

JERKINS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

Message from the Director

Dear JLA Parents and Students

The Jerkins Leadership Academy is committed to providing our students with an exceptional education, inspiring and fostering their passion for their academic studies. The safety, success, and wellbeing of our students depends on the mutual understanding between parents, students, faculty/staff, and school administration regarding the policies and procedures that have been outlined in this Handbook.

This Handbook can never address all situations and circumstances which may arise throughout the school year, but is intended to articulate the broad range of expectations to which we hold our students accountable. This Handbook can be modified at any time to adapt to new circumstances, conform to new Board policies or State legislation, or address changing needs of the school. Please make sure to check the revision and date on the front cover to ensure that you have the latest edition.

It is critical that students and parents read this Handbook carefully and discuss any questions or need for clarification. Signing and returning the acknowledgement form indicates that our students and families fully understand the expectations outlined in this Handbook and agree to adhere to them. I look forward to an outstanding 2023-2024 academic year and thank you for your commitment to supporting our school's mission.

Best Regards,

*Ernestine Mitchell
Director, Jerkins Leadership Academy*

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Jerkins Leadership Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, national/ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability in its programs, activities, admissions and employment practices.

Notice of Implied Agreement

The registration of a student at JLA is deemed to be an agreement on his or her part, and on the part of the parents or guardians, to comply fully with all policies, rules and regulations of the school. JLA reserves the right to revise its policies, rules, and regulations at any time.

Board of Directors

JLA is governed by a Board of Directors that has general supervisory control and authority over operations. Directors' selection is based on personal and professional background and a commitment to the school's mission, support, and sustainability.

Ernestine Mitchell – Administrator/Director

Catherine Love – Director

Adrienne Kendrick – Secretary

Helen Blue – Treasurer

Purpose

The purpose of Alternative Education is to accommodate behavioral and academic needs of children and adolescents which cannot be adequately addressed in a traditional school environment. In addition, Alternative Education provides direct social, emotional, and behavior management instruction to students.

Mission

The mission of the Alternative Education Program is to promote academic success, modify behavior, and facilitate employability and functional skills attainment, as well as to support career and character education development in an environment that differs from the traditional school setting and offers a more conducive setting for learning. Through ongoing direct instruction, guidance and monitoring, students will be provided support with the goal of returning the student to a comprehensive school environment with the necessary abilities to function therein

ORIENTATION/ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Before any student can be enrolled at Jerkins Leadership Academy, he/she (accompanied by parent/guardian) must attend the orientation and enrollment session. Orientation sessions will be scheduled by the administrator. Students and parents/guardians should be prepared to stay at least 30 minutes to 1 hour. During this session information will be provided on Jerkins Leadership Academy and enrollment forms completed. A course of study plan will be established to meet the individual needs of each student. This plan will be developed with input from the administrator and advisement from the referring school.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

Enrollment procedures have been established for student referrals in order for a student to be accepted into the JLA. Each enrolled student will have an Individualized Instructional Plan (IIP) stating the objectives to be mastered for each course with additional objectives intended to assist the student to achieve successful learning experiences and modified social behavior that will entitle him/her and in order to graduate.

PLACEMENT CRITERIA

The principal shall require verification from the appropriate home school guidance counselor that a student referred is suitable for placement

Detailed information from the home school should be provided and include the following:

- academic reports
- attendance reports
- copies of requested cumulative records
- counseling reports
- counselor referral
- detailed report surrounding the disciplinary infraction
- Due Process information
- emergency information
- IIP or IEP if student is receiving special education services
- manifestation determination results and minutes
- other behavioral/disciplinary reports
- parental
- test data

SCHOOL OPERATION

School hours: School starts at 8:30 and ends at 2:00. The doors are open from 8:00 a.m. and students are expected to be picked up no later than 2:15. Any events requiring alterations in this should be approved by staff or the administrator. Students are provided direct supervision during the hours of 8:00 to 2:15 and during club activities. Before teachers leave for the day, they are expected to have their lesson plan for the following day completed, classroom fully stocked (trash bags, paper towels, toilet paper, forks/spoons/plates, other teaching materials as needed), and classroom/bathroom is to be clean and presentable.

