Family and Student Handbook

PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

Updated for the 2025-26 School Year

This handbook reflects our commitment to collaboration, clarity, and care. At Julius Marks Elementary, we want families to feel welcomed, informed, and involved. We have aligned our language with Fayette County Public Schools' priorities, the Portrait of a Graduate, and our JME Character Equations to reflect who we are and what we believe.

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Dear Julius Marks Students and Families,

Welcome to a new year at JME—where every child is seen, heard, and valued. We are honored to partner with you this school year. Whether you're returning or new to our Jaguar family, we want you to know you belong here.

Our work is rooted in building confident learners and compassionate leaders. Our goal is not only academic excellence but also meaningful growth in character and relationships. We believe in nurturing the whole child and partnering with families every step of the way.

💙 Our Beliefs at Julius Marks Elementary

At Julius Marks, we believe in the power of community, character, and curiosity to shape every child into a confident learner and compassionate leader. Rooted in the values of Fayette County Public Schools, aligned with the Portrait of a Graduate, and inspired by our Character Equations, we hold the following core beliefs:

💙 Our Beliefs at Julius Marks Elementary

Where character + learning = a future full of promise and hope.

1. **We believe that school should feel like a place of belonging, stability, and purpose**, where every child is known, valued, and safe to grow.
2. **We believe that a strong learning environment starts with students who are helpful and organized**, because **Helpfulness + Organization = Strong Learning Environment**.
3. **We believe stability is built through relationships grounded in care and safety—** because **Care + Safety = Stability**.
4. **We believe that real ability comes from the combination of goodness and practiced skill—** because **Goodness + Skills = Ability**.
5. **We believe perception comes when students slow down, observe, and practice patience—** because **Patience + Senses = Perception**.
6. **We believe that responsibility grows when students act with kindness and seek to understand others—** because **Kindness + Understanding = Responsibility**.
7. **We believe joyful focus leads to energy for learning—** because **Joy + Focus = Learning Energy**.
8. **We believe students grow wise when they bring hope to what they're learning—** because **Hope + Knowledge = Discernment**.
9. **We believe friendships are formed when gentleness and respect are practiced daily—** because **Gentleness + Respect = Friendship**.
10. **We believe that resilience is the outcome of self-control and a clear purpose—** because **Self-Control + Purpose = Resilience**.

Fayette County Public Schools share our belief that all students deserve access to a world-class education and the support of a community that champions them. It is my honor to serve the students, families, and staff of Julius Marks Elementary.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me anytime. My email is jennifer.spencer2@fayette.kyschools.us and our main office number is 859-422-3470. We also encourage you to join Parent Square for daily communication and celebrations.

We can't wait to grow alongside you this year!

With gratitude,

Jennifer F. Spencer
Principal, Julius Marks Elementary

Attendance & When to Keep Your Child Home

At Julius Marks, we believe that every day counts—but we also understand that children need rest and care to be their best selves. Regular attendance is key to success, but we also want to honor the real-life needs of students and families. Our goal is to work in partnership with you to ensure that students attend school consistently, while also staying home when necessary to protect their health and the well-being of others.

💙 When to Keep Your Child Home

Sometimes it's hard to know whether your child is well enough to attend school. Below are some common guidelines to help you decide:

- **Fever: Keep your child home if they have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher. They may return after being fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine.**
- **Vomiting or Diarrhea: Students should remain home for 24 hours after the last episode.**
- **COVID-19 or other contagious illness: Follow physician or health department guidance. Reach out to the school nurse if you're unsure.**
- **Eye infections, rashes, or unusual symptoms: Please consult a doctor before returning to school.**
- **Just not feeling like themselves: If your child is overly tired, clingy, or in pain, a day of rest might be best.**

🫧 When in doubt, give us a call! We are happy to help you decide what's best.

📘 Understanding Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

FCPS allows excused absences for the following reasons:

- **Student illness (up to 10 parent notes per year; doctor's note required after that)**
- **Medical or dental appointments (with official documentation)**
- **Death in the family**
- **Religious holidays**
- **Court appearances**
- **Family emergencies (3 events per year, with principal approval)**
- **Military-related absences**
- **Approved Educational Enhancement Opportunities (EHOs)**

All absences require a written excuse within 3 days of return. Notes must include:

- **Student's name**
- **Dates of absence**
- **Reason for absence**
- **Parent/guardian signature**

Notes can be emailed, scanned, or turned in via Parent Square.

⏰ Tardies & Early Dismissals

- **Arriving after 7:45 AM or leaving before 2:35 PM without an approved excuse will count as a tardy.**
- **If you're picking your child up early, please bring photo ID and sign them out in the office.**
- **We ask that all transportation changes be made before 12:00 PM via Parent Square or in writing.**

⚠️ Truancy and Habitual Truancy

Students with 3 unexcused events are considered truant, and students with 6 or more are considered habitually truant under Kentucky law. Our team will always reach out with support and interventions first, but documentation and legal procedures will follow if attendance doesn't improve.

💬 How We'll Support You

- **Automatic calls and texts if your child is marked absent**
- **Letters home when attendance becomes a concern**
- **Personal calls and meetings to create a plan if needed**
- **Compassionate conversations—always**

Bullying

At Julius Marks Elementary, every student has the right to feel safe, respected, and valued. We work hard to build a school culture where kindness is the standard and where problems are solved with care. When someone causes harm repeatedly—through words, actions, or exclusion—that is bullying, and we take it seriously.

