% of the time for the prior semester. Any behavior problems that result in In-School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension may cause suspension or dismissal from the team or game participation.

Athletic Boosters

Jacobs Fork Middle School has a fully functioning athletic booster organization that operates to support the interscholastic athletic program. Parents are encouraged to support the school's athletic program through volunteering at events, attendance, and any means possible to ensure our athletic program is the most successful program possible. All support is greatly appreciated by athletes, coaches, the school faculty, and administration.

Items Not Permissible At School

The following items are not allowed at school:

- Gum
- Radios, MP3 players, iPods, CD Players
- Toys, video games (Any electronic equipment that may cause an interruption to instruction)

Cell Phones

Students carrying cell phones to school should place these items in student lockers or store them in book bags during the instructional day. Cell phone usage cannot interfere with instruction or the learning environment and should remain off or on silent during the school day. Parents should note that while such items are common in our culture today, they can be a serious distraction for students, if not taught when it is appropriate to use such items. Students are not allowed to use cell phones during the instructional day to call or text other students. The school will not be responsible for loss or theft of any of these items. Should any items such as those previously listed, or cell phones interfere with instruction or cause a disruption, they will be removed from student possession and returned to students at the end of each day. Repeated offenses will result in violation of the student code of conduct.

Use of School Telephone

Students may be permitted to use the school telephone only in case of emergencies or when notification of a parent is necessary. Parents should make all arrangements for transportation before or after school.

Hallways

Students are expected to be in class on time and for the entire period. Students in hallways during the school day while classes are in session must have in their possession the appropriate hall pass provided by the teacher.

Media Center

The school media center offers an up-to-date collection of books and media materials focusing on the school curriculum, student interests, as well as classic and popular titles. Computers are available for internet research and access to an online public access catalog for accessing the media collection.

The media center is open from 7:30 am until 4:00 pm. Students may check out three books at a time for a two week period of time. Reference materials may be checked out on an overnight basis. Students with overdue materials receive notices for reminders to return materials in a timely fashion.

Scholastic book fairs are conducted each year at Jacobs Fork by the media coordinator. These fairs feature select and popular titles of interest for young adults and families. Parents and students are encouraged to support and participate in this endeavor.

The media coordinator and language arts teachers sponsor a Battle of the Books Team and competition. Jacobs Fork is proud of the achievement of past teams in this competition and highly encourages students to become involved in this activity.

Tobacco Free Campus

Tobacco products and use are prohibited on campus at all events.

Cafeteria Procedures/Expectations

Students are expected to conduct themselves properly during lunch periods and exercise appropriate etiquette and table manners. Expectations in the cafeteria include:

- Enter the cafeteria in an orderly manner and remain in line quietly and respectfully until seated (This ensures that cafeteria staff can hear lunch numbers and students are served in an efficient manner)
- Students should remain seated until dismissed by their teacher
- Use appropriate levels of conversation at the table and all areas of the cafeteria
- School food cannot be removed from the cafeteria
- Leave tables in a clean manner for others to eat when exiting (Clean up your mess- Leave it better than you found it)

In addition to the regular lunch offered, students also have the choice to purchase supplemental items. All items on the menu may be purchased separately. Students and parents may pay for lunches in advance or through internet services. Students may charge lunches if they forget money. Excessive charges may involve contact by the cafeteria manager or school administration. Parents are requested to contact the cafeteria manager regarding lunch accounts or balances.

Transportation Changes

Parents must notify the school in advance and in writing of transportation changes for students. If proper notification does not occur, school officials follow regular procedures for dismissal.

Car Rider Transportation

When students are dropped off or picked up for arrival or dismissal, parents or drivers should adhere to the following procedures/expectations:

- Observe all speed limits and exercise caution to pedestrian traffic
- Drop off/Pick Up all students in the traffic line
- Never drop students off in the parking area to walk to the school entrance
- Do not park in the traffic line/fire lane and leave vehicles unattended

Bus Transportation

School transportation service is a privilege. Students will observe the directives of the school bus driver at all times while riding a school bus or other school vehicle. Students not following bus rules and regulations are subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the code of student conduct.