LUNCH

The Jerkins Leadership Academy is unable to host a traditional pay-as-you-go school lunch program. Students should bring a packed lunch or use our pre-ordered catered lunch.

Students have access to microwave ovens to reheat packed lunches.

COMMUNICATION WITH JLA STAFF

If it is necessary to contact someone by phone, please call the main office at 850-371-5119

If you have a question or concern about a class, it is important to first reach out to the classroom teacher who has information and context about their classroom, content and assignments.

Please allow two business days for an email response from faculty and staff. There is no expectation that faculty and staff will respond to email over the weekend or on school holidays

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/INFORMATION

A parent or guardian should contact the school Administrator at jerkinsleadershipacademy.com to report any changes in a student's address or contact information.

VISITORS

All visitors must enter the building only via the main office and must check in on arrival. All visitors must have a clear purpose for being in the building and must wear a visitor's badge at all times.

Please note that JLA does not permit any student visitors other than JLA graduates.

VOLUNTEERS

JLA recognizes and encourages the involvement of volunteers to advance the school's mission. Examples of volunteer roles at JLA include:

- Substitute Teachers

To comply with federal and state laws, and JLA policy, all JLA volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Information Form and sign a Confidentiality Agreement.

Volunteers who will have regular contact with students (“designated volunteers”) will be additionally required to have a background and criminal records check.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Attendance

Student attendance and participation is directly correlated with student success. Students who participate are able to access curriculum content and instruction while developing their skills as learners. As such, **attendance** is an important aspect to ensure that all students achieve as much as possible. Therefore, JLA has a policy, which states that a child can have only nine unexcused absences in a semester. Unexcused absences are considered absences that are not accompanied by a doctor's note. It is also noted that many of the students come to JLA with a varied life situation and that the overall picture of the child's circumstances is taken into account. Therefore, the following policy will be followed regard attendance:

Absences

JLA faculty and staff understand that absences are necessary in many life situations. Please see below for detailed information about attendance.

Excused Absences

- Illness
- Recovery from an accident
- Required court attendance
- Medical and dental appointments
- Death in the family
- Observation or celebration of religious holidays
- Such other good cause as may be acceptable to the Director or permitted by law

Unexcused Absences

- Refusal to participate in school
- Skipping classes

Any absence that has not been reported by a parent or guardian will be considered an unexcused absence.

Notification of Absences or Tardiness

Parents or adult students should report absences to EMAIL with student's name and reason for absence.

Non-participation in School Events Due to Absence

Students who are absent from school are not permitted to attend school events on the day of the absence. This includes club activities and school sponsored events.

Students who refuse participation in the school day, classes and activities, will need to be picked up by a parent or guardian.

Dismissals

There are a variety of reasons for which a student might be dismissed prior to the end of the school day. Students may only be dismissed by the Teacher or Administrator.

Early Dismissals

A parent, guardian, or previously authorized individual must come into the main office to have students dismissed. Parents can authorize another person to pick up their child by emailing jerkinsleadershipacademy.com well prior to the intended dismissal time.

Illness Dismissals

If the student needs to leave early due to illness, the student should communicate with the Teacher will make arrangements for pick up. **Students should not use their cell phones to contact their parents about dismissal due to illness without first communicating with the Teacher.**

Pick-Up by Car

Students being picked up by car must wait in the designated area in front of the school and take direction from the staff on duty as to when to walk and/or wait.

Extended Absences

JLA allows for flexibility in our attendance policy to account for vacations and important family events. It is important to note due to the convenience of FLVS students may complete assignments at home utilizing their laptops or computers. Students will have time to complete in person courses when they return to school, but teachers are not required to give assignments in advance and do not reteach material/instruction that was covered during the vacation absence.