💙 Our Stance on Bullying

We define bullying as:

- **Intentional harm**
- **Repeated over time**
- **Involving a real or perceived imbalance of power**

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Physical: Hitting, pushing, kicking, or damaging belongings**
- **Verbal: Name-calling, teasing, threats, or hurtful comments**
- **Social/Relational: Spreading rumors, leaving someone out on purpose, or turning others against a student**
- **Cyberbullying: Sending mean messages or posting harmful content online**

Even a look, gesture, or whisper can cause harm if it makes someone feel unsafe or unwelcome.

⛔ What Happens When Bullying Is Reported

We follow a tiered response system aligned with Fayette County Public Schools' Code of Conduct:

1. **Prevention and Character Education: We teach empathy, conflict resolution, and the power of words through our Character Equations and PBIS (PAWS) expectations.**
2. **Classroom Intervention: Teachers address early signs of conflict through restorative conversations and reteaching.**
3. **Administrative Support: If the behavior continues or is severe, it is referred to the principal or dean.**
4. **Student Assistance Team: A plan may be developed to support both the student harmed and the student causing harm.**
5. **Conferences & Consequences: Families are contacted. Conferences are required if the bullying persists. Appropriate consequences will be assigned.**

All reports are investigated thoroughly and confidentially. We will not tolerate bullying in any form, and we commit to addressing it quickly, fairly, and with compassion for all involved.

✋ How to Report Bullying

We encourage students and families to speak up. Reports can be made:

- **To a teacher, counselor, or administrator**
- **Through a Parent Square message or phone call**
- **Using the district's anonymous reporting tools**

If you or your child need help navigating a conflict or reporting a concern, please know we are here to support you. Our goal is to restore peace, understanding, and safety—while helping every student learn how to treat others with respect.

> **💬 "We rise by lifting others." – Robert Ingersoll**
> **Let's work together to ensure every child feels seen, heard, and protected.**

Cafeteria & Mealtime at JME

At Julius Marks, we believe mealtimes are more than just a chance to eat—they're an opportunity to build community, practice independence, and recharge for learning. Our cafeteria is a welcoming space where every child is encouraged to make healthy choices and feel safe and included.

🥗 Meals at School

- **Breakfast and lunch are available daily to all students.**
- **Students are encouraged to try new foods, take what they need, and eat at their own pace.**
- **Menus are posted monthly and are available online through FCPS Food Services.**

🍎 Food Allergies and Health Needs

If your child has a food allergy, please notify both their teacher and the school nurse.
Julius Marks is a peanut-aware school—we do not serve peanuts in school meals and work with families to minimize risk. We take health concerns seriously and will work with you to create a safe plan for your child.

👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 Visiting for Lunch

We love welcoming families into Julius Marks! If you'd like to eat lunch with your child:

- **Please call the front office to reserve a spot. Space is limited.**
- **Visitors will be seated in our designated family seating area.**
- **Due to safety and allergy concerns, outside food from restaurants is not allowed unless arranged in advance with the office.**

🎉 Celebration Guidelines

We want every student to feel included and celebrated, especially on their birthday! To protect all students and respect health needs:

- **Store-bought snacks only (no homemade items)**
- **No food with peanuts or peanut butter**
- **Treats should be individually packaged**
- **Balloons, flowers, and gifts should not be delivered to school**

Want to do something special for your child's birthday or another occasion? Consider donating a book to the library in their honor or emailing their teacher about a class shout-out!

🍽️ Mealtime Expectations

Our cafeteria follows the same PAWS expectations as the rest of our school:

- **P – Be Prepared: Know your lunch number, make your choices quickly**
- **A – Act Responsibly: Use quiet voices, clean up your area**
- **W – Work and Play Respectfully: Be kind to staff and classmates**
- **S – Solve Problems: Ask for help when you need it**

Students are reminded that lunchtime is a social and respectful environment. Adults are always present to help, supervise, and encourage students to show good character—even while eating!

eOS: Tracking Behavior, Building Belonging

At Julius Marks, we believe behavior is learned, just like reading and math. That's why we teach it clearly, reinforce it positively, and track it consistently. To help us do this, we use a tool called eOS (Education Outcomes System)—a platform created by Fayette County Public Schools to support school-wide expectations, behavior interventions, and student growth.

💻 What Is eOS?

eOS is a digital platform that allows us to:

- **Track daily student behavior**
- **Monitor progress toward PBIS goals**
- **Celebrate positive choices**
- **Support students who need extra help with self-regulation or behavior**
- **Maintain accurate, transparent records**

Each student's behavior data in eOS becomes part of their PAWS Percentage—a daily reflection of how well they are meeting school-wide expectations.

🐾 What Is PAWS Percentage?

