

# STUDENT HANDBOOK 2019-2020



## MACK BENN, JR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1253 Nansemond Pkwy.  
Suffolk, Virginia 23434  
(757) 934-6224  
(757) 925-5644 [fax]

Garrick Rhoads, Principal – [garrickrhoads@spsk12.net](mailto:garrickrhoads@spsk12.net)  
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**Mack Benn, Jr. Elementary School**  
**Suffolk Public Schools**  
**2019~2020**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| TBD                          | <i>Superintendent</i>                                  |
| Dr. Latoya Harrison          | <i>Asst. Superintendent of Teaching &amp; Learning</i> |
| Dr. Suzanne R. Rice          | <i>Asst. Superintendent of Student Services</i>        |
| Dr. Rodney Brown             | <i>Director of Human Resources</i>                     |
| Mrs. Pamela L. Connor        | <i>Director of Elementary Leadership</i>               |
| Ms. Stephanie Whitley        | Director of Special Education                          |
| Mr. Garrick Rhoads           | <i>Principal</i>                                       |
| Ms. Candace Myrick           | <i>Assistant Principal</i>                             |
| Mrs. Melissa Zawodny         | <i>Dean of Students</i>                                |
| Mrs. Jeanette Alford         | <i>Bookkeeper</i>                                      |
| Mrs. Lisa Brown              | <i>Secretary</i>                                       |
| Mrs. Katharine Pairis        | <i>Nurse</i>   |
| Mrs. Kandace Taylor-Tysinger | <i>Guidance Counselor</i>                              |
| School Phone                 | 757-934-6224   |
| School Fax                   | 757-925-5644   |
| Student Drop-Off             | 9:00 a.m.  |
| Instructional Hours          | 9:25 a.m. – 3:50 p.m.                                  |
| Teacher Hours                | 8:50 a.m. – 4:20 p.m.                                  |
| Office Hours                 | 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.                                  |

*MACK BEN, JR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*  
*PTA EXECUTIVE BOARD*  
*2019-2020*

President: Tiesha Jones

Vice President: Vernecia Fentress

Treasurer: Evelyn Arnold

Secretary: Vernecia Fentress

*SCHOOL COLORS*

*Blue, Yellow, and Silver*

*SCHOOL MASCOT*

*Marlin*

## ATTENDANCE

All students are expected to come to school daily. The effectiveness of the academic program can be fully realized only when students are in attendance and are involved in their class activities daily. When students are absent from school a parent/guardian must send a signed note including the reason and date(s) of the absence, the student's full name, teacher and grade. The note should be sent to the child's teacher on the date he/she returns to school. However, with that said, **Virginia Department of Education has implemented the monitoring of absences whether excused or unexcused.** School Board policy states that elementary students who miss in excess of twenty (20) unexcused days a year may be retained.

The following steps will take place when unexcused OR excused absences occur for any student:

1. Automated phone call when a student is absent. Accordingly, it is important that you keep us advised of your current mailing address and phone number.
2. Five (5) unexcused/excused Absences – Attendance Improvement Team Meeting at Mack Benn, Jr. Elem.
3. Six (6) or More unexcused/excused – Truancy Review Team at the Suffolk Courthouse
4. Seven (7) or More unexcused/excused Absences – Legal proceedings may be pursued through the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

## BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

**EVERY** child at Mack Benn, Jr. Elementary will be eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch through the Community Eligibility Provision Grant. Details and prices below are what would normally be the case were we not receiving the grant.

Our cafeteria offers well - balanced and nutritional meals for all students. All students are to eat their lunch in the cafeteria. Students are expected to either purchase a school lunch or to bring one from home. Lunches brought from home **must not** include glass containers.

Cafeteria prices are as follows:

|                   |                              |                                  |
|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Breakfast:</i> | <i>Full Price---</i> \$ .85  | <i>Reduced Price-----</i> \$ .30 |
| <i>Lunch:</i>     | <i>Full Price---</i> \$ 2.00 | <i>Reduced Price-----</i> \$ .40 |

Parents may choose to place monies on the student's account. This may be done weekly, monthly, or whenever the parent desires. Checks may be sent any day. Please write your child's account number in the memo section if writing a check. Any questions or concerns involving cafeteria accounts will be referred to our cafeteria manager and/or the Food Services Department of Suffolk Public Schools.

Students who eat breakfast at school should report to the breakfast cart after taking their books/supplies to their homeroom. Students who arrive on late buses will be served breakfast upon their arrival. Sodas, any other canned drinks, or caffeinated drinks of any kind are not allowed at school. Gum, candy, sunflower seeds, etc. will be confiscated if eaten outside of the designated area.