School Cancellations & Delayed Openings/Early Release

All closings, delays, or early release decisions will be communicated in the following ways, as soon a decision has been made:

- Automated phone call to families
- A notification will be posted on JLA website
- Email to students and parents
- Posting on official school social media accounts

As safety is always the most important, parents and students are encouraged to use their own discretion when commuting to JLA during inclement weather. Absences due to unsafe road or travel conditions are considered "excused."

Emergency Early Closure

If inclement weather or another situation occurring **during a school day** necessitates an emergency closure of the school, the following actions will occur. Every effort will be made to reach all parents in a timely manner.

- A notification will be posted on JLA website
- An email will be sent to all parents' email addresses on file
- Phone calls will be made to all families via the automated call system.

JLA requests that all students be picked up at the time stated in any emergency early dismissal notice. In a situation warranting an emergency early dismissal, we cannot jeopardize the safety of staff members by asking them to remain in the building. If you are unable to pick-up your child by the stated time, please arrange for someone else to do so and notify the school of the arrangement.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

JLA is a community built on kindness and respect. JLA sets high expectations for student learning and behavior.

Learning and Consequences

At times, it is necessary and appropriate for JLA administration to enforce consequences as a response to a student's choice, action, and/or behavior. Whenever possible, education and restriction of non-academic community activities are used to help students learn from their mistakes in a safe environment. We understand consequences that enforce rules, while empowering student knowledge, ownership, empathy, and responsibility are more meaningful in their growth and personal development.

When a student's behavior disrupts the learning environment of others in the classroom or the school community, JLA faculty and administration may take the following actions as a response to student behavior:

- Faculty Redirection
- Removal from classroom
- Education to promote growth and accountability for words and choices
- Parent Meeting
- Lunch Detention
- Loss of Privileges/Restriction
- In-School Suspension
- Out-of-School Suspension

Expulsion

Expulsion is reserved for the most extreme circumstances and is determined by the Board of Directors after review of the infraction(s) and consultation with the Director and appropriate JLA staff. The student will serve out-of-school suspension during the time frame expulsion is under consideration. The student and their parents/ guardians will be granted a hearing by the Director and Board of Directors. If expulsion is determined to be necessary and appropriate, the Board of Directors (or their designee) shall notify the parents/guardians in writing of the reason(s) for expulsion and shall file a copy of the notification in the student's permanent school record.

Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use

JLA has a zero tolerance regarding the use, possession, sale, distribution, or manufacturing of alcohol, drugs or tobacco on school grounds.

Drugs are defined to include, but not limited to:

- Any controlled substance prohibited by law
- Any beverage containing alcohol
- Any prescription or over-the-counter drug, with the exception of those authorized by parent/guardians
- Hallucinogenic substances of any kind
- Inhalants
- Tobacco or vaping products

JLA Administration and/or Board of Directors will deal directly with students responsible for violating this policy and appropriate disciplinary action will be administered. Student discipline may include suspension and/or expulsion. All cases will also be referred to the proper authorities.

Bullying

“Bullying” is defined as a single significant incident or a pattern of incidents involving a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another pupil which:

- Physically harms a pupil or damages the pupil’s property
- Causes emotional distress to a pupil
- Interferes with a pupil’s educational opportunities
- Creates a hostile educational environment
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.
- (Or any combination of the above)

Bullying shall include actions motivated by an imbalance of power based on a pupil’s actual or perceived personal characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs or motivated by the pupil’s association with another person and based on the other person’s characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs.

“Cyberbullying” is any conduct that is defined as “bullying” within this policy that is undertaken through the use of electronic devices including , but not limited to, telephones, cellular phones, computers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, mobile apps, or websites.

JLA will not tolerate any form of bullying. The Board of Directors has outlined the definition of bullying as well as the procedure that is followed by administration for investigations and interventions.