Our PAWS Expectations (Prepared, Act responsibly, Work and play respectfully, Solve problems) guide student behavior in every setting. The PAWS Percentage shows:

- **How consistently a student is following expectations**
- **Patterns in behavior over time**
- **Opportunities for praise, support, or intervention**

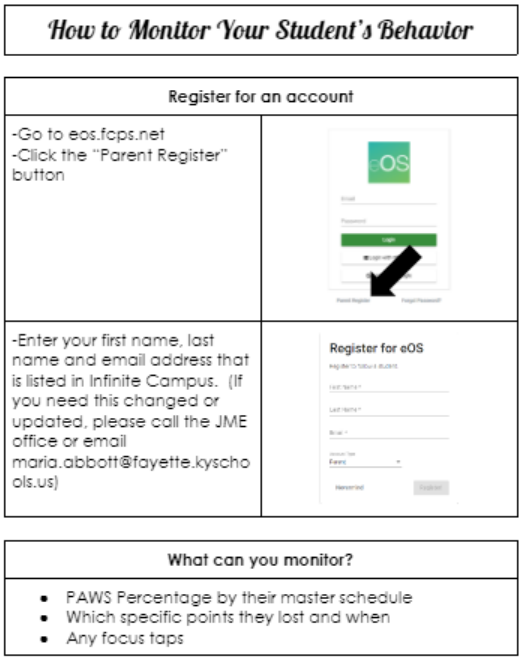
🟦 95% or higher: PAWS Pro!
🟨 80–94%: Making progress—let's keep growing!
🟥 Below 80%: We'll check in, reteach, and offer support

✨ Other Tools in eOS

- **Focus Taps:** Reminders that help students refocus their attention and rejoin learning
- **Positive Points:** Recognition for modeling Character Equations and PAWS
- **Referrals:** Used when a behavior needs additional attention or support
- **Hall Passes:** Digital system to monitor and manage student movement safely

💬 How Families Stay Informed

You'll receive regular updates through Parent Square, and teachers may also communicate about behavior patterns, celebrations, or concerns. If we see patterns that need intervention, we'll reach out to collaborate on next steps. Behavior data in eOS is not just about discipline—it's about connection, consistency, and growth.



How to Monitor Your Student's Behavior

Register for an account	
-Go to eos.fcps.net -Click the "Parent Register" button	
-Enter your first name, last name and email address that is listed in Infinite Campus. (If you need this changed or updated, please call the JME office or email maria.abbott@fayette.kyschools.us)	

What can you monitor?
• PAWS Percentage by their master schedule • Which specific points they lost and when • Any focus taps

At Julius Marks, we know that self-control + purpose = resilience, and eOS helps us teach those skills. We're here to partner with you so that every student can shine in both character and academics.

Discipline at JME: Guiding Behavior, Growing Character

At Julius Marks, we believe discipline isn't about punishment—it's about growth. It's about learning from mistakes, repairing harm, and building the habits that help students thrive both in and out of the classroom.

We use a proactive and responsive approach to behavior that centers on:

- **Clear expectations**
- **Positive reinforcement**
- **Restorative conversations**
- **Consistent support and follow-through**

Our goal is to create a school where every student feels safe, respected, and empowered to make good choices.

🐾 Our Foundation: PAWS Expectations

We teach behavior the same way we teach academics—explicitly, intentionally, and with heart. Our school-wide expectations are:

- **P – Be Prepared for Learning**
- **A – Act Responsibly**
- **W – Work and Play Respectfully**
- **S – Solve Problems**

These expectations are modeled, practiced, and celebrated across all settings. You'll hear your child talk about "PAWS" often—it's part of our shared language for behavior and character!

💙 Our Approach to Behavior Support

Teach First: Expectations are taught, not assumed. We model what respectful behavior looks like in every area of the building.

Positive Reinforcement: Students earn recognition for meeting expectations through eOS, PAWS celebrations, and classroom rewards.

Restorative Conversations: When a student makes a mistake, we seek to repair harm—not just assign a consequence. We ask:

- **What happened? What is your role in the conflict?**
- **Who was affected?**
- **What needs to be done to make things right?**
- **What might be our resolution?**

Tiered Support: Some students may need additional tools to manage behavior. We work with families to build individualized support plans when needed.

⚠️ Serious or Ongoing Behavior

We believe all students deserve a learning environment free from disruption or harm. When severe behaviors occur—or when repeated behaviors interrupt learning—students may be referred to the office or student support team.

Examples of major behaviors include:

- **Physical aggression**
- **Leaving the classroom without permission**
- **Threats or harassment**
- **Stealing, vandalism, or cheating**

Our response may include:

- **Restorative meetings**

- **Family conferences**
- **Behavior intervention plans**
- **Temporary removal from the classroom**
- **Administrative consequences aligned with the FCPS Code of Conduct**

👥 Partnering With Families

You'll always be informed when a significant behavior concern arises. We believe discipline should never be a surprise—it should be a collaboration. Whether your child is struggling or succeeding, we're here to talk through it, learn from it, and keep moving forward.

Because patience + senses = perception, we aim to see the whole child—not just the behavior in the moment.

Family Resource Center: Partnering With Families for Student Success

At Julius Marks, we know that students do best when schools and families work together. That's why we are proud to have a strong Family Resource Center (FRC) that exists to support your family, remove barriers to learning, and connect you to valuable resources in our community.

Our Family Resource Center isn't just a place—it's a *bridge*. It's where care meets action.

👋 Meet Your FRC Coordinator: Hannah Pemberton

Mrs. Pemberton is here to help you and your child thrive. She works closely with our staff and community partners to ensure students have what they need—whether it's school supplies, clothing, food, or support during a tough time.