**Students will be required to meet the following Cafeteria Expectations:**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <p>Be Safe</p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use walking feet.</li> <li>- Carry tray with both hands.</li> <li>- Stay seated at your assigned table.</li> <li>- Remain in line until your teacher arrives.</li> <li>- Keep your hands, feet, and body to yourself.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Be Respectful</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use table manners.</li> <li>- Keep trays on table and eat.</li> <li>- Listen to and follow all adult requests</li> <li>- Use your Level One voice unless otherwise asked</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Be Responsible</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stay in line with your class.</li> <li>- Clean up after yourself.</li> <li>- Raise your hand for assistance.</li> </ul>  |

**BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Bus drivers have been instructed not to pick up or take an additional students without permission from the administration or designee. Students must be picked up and dropped off at their assigned bus stop. **The parent/guardian must send written permission to the school office if your child is to ride another bus.** A bus pass will be given to the student to give to the appropriate bus driver. **Students must ride their designated bus unless the school has received written notification and permission has been granted by transportation.** This will prevent any misunderstandings and support student safety.

The bus driver of each bus is responsible for the bus and all students riding his/her bus. **Early Start and Kindergarten students must have an adult at the bus stop in the morning and afternoon. If there isn't a parent at the stop in the afternoon, the driver will bring him or her back to school.**

The following expectations will be in place on every bus:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Be Safe        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Remain at the bus stop.</li><li>- Remain seated and facing forward.</li><li>- Walk to, on, and off the bus.</li><li>- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.</li></ul> |
| Be Respectful  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Use kind words.</li><li>- Share your seat.</li><li>- Listen and follow the bus driver's rules.</li></ul>   |
| Be Responsible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Be at your bus stop on time.</li><li>- Use self-control.</li><li>- Report all problems to the bus driver.</li></ul>  |

\* More specific rules for bus transportation will be sent home in the pamphlet, "**Regulations for Pupils Riding School Buses**".

Students who choose not to follow all bus rules may have bus-riding privileges suspended. **Students who fight on the bus could be suspended from school in lieu of a bus suspension only.**

**Parents are not to board the bus for any reason.**

### CELLPHONES

Cellphones are not to be brought on the bus or to school without permission from administration. If parents would like for their child to be able to bring a cell phone to school, please see the secretary for the Request Form. If permission is granted for a student to bring a cellphone to school, the phone must remain off and put away at all times. Using a cellphone in an inappropriate manner on the bus or in school will cause a student to be disciplined in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

### DISCIPLINE

**Discipline is the positive direction of behavior toward established standards of conduct, fully understood, and based upon reasonable judgment, and in consideration of the rights of others. It is self-directed and self-controlled. Schools, communities, and parents share the responsibility for helping students develop self-discipline.**

Students attending Mack Benn, Jr. Elementary School are **expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified, and respectful manner.** In an effort to maintain an orderly atmosphere, **the teacher's authority extends to all students**, whether or not the teacher has the student in his or her class. When self-control falters and self-discipline fails, disciplinary action must be imposed to protect the rights of others and to ensure uninterrupted instruction by teachers for students.

Disruptive student behavior is subject to disciplinary action by the teacher or building administrators. The action may take the form of reprimand, conference with the teacher or administration, separation from the group, notification of parents, discipline referral, restriction of privileges, in-school suspension, short-term suspension (ten days or less), long-term suspension, and expulsion. Each teacher will prepare and share with students and parents a classroom discipline plan that will consist of classroom rules, consequences, and rewards.

**Students may not participate in any school-related activity while suspended from school. Field trip fees will not be refunded if a student is suspended and not allowed to attend his/her trip.**

Students are not permitted to bring cell phones, pagers, CD players, tape players, sunglasses, toys, games, walkmans, trading cards, virtual pets, etc. to school. If any of these items are brought to school, they will be collected until the parent can pick them up. Loss of such items is the responsibility of the student. Students are strongly encouraged to leave excess money at home. It is difficult to recover money when it is either lost or stolen.

Mack Benn, Jr. Elementary School will continue to implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This program teaches correct and appropriate behaviors while offering positive reinforcement (Good Behavior Events and Caught Being Good Cards) to students when they make the right choices. Please review our school-wide expectations with your children.

Be Safe  
Be Respectful  
Be Responsible

While we will be teaching, reviewing, and enforcing these expectations at school, it would be helpful if they were reviewed at home as well. Thank you!