Each year, parents and students will be required to **acknowledge** that they have read and understand the policy.

JLA reserves the right to address bullying and/or cyberbullying, and impose discipline for bullying and/or cyberbullying that: occurs on, or is delivered to, school property or a school-sponsored activity or event on or off school property; or occurs off of school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity or event, if the conduct interferes with a pupil’s educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operations of the school or school-sponsored activity or event.

during class unless the device is being used for educational/academic purposes and approved by the teacher, or for medical purposes with the school nurse’s permission.

Music players/apps (with earphones) may be used during free time or when permitted by individual instructors. The volume MUST be inaudible to surrounding students and school staff.

Faculty or staff may confiscate any of these devices from students if they are misused. Students may pick up devices at the end of the day. In some cases, the devices may only be returned to parents.

Due to privacy and safety issues, at no time are students allowed to use the camera function on their cell phones to photograph or record other students or faculty. Students are not permitted to set up wi-fi hotspots with their phone or device, bypassing the federally-mandated firewall.

JLA is not responsible for items which are lost, stolen, or damaged.

Computer and Internet Use

Students are expected to use technology to assist and further their educational experience at JLA. Yearly, parents will fill out a form acknowledging that they as well as their student(s) have read and understand the agreement.

JLA does not permit computer gaming during class time or study hall time. Students are permitted to play games during their lunch breaks, before and after school, if those games do not use the school network. Students are not permitted to play “first person shooter games” or games with violent content while at the school building.

JLA Administration will determine consequences appropriate for the violations listed above ranging from loss of privileges/restriction, removal of the device to be picked up by a parent, or further action depending on the seriousness of the behavior and the impact on equipment and/or learning environment of others.

The following are examples of unacceptable computer/internet use:

- Misusing school computers
- Sending or displaying messages or pictures that are offensive or intimidating
- Using another individual’s device, passwords, changing school passwords, or attempting to manipulate the operating system
- Tampering with network computer equipment or any school hardware related to the school’s computer network
- Accessing or attempting to gain access to unauthorized or blocked files and websites
- Violating copyright laws by unauthorized copying of software, e.g. pirated software
- Streaming or intentionally over-using school bandwidth
- Using the school’s network system for personal commercial purposes

Dress Code

All clothing worn to school should be appropriate for the learning environment at JLA. Based upon the guidelines below, judgments related to unacceptable clothing shall be made by the administration, and those judgments are not subject to discussion.

The intent of this dress code is not to interfere with the free exercise of religion, and JLA shall grant appropriate exceptions to this policy for matters of religious exercise which do not create a risk to public health or safety.

The JLA dress code is in effect at all times that school is in session, including mid-year and final exams, and at all school functions.

Dress code violations will be referred to the main office. Parents may be contacted and asked to bring appropriate attire for the child, so that he or she may return to class. If dress code violations continue, students will be asked to bring an extra set of appropriate clothing to be stored at school.

- Clothing must conform to all other JLA rules and to state and federal health and safety regulations.
- Closed toe shoes must be worn in lab classes.
- Acceptable shorts or skirts must not show undergarments
- The following are prohibited: visible undergarments, strapless clothing, clothing/accessories displaying or glorifying violence, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, profanity or sexual content.
- Sunglasses are not to be worn in the school building unless the student has a medical need and documentation.
- Masks or hoods that cover a student's whole face are not permitted.

Food Service/Lunch

JLA is unable to host a traditional pay-as-you-go school lunch program. Students should bring a packed lunch. Students have access to microwave ovens to reheat packed lunches.

Food in Classrooms/Café

Due to increasing numbers of students with serious, even life-threatening food allergies, JLA continues to manage potential site contamination. During lunch periods, there will be a marked nut-free table and microwave in the cafeteria.

All students will participate in cleaning their spaces of food trash and wiping the tables down at the end of lunch.