📞 You can reach the FRC at 859-422-4829.
The office is open during school hours, and messages can be left anytime.

🧭 What the Family Resource Center Offers:

- **Referrals for Food, Housing, and Utility Assistance**
- **Support with Medical, Dental, or Vision Needs**
- **Connections to Counseling and Mental Health Services**
- **Back-to-School Readiness Resources**
- **Holiday Help and Emergency Support**
- **After-School & Summer Program Information**
- **Parent Workshops and Learning Events**
- **Help for Families Experiencing Crisis or Transition**

💙 We're Here for You

No request is too small. Whether you're facing a short-term challenge or need long-term support, the FRC is a judgment-free zone where your family will be treated with compassion and confidentiality.

> **Because at Julius Marks, helpfulness + organization = a strong learning environment—and that includes the *home* environment.**

If you're ever unsure where to turn, start with the FRC. We are one team, one family.

Field Trips: Expanding Learning Beyond the Classroom

🎯 Purpose

All field trips must:

- **Be aligned to grade-level standards**
- **Deepen understanding of a current unit or project**

- **Be inclusive of all students**
- **Create opportunities for real-world learning, reflection, or action**

Field trips are approved by administration and support our belief that joy + focus = learning energy.

📝 Permission Slips & Communication

- **All students must have a signed permission slip to attend. Verbal or phone permissions cannot be accepted unless approved by administration.**
- **Trip details will be communicated through Parent Square well in advance.**
- **Permission slips include key information like destination, time, cost (if any), transportation, and what students need to bring.**

🚌 Transportation and Attendance

- **Students must ride school-provided transportation to and from the field trip—no exceptions.**
- **All students are expected to be present at school before the trip and will return with their class.**
- **Attendance is taken before departure and again upon return to ensure safety.**

Students will not be released from field trips to leave with chaperones or family members unless pre-approved through the front office for extenuating circumstances.

🤝 Chaperones

- **We love having family members involved! To attend a trip, you must be on the approved volunteer list.**
- **All chaperones must complete a background check through Fayette County Public Schools.**

- **Chaperones are expected to model JME behavior expectations and remain with their assigned group at all times.**

Apply to volunteer here:
👉 https://www.fcps.net/volunteer

💙 Equity & Access

If a field trip has a cost, we will never let that be a barrier to participation. Families needing financial support for a trip can confidentially reach out to our Family Resource Center, classroom teacher, or administration.

Every student deserves the opportunity to explore the world—and we'll work together to make sure that happens.

> **Because gentleness + respect = friendship—and we believe that includes how we treat each other *wherever* learning happens.**

Gifted & Talented Education: Nurturing Potential, Fueling Possibility

At Julius Marks, we believe that goodness + skills = ability, and we are committed to identifying and nurturing every student's unique talents. The Gifted and Talented (GT) Program and Primary Talent Pool (PTP) are designed to support students who demonstrate exceptional ability or high potential in one or more areas.

🌱 Primary Talent Pool (PTP): Grades K–3

In primary grades, we use a variety of informal observations and data to identify students who show high potential. Students in the Primary Talent Pool:

- **Receive enrichment opportunities in and beyond the classroom**
- **Are not formally identified as "gifted" yet, but are closely monitored for strengths**
- **May participate in small group experiences, challenges, and exploratory tasks**

Identification in the PTP does not guarantee formal gifted services later, but it ensures we are watching and stretching students early in their learning journey.

🌟 Gifted and Talented Services: Grades 4–5

In Kentucky, students may be identified as gifted in one or more of the following areas:

- **General Intellectual Ability**
- **Specific Academic Aptitude (Math, Reading, Science, etc.)**
- **Creative or Divergent Thinking**
- **Leadership**
- **Visual or Performing Arts**

Identification is based on a body of evidence, including:

- **Formal and informal assessments**
- **Teacher and family nominations**
- **Student work samples**
- **Performance tasks or behavior checklists**

Once identified, students receive Differentiated Services Plans (DSPs) and support through:

- **Cluster grouping**
- **Extension activities and projects**
- **Critical thinking and creative problem-solving**
- **Collaboration with our GT resource teacher**

🤝 Our Commitment to Equity

Giftedness doesn't always look the same, and we are committed to finding and serving students from all backgrounds. We seek to reduce barriers, increase access, and engage families as partners in this process.

If you believe your child may qualify for GT services, reach out to your child's teacher or the GT coordinator to learn more about the screening process and how you can be involved.

At Julius Marks, we believe giftedness is more than a label—it's a launch point. And with the right support, every child can soar.

Parent Conferences & Classroom Visits: Partnering With Purpose

At Julius Marks, we believe that education is a team effort, and Families are our most important partners. Whether you're checking in on progress, attending a conference, or visiting your child's classroom, we want every experience at JME to reflect our belief that kindness + understanding = responsibility.

🤝 Parent-Teacher Conferences

We offer two formal conferences each year—one in the fall and one in the spring. These are important opportunities to:

- **Review your child's academic progress and strengths**
- **Set goals together for continued growth**
- **Ask questions and share insights from home**

In addition to scheduled conferences, teachers are happy to meet with you at any point in the year. Communication is most effective when it's proactive and planned, so we ask that all meetings be scheduled in advance. Conferences may be held:

- **In person**
- **By phone**
- **Virtually via Microsoft Teams**

To schedule, reach out to your child's teacher directly or message through Parent Square.