### **DISCIPLINE AND SCHOOL JURISDICTION**

The authority of the school over the conduct of students extends to the following locations:

1. On the school grounds during, before, or after school hours;
2. On the school grounds as either a spectator or a participant and any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
3. Off the school grounds at any school-related activity, function, or event as a participant or a spectator;
4. During the time required in going to and from the home, **including time spent at bus stops, walking to and from the bus stop**, and on school bus transportation.

### **DROPPING OFF STUDENTS**

Please note, **students cannot be dropped off any earlier than 9:00 AM**. The circle driveway in front of the building will be open only from 9:00 to 9:25 am. Any student **arriving later than 9:25 a.m. must be signed in at the front office by a parent or guardian**. Staff or student safety patrol will be present to assist in opening your car's door and guiding the children to the main entrance. Please do not allow your child to exit the car by themselves!

Reminders...

- Please park in a designated parking space at all times.
- Please be mindful of the traffic patterns for morning drop off to ensure the safety of our students, as well as to prevent car accidents.
- Please do not drop students off in the parking lot and allow them to walk across the parking lot.

### **LATE ARRIVALS TO SCHOOL**

If your child arrives to school after **9:25 a.m.** he/she should report to the office before going to class. **Parents/Guardians are expected to sign their child in when arriving to school late.** Please refrain from just dropping your child off. Signing them in will ensure that we are accountable for all students. This procedure will also prevent your child from being marked absent for that day. Please make every effort to ensure that tardies are kept to a minimum as tardies have an adverse affect on student progress.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Students who need to be dismissed from school early must have a parent/guardian sign them out in the main office. We request that parents respect the instructional program by not going directly to the classroom to pick up children. Adults picking up students will be asked to show a photo ID prior to office personnel releasing students. If your child is to be picked up by someone other than the parent/guardian, please send a note to the office identifying the person and noting the time of dismissal. All students should have an Authorization to Pick Up card on file at the school office, this is used to identify those parties who are allowed to pick up the student in case of early dismissal or emergency.

### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Parents/Guardians are required to complete an Emergency Information Card for each child they have attending the school. It is very important that the card is completed accurately to support contacting the parents/guardians in the event of an emergency. **If information changes throughout the year, the parents/guardians should notify the office or the child's teacher as soon as possible.**

### **EXCESS MONEY**

Students are strongly encouraged to leave excess money at home. It is virtually impossible to recover money when it is either lost or stolen.

### **FIELD TRIPS & SUSPENSIONS**

Field trips are an integral part of our curriculum. Every effort is made to ensure that all students can participate and that the experience is enriching. However, there are times when students are suspended after paying for a field trip. Since we must pay for admissions and for the bus based on the number of students who stated they would be attending, **we will be unable to refund money if a student is suspended on the day of the field trip.** Students are also expected to follow the same rules and regulations relating to school while on field trips. No student will be allowed to participate on a field trip without a returned signed permission form. All money for field trips must be received on or before the date due as stated on the parent notice/permission form.

## FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills will be held at least twice during the month of September and once a month for the remainder of the school year. The importance of moving from the building quickly and quietly should be discussed at home and will be strongly emphasized at school.

## FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Our Parent Teacher Association, Student Council Association, and other school organizations may periodically sponsor fund raising projects to raise money for school-related purposes. Parents must give permission to allow their child to participate in such activities. **Door-to-door solicitation is prohibited to ensure student safety.**

## HEALTH SERVICES/MEDICATION

The school nurse is available to assist with the health needs of students. If a student desires to go to the clinic during the school day, he/she must first receive a written pass from the teacher. If a student becomes ill during the school day, the school nurse will assess him/her and determine the best course of action. Upon determining the need to go home, the nurse or designee will make the proper arrangements by contacting the student's parents. If the parent cannot be contacted, other person(s) on the student's emergency card will be contacted. If your child is sent home from school by the nurse he or she is to remain at home until free of diarrhea and/or vomiting and has no fever for 24 hours.

**State law** prohibits the school nurse from dispensing any medication to students unless the nurse has written permission from the child's doctor. The school nurse will conduct vision, hearing, and dental screenings throughout the year. **All students taking medication (including inhalers) must have a doctor's note on file in the clinic at the beginning of the school year. NO medication will be administered unless there is a written order from the doctor on file in the clinic.**

## LUNCH MONEY

If a student forgets or loses his/her lunch money, he/she may **NOT** borrow money from the office. Suffolk Public Schools has implemented an online pre-payment option for student meal accounts for the 2019-2020 school year called [myLunchMoney.com](http://myLunchMoney.com).

[myLunchMoney.com](http://myLunchMoney.com) provides peace of mind to parents and faster lunch lines for students. Parents can prepay for their child's school food charges, using a credit card through a secure website. The new program also allows parents to set spending limits and to monitor what their children are buying in the cafeteria.