Students are not permitted to eat in the classroom. Students may only eat in designated areas (lounge and banquet hall). Individual student water bottles are highly encouraged. Students will not have access to water fountains but will have access to bottled water or water fill station. Glass water bottles are not allowed. Students are not permitted to bring glass containers of any kind for food and drink.

Leaving School Grounds

Students under the age of 18 are not to leave school property during school hours. Violation of this will result in disciplinary action which may include loss of privileges, restriction, and parents will be notified.

Students who do not return to school, return late to class, or abuse this privilege may have this privilege revoked by school administration or the student's parents.

Students who drive themselves to school may sign out at the main office for medical appointments, internships, employment, etc. **with written permission from a parent or guardian.**

Physical Contact

Students are expected to respect and good judgment regarding their personal boundaries and actions. Rough physical contact and/or unwanted physical contact are not acceptable, and judgments related to unacceptable behavior shall be made by the administration. Behavioral redirection from faculty or staff will be given to students as needed. For repeat offenses or those that are dangerous and disruptive to others or the learning environment, JLA administration will determine consequences appropriate for the violations listed above ranging from loss of privileges/restriction to suspension.

Public Displays of Affection

Students are expected to use common sense, decency and good judgment regarding their personal boundaries and actions. Students are also expected to consider the feelings of other students and school staff. Inappropriate displays of affection are those which make the people around you feel uncomfortable. Students will be verbally redirected and if the behavior does not stop other consequences may be assigned.

Rolling Backpacks

In order to ensure student and faculty safety, students are not permitted to use rolling backpacks or suitcases.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Any student, faculty/staff member or advisor who believes that he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment should report such incident or incidents to a school staff member. In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the alleged harassment and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred will be investigated promptly.

Skipping Class

Class attendance is mandatory. If a student skips a class, he or she will receive a referral and parents/guardians will be notified. Repeat offenses will result in a parent conference, loss of school privileges, or other disciplinary action.

Student Reporting of Incidents

Students should report instances of bullying when they witness it. Students may report other inappropriate behaviors as they see fit.

All student-reported incidents will be kept confidential to prevent any retaliation against the reporting student.

When a student reports an incident, no disciplinary action will be taken against those reported unless a faculty member is sure beyond a reasonable doubt that the reported incident has occurred. Faculty, staff, and volunteers will be informed and asked to watch for a repeat occurrence of the reported behavior and then take action as soon as it is observed.

Theft/Vandalism

Acts of theft and vandalism will be reported to JLA Administration as well as the local authorities. Students who commit acts of theft or vandalism will be suspended or expelled from school, and families will be required to pay restitution.

Weapons

Weapons of any type such as, but not limited to, firearms, explosives, knives, incendiaries, martial arts weapons, electronic defense weapons clubs, billies, metallic knuckles or containers containing chemicals such as pepper gas or mace, or the use of any object as a weapon are prohibited on school property, on vehicles used for the transportation of students, or at school sponsored off site activities. Students violating this policy will receive school disciplinary action and police will be notified. Suspension and possible expulsion will result in violations of these RSAs/school rules.

Violence or Fighting

Any acts of violence or physical fighting will not be tolerated. Students engaging in violent behaviors, threats of violence or physical fighting will face disciplinary actions that will include suspension and/or possible expulsion. All cases will also be referred to the proper authorities.

ACADEMIC GUIDELINES

Grade Reporting

The academic year is divided into two semesters. Report cards are available at the end of each grading period. Exam grades will be included on semester report cards. The school will also email mid-semester progress reports, which will provide a snapshot picture of student progress. Individual assessment grades, as well as up-to-date averages, will be available on Focus throughout the year.

Grade Level Assignment

Each student is admitted to the Academy at the grade level assigned by the student's former school district. Students will progress as their individual program dictates. Please review the Program of Studies for more information on course progression.