👋 Classroom Visits

Families are welcome at Julius Marks! However, to protect instructional time and ensure safety for all students, we ask that classroom visits follow these guidelines:

- **All visitors must check in at the front office and wear a visitor badge**
- **Classroom visits should be scheduled with the teacher in advance**
- **Visits are typically limited to 30 minutes so teachers can remain focused on student instruction**
- **Visitors should not interrupt or engage students or staff during lessons**

If you'd like to observe a particular subject or learning activity, we'd love to make that happen—just coordinate with the teacher in advance.

📅 Drop-Off and Morning Expectations

We know mornings can feel rushed, but we kindly ask:

- **Please do not enter classrooms at drop-off unless you've scheduled a visit**
- **Teachers need this time to connect with students and prepare for a successful day**

If you need to speak with your child's teacher, send a message through Parent Square or request a time for a conversation. We are always open to connecting—you are never a bother!

> **Because when care + safety = stability, the best learning happens—and that includes caring for our relationships with Families.**

Medical Information: Caring for the Whole Child

At Julius Marks, we know that students do their best when they feel their best. We're committed to creating a safe, healthy environment where every child is supported physically, emotionally, and academically.

If your child has medical needs—short-term or ongoing—we are here to help. Our school nurse and front office team work closely with Families to ensure that care is consistent and confidential.

💊 Medication at School

If your child needs to take medication during the school day, please follow these guidelines:

- **All medications must be brought to school by an adult.**
- **Prescription medications must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container.**
- **A written authorization form signed by a parent/guardian is required.**
- **We cannot give over-the-counter medications (like Tylenol, cough drops, or allergy meds) unless we receive:**
    - **A doctor's note stating the reason and dosage**
    - **The medication in its original, unopened container**

If your child needs an emergency medication (like an inhaler or EpiPen), please alert the nurse immediately so we can create a plan to keep your child safe and protected.

🧼 Common Health Concerns

Head Lice:

Lice happen—and it's okay. If your child has lice, they must be treated at home before returning to class. The school nurse will check your child before reentry. We follow Health Department guidelines and will support you through the process with compassion and discretion.

Communicable Illnesses (e.g., pink eye, strep, flu, etc.):
If your child has a diagnosed illness, they must stay home until they have started treatment and are symptom-free for 24 hours without medication.

Injuries, Illness, or Accidents at School:
If your child becomes ill or injured while at school:

- **We will call you or your listed emergency contact immediately.**

- **If the situation is urgent, we will call emergency services (911).**
- **Please make sure we always have updated contact information on file.**

⚠️ When to Reach Out

Please let us know:

- **If your child has a new diagnosis (e.g., asthma, seizures, diabetes, allergies)**
- **If there are health changes that affect learning or attendance**
- **If you need help with health care resources—we're here for that, too**

Our Family Resource Center can help with needs like lice treatment kits, vision referrals, or dental care access. Don't hesitate to ask.

At JME, we believe that care + safety = stability—and we promise to treat every child with the same care we'd want for our own.

Report Cards: Tracking Growth, Celebrating Progress

At Julius Marks, we believe that learning is a journey—not a race. Our goal is to give you a clear, honest picture of your child's academic growth and character development throughout the year. Report cards are just one way we communicate about that journey, and we want them to be meaningful and easy to understand.

📅 When Are Report Cards Sent Home?

Quarterly, at the end of each nine-week grading period

You will receive a printed report and/or a digital version depending on your preference

Teachers will also communicate progress during Parent Conferences and may provide updates through Parent Square throughout the quarter

🧠 What's on the Report Card?

In grades K-5, we use standards-based grading to reflect your child's progress toward mastering key skills and concepts. You'll see language like:

- **E – Exceeds Standard**
- **M – Meets Standard**
- **A – Approaching**
- **N/A – Not yet assessed**

> **Report cards are a tool for reflection, not a final verdict. They help us understand what your child knows now and what they're ready to learn next.**

💬 Let's Talk About It

We encourage all Families to:

- **Review report cards with your child and celebrate progress**
- **Talk about areas where effort and persistence are needed**
- **Reach out to your child's teacher with any questions or to schedule a follow-up conversation**

You are not alone in this journey—we are here to help you understand the learning targets and support your child at home.

🎯 Aligned With the Portrait of a Graduate

Our report cards reflect more than academic content—they connect to key skills like:

- **Communication**
- **Critical thinking**
- **Collaboration**

- **Responsibility**
- **Growth mindset**

Because joy + focus = learning energy, we celebrate growth—not just grades.

Volunteering at JME: All Hands, One Heart

At Julius Marks, we believe that schools are strongest when Families feel empowered to contribute. Whether you're reading with a student, chaperoning a trip, organizing a celebration, or simply offering a helping hand—we welcome your involvement with gratitude.

Volunteers are an essential part of our school community, and every act of service helps us build a school where students thrive.

🧭 How to Become a Volunteer

To ensure the safety of all students, all volunteers must:

1. **Complete a Fayette County Public Schools background check**
2. **Submit the volunteer application found at:**
   👉 https://www.fcps.net/volunteer
3. **Review the Volunteer Handbook and agree to confidentiality and safety expectations**

You'll receive confirmation once you're approved and added to our volunteer list.

👩‍🏫 What Volunteers Might Do

- **Help in the classroom (reading, organizing, small groups)**
- **Assist with school events or projects**
- **Support teachers with materials prep or bulletin boards**
- **Serve as a chaperone on field trips**
- **Volunteer in the library or during lunch**

- **Lead or support PTA activities**
- **Offer your unique gifts and talents—we love creativity!**

Big or small, every role matters. Volunteering is not about time—it's about connection.

💙 What You Can Expect

We'll always:

- **Make sure you know your role and feel supported**
- **Respect your time and availability**
- **Celebrate and thank you often**
- **Keep student safety and confidentiality as our top priorities**

Our goal is that every volunteer experience reflects the best of JME: respectful, joyful, and student-centered.

Title I at JME: Equity in Action, Every Child Empowered

Julius Marks is proud to be a Title I school, which means we receive federal funding to help ensure that every student—no matter their background—has access to a high-quality education. This funding allows us to provide additional supports, resources, and opportunities for students and Families.

But Title I is more than a funding source. It's a commitment—to equity, excellence, and family partnership.

🧭 What Does Title I Funding Support at JME?

Small group instruction to support reading and math growth

Instructional coaches and intervention teachers

Classroom materials that enhance learning

Professional development for teachers

Family engagement events and workshops

Technology and resources to support access at home

🗒️ The Title I Family-School Compact

Each year, Families, teachers, and students sign a Title I Learning Compact that outlines how we'll work together to support student success.

It reflects shared commitments:

- **Families agree to stay involved, support learning at home, and communicate regularly.**
- **Teachers commit to high expectations, differentiated instruction, and strong home-school partnerships.**
- **Students pledge to try their best, ask for help, and take responsibility for their learning.**

> **This compact is a promise we make to one another, built on trust, communication, and shared responsibility.**

💬 We're In This Together

As a Title I school, we are expected to:

- **Keep families informed about your rights, school progress, and how Title I funds are used**
- **Offer opportunities for Families to give feedback and be involved in decisions**
- **Provide language access and support to all families**

And at Julius Marks—we don't just meet those expectations, we embrace them. Because self-control + purpose = resilience, and we believe that partnership is the most powerful tool we have.

Student Dress Code: Dressing for Comfort, Confidence & Success

At Julius Marks, we want students to feel confident, comfortable, and ready to learn. We believe that clothing should support focus, safety, and self-expression—without becoming a distraction.

Our dress expectations are designed to protect learning time, ensure safety, and reflect our core belief that care + safety = stability.

👕 What's Expected

Students may wear:

- **Slacks, jeans, sweatpants that fit at the waist**
- **Shorts, skirts, or dresses at or below mid-thigh**
- **Leggings with a top that covers to mid-thigh**
- **Shirts, tops, or blouses that fully cover the chest, stomach, and shoulders**
- **Closed-toe shoes for active learning and PE**

🚫 What's Not Allowed

To keep our environment safe and focused, please avoid:

- **Crop tops, tube tops, halter tops, or mesh/see-through clothing**
- **Hats, hoodies pulled over the head, sunglasses indoors (except with a medical need)**
- **Shorts or skirts above mid-thigh**
- **Pajamas (unless it's a special spirit day!)**
- **Shoes with wheels, heels, or open toes on PE days**
- **Clothing with profanity, alcohol/drugs, or violent or inappropriate messages**
- **Jeans with holes above mid-thigh**

We ask that students avoid clothing that would distract from learning or make others feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

💡 Need Support?

If your child needs help accessing school-appropriate clothing, please reach out to our Family Resource Center. We will always offer support with care and respect—never judgment.

Our goal is not to call students out, but to lift them up.

> **Because when students feel comfortable, safe, and respected, they can focus on what matters most: learning, relationships, and growth.**

Safety Drills: Practicing Calm, Staying Safe

At Julius Marks, student safety is always our top priority. We believe that when students know what to do in an emergency, they feel more confident and secure. That's why we practice a variety of safety drills throughout the year—to prepare, not to scare.

These drills help us respond quickly and calmly in the unlikely event of a real emergency.

🔥 Fire Drills

- **Held monthly per state regulation**
- **Students practice calmly exiting the building using designated routes**
- **Every classroom has a posted exit map**
- **Staff check attendance and support students at all times**

🌪️ Severe Weather / Tornado Drills

- **Students move to designated safe areas (typically interior hallways or the gym)**
- **They are taught how to duck, cover, and protect their heads**
- **Conducted several times each year—especially during storm seasons**

🌍 Earthquake Drills

- **Students practice Drop, Cover, and Hold On**
- **These drills are brief but important—especially in Kentucky, where earthquakes are rare but possible**

🔒 Lockdown / Intruder Drills

- **These drills are designed to prepare students, not frighten them**
- **Teachers calmly explain procedures beforehand**
- **Students learn how to stay quiet, hidden, and safe if there is ever a danger inside the building**
- **We conduct at least one lockdown drill per year in coordination with FCPS Law Enforcement and local police**

We always explain drills in age-appropriate language, and staff are trained to keep students calm and reassured throughout.