Textbooks/Materials

JLA provides textbooks and other instructional materials to students in order to maximize their educational experience. These items are on loan to students, and all efforts must be made to keep them in good condition. Students need to report any and all problems with their textbooks and materials to the teacher immediately. Students will be issued textbooks and instructional materials only for those classes in which they are enrolled, and these items must be returned at the conclusion of a class. In cases where textbooks, library books, and other instructional materials are lost, damaged, or destroyed in excess of reasonable wear and tear, the student or parent will be assessed an amount sufficient to cover replacement cost(s).

Field Trips

On occasion curriculum will be supplemented by off-site field trips which may have an associated field trip fee to cover the cost of admission and transportation. Students will be provided a permission slip which must be signed by a parent/guardian and verified by the advisor planning the trip.

Academic Integrity

Cheating

JLA defines and includes cheating as: the actual giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid or assistance, or the actual giving or receiving of any form of academic work.

Plagiarism: includes the copying of the language, structure, idea, and/or thought of another representing it as one's own original work.

Incidents of cheating and/or plagiarism threaten the integrity of instruction and compromise the character of the individual. Examples of cheating may include but are not limited to: permitting another student to copy work or assignments, giving or receiving answers, plagiarizing, and improperly using the internet and web materials to complete papers or assignments.

The faculty and staff encourage students to take pride in their own success and support and guide students to achieve success through their own initiative and perseverance. If a student has cheated, it will be regarded as a serious matter and appropriate consequences will be administered.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND SAFETY

Emergency Drills

JLA will have monthly fire drills and 2 lock down drills per year.

When the fire alarm is sounded, students will move quickly and carefully out the nearest lighted exit door in an orderly fashion. Students should remain silent while leaving the building in case instructions need to be issued by school staff. Students will report to the designated areas in the parking lot away from the building, with their Teacher/Administrator and will remain there until given the signal to re-enter the building.

During a lockdown drill, students will follow the instructions from the teacher and the practiced procedures. In the event of an evacuation, students will be taken to an off-site evacuation location. Parents will be informed through phone calls and email with details about the location and other pertinent information about the emergency procedures in process.

Emergency Response Forms

At the beginning of each year, we ask parents to complete the Beginning of the Year form. This form should be completed before a student attends any classes, clubs or activities at JLA. In the event of an emergency, this information provides the authorization and guidance for proper notification and care. It is important the parents submit updated emergency information in the event of any changes (address, phone, change to insurance carrier, etc.). Changes can be emailed to emitchell@jerkinsleadershipacademy.com

First Aid, Medical, and Emergency Procedures

Students and families are asked to assist with emergency planning as follows:

1. By completing the Emergency Response and Medical Forms that are part of the annual required school forms'
2. By making backup plans with other students and parents for transportation;
3. By participating in emergency evacuation drills when in school;
4. By guaranteeing no implements (for example, knives) which could be used harmfully are transported with students. (See below for procedure for carrying medications.)

If a student requires emergency care due to illness or injury, someone in authority (classroom teacher, study teacher, office staff, etc.) must be notified immediately. The administration will then be notified and appropriate emergency response measures will be initiated. **Students who are ill should not use cell phones to contact parents directly.** They are to ask to see the teacher, who will contact parents.

Immunizations

As per state law, all students must have updated immunizations documented to attend school. This does not apply to students with medical exemptions/religious exemptions.

Medications

Students are required to keep all required medications on their persons. Students must advise Teacher/Administration of all medication. **All prescription medication must be in its original pharmacy container.**

Students may possess and self-administer an epinephrine auto-injector if the student suffers from potentially life-threatening allergies. Both the student's parent/guardian and physician must authorize such self-possession and self-administration. If a student finds it necessary to use his/her auto-injector, they shall immediately report after its use to the nearest supervising adult. The school may maintain at least one epinephrine auto-injector, provided by the student, or another suitable location.

First Aid

If a student hurts themselves, band aids and other first aid remedies will be made available to the student. Depending on the severity of the problem, the student may go back to class, have a staff member contact their parent or guardian, or be taken to the nearest hospital via ambulance.