💬 How We Talk About Drills

We never want students to feel afraid. We say things like:

> **"Just like we practice fire drills to be safe, we practice other drills too—so that we all know exactly what to do. Practicing helps us stay calm and take care of each other."**

If your child feels worried after a drill, please let their teacher or our school counselor know—we are here to support them.

> **Because care + preparation = confidence, and every child deserves to feel safe at school.**

School Property: Respecting Our Space, Protecting Our Community

Julius Marks is more than a school—it's a shared space where students, staff, and Families come together to learn, grow, and connect. Just like we take care of each other, we also take care of our building, materials, and spaces. Respecting school property is an important part of showing pride in our learning community.

🧱 What We Expect

Students are expected to:

- **Treat desks, books, technology, and classroom materials with care**
- **Avoid writing on or damaging school surfaces**
- **Use materials and furniture as intended**
- **Report any accidental damage to a teacher or staff member**

We teach students that taking care of school property shows responsibility, respect, and readiness—key traits of a Julius Marks Jaguar.

🚫 What Happens If Property Is Damaged

In accordance with FCPS policy and Kentucky law:

- **Students who intentionally damage or deface school property may face disciplinary consequences**
- **Parents/guardians may be held financially responsible for the cost of repairs or replacement (KRS 405.015)**
- **In serious cases, the school is required to report the incident to law enforcement**

This includes damage to:

- **Classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, lockers, or playground equipment**
- **Technology such as Chromebooks or iPads**
- **Personal property belonging to school staff or other students**

🛠️ Accidents Happen—We Understand!

If something breaks, we ask students to be honest and tell an adult. We believe in using mistakes as learning opportunities. Our first response is always to talk, teach, and restore, not shame or blame.

> **Because goodness + skills = ability, and one of the most important skills is knowing how to take care of what we're given.**

Special Area Classes: Learning Through Movement, Music, Art, and More

At Julius Marks, we believe that every child deserves opportunities to create, explore, perform, and discover. Our Special Area classes are an essential part of our commitment to whole-child development. These classes spark joy, build confidence, and grow lifelong skills that go far beyond the classroom.

Each student rotates through a variety of specials on a 4 day rotation and Library for 30 minutes each week.

🎨 Art

In art class, students explore creativity through drawing, painting, sculpture, and mixed media. They study art history, elements of design, and express their ideas visually. Art builds critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to see beauty in the world and themselves.

📚 Library / Media

Our library is the heart of JME! Students learn to research, read with purpose, and develop a love of books. They explore digital tools, participate in events like Book Fair's and enjoy time to grow as readers and thinkers. Our goal is to create lifelong learners and curious minds.

🧪 STEM Lab

In science, students become investigators. They conduct experiments, use scientific tools, analyze data, and explore real-world applications. Science lessons are hands-on and inquiry-based, aligned with national and state standards, and designed to ignite curiosity and foster evidence-based thinking.

🎶 Music

In music class, students learn rhythm, melody, and expression through singing, instruments, movement, and performance. They explore musical traditions from around the world and learn how music connects people, tells stories, and builds emotion. Music fosters joy, confidence, and community.

🏃‍♀️ Physical Education (PE)

PE helps students develop coordination, teamwork, and lifelong fitness habits. Through games, challenges, and skill-building, students learn how to move safely and have fun while doing it. On PE days, students must wear:

- **Tennis shoes**
- **Comfortable clothing that allows for physical movement**

PE is more than just play—it's about learning how to take care of your body and your mindset.

💙 Character Through Specials

Our Special Area teachers weave in JME's PAWS expectations and Character Equations throughout their lessons. Whether students are learning about tempo or teamwork, they're practicing respect, responsibility, creativity, and care.

PTA: Partners in Every Step

The Julius Marks PTA (Parent Teacher Association) is one of the strongest support systems for our school. Our PTA is made up of parents, caregivers, teachers, and staff who work together to enhance the educational experience for all students.

Whether you're attending a meeting, helping at an event, or donating your time or resources, your involvement matters.

💙 What PTA Does

- **Organizes school events like Fall Festival, Spirit Nights, and Staff Appreciation Week**
- **Funds classroom supplies, field trips, and enrichment activities**
- **Hosts family engagement events that build school spirit and connection**
- **Supports student celebrations, incentives, and programs**
- **Advocates for school needs and district-wide improvements**

📝 How You Can Join

It's easy! PTA memberships are open to any adult who wants to support JME. You can:

- **Join during back-to-school events**
- **Sign up online through our PTA portal**
- **Volunteer for events or donate directly to support programs**

There's no pressure to attend every meeting. Your support in any capacity helps students feel seen, celebrated, and supported.

🤝 Meetings & Communication

PTA holds regular meetings throughout the year, both in-person and virtually. Follow our PTA on Parent Square or through school newsletters for announcements, event sign-ups, and updates.

School Closings & Weather Alerts: Stay In the Know

FCPS may close or delay school due to inclement weather, emergencies, or other district-wide situations. When this happens, communication will be made quickly and clearly through multiple channels.

❄️ **Where You'll Hear First**

FCPS website: www.fcps.net

Local TV/radio stations

FCPS Call/Text System: Make sure your contact info is updated!

Parent Square: We'll post and send alerts ASAP

Social Media: Follow Julius Marks and FCPS on Facebook & Twitter

⏰ Possible Schedule Changes

NTI (Non-Traditional Instruction) Days: Students will work from home using digital tools or paper packets

1-Hour or 2-Hour Delay: School opens later; arrival and dismissal times will shift

Early Dismissal: Be sure emergency contacts are up to date in case of unexpected closings

🧤 **Weather-Ready Kids**

Help your child dress for the weather with coats, gloves, and appropriate shoes—especially during cold and rainy seasons. Outdoor recess will continue unless temperatures or conditions are unsafe.

Because prepared + informed = calm and confident kids and Families who can breathe easy.

Speech & Language Services: Helping Every Voice Be Heard

At Julius Marks, we believe that every child deserves to be understood and heard. Our Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) supports students with communication needs so they can participate fully in learning and life.

🗣️ **What Speech & Language Services Support**

Articulation (speech sounds)

Language (understanding and using words)

Fluency (stuttering or flow of speech)

Voice (pitch, volume, or quality)

Social communication (pragmatic language skills)

🧠 How Students Qualify

Speech and language services are part of Special Education under an Individualized Education Program (IEP). If a student is struggling to communicate or be understood, the process includes:

1. **Teacher or parent referral**
2. **Evaluation by the SLP**
3. **Team decision-making and family input**
4. **Development of an IEP with goals and services if needed**

These services help students express ideas, connect with others, and feel confident participating in class.

🤝 Working With Families

Our SLP collaborates closely with caregivers to:

- **Share strategies for home**

- **Track progress**
- **Make speech work fun and functional**

We believe that patience + senses = perception—and every student deserves to be heard and understood.

Telephone Use: Staying Connected, Prioritizing Learning

We know it's important to stay in touch with your child—and we'll always help you do that when it's needed. But to protect learning time and minimize distractions, student phone use during the day is limited.

📵 **Student Cell Phones & Smart Devices**

We strongly recommend that students leave phones at home

If a phone must be brought to school, it must be:

- **Turned off and**
- **Given to the teacher each morning**

Devices will be kept safely stored and returned at dismissal

If a student is found using a device during the day, it may be confiscated and returned only to a parent/guardian.

☎️ Calling the School

You may call the main office at 859-422-3470 any time during the school day.

- **For transportation changes, please notify the office before 12:00 PM**
- **For urgent messages, we will deliver them directly to your child**

📲 Student Use of the Office Phone

Students may request to use the school phone in the front office for:

- **Forgotten lunch or homework**
- **Illness or injury (after checking with the nurse)**
- **Emergencies**

We work to teach independence, so we help students problem-solve first and call when necessary.

> **Because self-control + purpose = resilience, and phones should empower—not distract—our students.**

Transportation, Arrival & Dismissal: Safe Routines, Smooth Transitions

Creating calm and consistent transitions helps our students start and end the day with confidence. Whether your child walks, rides the bus, or is dropped off by car, we want them to feel safe, supported, and seen.

🚌 Bus Riders

- **Bus routes and stop times are managed by FCPS Transportation**
  👉 Visit www.fcps.net/transportation or call 859-422-3855
- **Students must follow PAWS expectations on the bus:**
  - **Prepared to ride safely**
  - **Act responsibly (stay seated, use kind words)**
  - **Work and play respectfully**
  - **Solve problems by asking for help when needed**
- **Bus riders will load and unload at designated areas with staff support**

> **Riding the bus is a privilege. Repeated behavior violations may lead to temporary suspension from bus service.**

🚗 Car Riders

- **Morning drop-off is from 7:15–7:45 AM**
    - **Please pull all the way forward in the car line**
    - **Students must exit from the passenger side only**

- **Afternoon pick-up begins at 2:35 PM**
    - **Have your car tag visible**
    - **Remain in your car—staff will bring your child to you**
- **For safety, no early dismissals after 2:00 PM**

Staff are on duty to help—but please be patient and alert. Safety is our top priority.

🚶 Walkers & Bike Riders

- **Students who walk or bike to school must use sidewalks and crosswalks**
- **Walkers are dismissed after buses and car riders to avoid traffic**
- **Please remind your child to head straight home unless other arrangements are made**

✏️ Transportation Changes

- **Must be submitted before 12:00 PM through Parent Square or a written note**
- **For emergency changes after 12:00 PM, call the office**

Water Bottles: Hydrated Kids Learn Best

Students are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle each day. Hydration supports focus, energy, and wellness—and we want to make it easy!

- **Only plain water is allowed in classrooms (no juice, Gatorade, or soft drinks)**
- **Water fountains and refill stations are available throughout the building**
- **Please label your child's bottle with their first and last name**

If your child forgets a bottle, we'll offer a cup or help them access water during the day.

Final Thoughts: A School That Sees Every Child

We believe that every child deserves to be seen, celebrated, and supported.
That's the Julius Marks way.

As you read through this handbook, we hope you feel our values shine through:

- **Clarity in our expectations**
- **Compassion in our communication**
- **Consistency in how we care for kids**

We believe in building a school that's not just *for* students and Families—but *with* them. You are a vital part of the JME journey, and we're honored to walk it with you. Welcome to the 2025–26 School Year. Let's make it unforgettable.
We see you. We value you. You belong here.


I see
ME
Julius Marks
ELEMENTARY
at JME
I belong. I contribute. I matter.