All personal and payment card information is protected by the most advanced Internet security. Student information is safe and private.

Parents of current students will register directly on the website, using their child's student ID number. Students should know their own ID number because they use it to log on to school computers. The student ID can also be found on the report card and through an active Parent Connection account.

## MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work due to an absence is to be turned in to the teacher within **five (5)** days upon the student's return to school.

## PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

Please join "your" PTA and help us further the objectives of **parent-teacher-student** work. Dues entitle you not only to membership but also give you the right to vote on all issues concerning the PTA. We look forward to seeing you! Parent involvement is necessary - **Together We Do Make A Difference.**

Meetings have been set for **6:00 p.m.** on the following dates:

*August 29, 2019 - Orientation*

*September 17, 2019 - Open House*

*October 8, 2019*

*November 12, 2019*

*December 17, 2019*

*January 14, 2020*

*February 11, 2020*

*March 10, 2020*

*April 7, 2020*

*May 12, 2020*

## Monitoring of Grades

Parents of students in grades 1-5, can monitor grades online. This is highly recommended. To get set up to access grades, please contact **the School Secretary or the Guidance Counselor.** They will help you gain access to HAC. This will allow you to view your child's grades.

## PARKING

Please be reminded that parking in the traffic circle is prohibited at all times.

## PICTURES

School pictures will be taken in the Fall and Spring. Parents will be notified in advance of the specific dates. **Students will receive a proof for parents to view for purchase.**

## ROOM PARENTS

We welcome parents/guardians who wish to serve as room parents. Room Parents will also assist the teacher with special activities throughout the school year. Please notify your child's homeroom teacher as soon as possible, if you can serve in this capacity or would be willing to assist someone. All volunteers will be required to complete a Volunteer Form to be approved to volunteer for school related activities.

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Each student is expected to come to school fully prepared for active engagement in instructional activities. This includes having a supply of notebook paper, pencils, erasers, etc.

## STUDENTS' PROGRESS

A Weekly School/Home Communication Folder will be sent home each Tuesday with every student. Students in Kindergarten may have folders sent home daily. The folders may contain important notices from the school, class newsletters, work samples, and the weekly progress reports. Parents/Guardians are asked to sign the folder and send it back the next school day.

System-wide Progress Reports will be sent home on the following dates:

*October 3~ December 11 ~ March 4 ~ May 13*

Report Cards will be issued on the following dates:

*November 15 ~ February 18 ~ April 24 ~ June 12*

Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher throughout the school year when a conference is necessary. **To ensure safety and minimize instructional distractions, we ask that parents contact teachers to schedule individual conferences after school hours or during the teacher's planning period.** The division has set aside November 15th (no students in school ) and February 18th (Early Release for students) as conference days; however, the parent/guardian, teacher, or administration may request additional conferences.

## TELEPHONE

Students will not be allowed to use the telephone except in the case of an emergency and only with the permission of the teacher and/or office staff.

## TEXTBOOKS

Students will be assigned textbooks by the teacher for the year at no charge. Students are responsible for lost and/or damaged books and will be assessed a fee accordingly. These charges apply to library books as well. Please encourage your child to return their library books in a timely manner.

The student will not be permitted to:

1. mark pages of textbooks;
2. underline or highlight phrases or important lines within paragraphs;
3. fill in the blanks of questions throughout the textbooks.

Textbooks will not be taken home by students (except in prearranged agreements). If a book is lost, the school will issue another book once the parent has paid for the lost book.

## VISITORS

We encourage parents, guardians, and others to visit our school. All visitors must check in at the kiosk. You must present your driver's license, which will be scanned for a background check, and then a visitor's

sticker with your picture will be printed. All visitors, while on school grounds, must wear a visitor's badge.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Parents/Guardians and others are always welcome to volunteer in our school! You may serve in any capacity (library, office, classroom, take home activities, etc.). We ask that all volunteers sign the volunteer sign-in sheet in the office to document hours of participation. In an effort to protect the instructional environment and avoid liability issues, alternate child care must be secured for students who are not enrolled at Mack Benn, Jr. Elementary School. Please contact the administration if you are interested in supporting our students and staff by donating time. If you are unable to volunteer your time during the school day, alternate projects are available for you to take home. **All volunteers will be required to register via Volunteer Connect, which can be found on the Suffolk Public Schools portal.**

### **WEATHER DRILLS**

Weather drills will be held a minimum of 2 times per semester, totaling 4 per year. The school will participate in the statewide tornado drill, usually scheduled for the middle of March.

### **WEAPONS POLICY**

Parents are reminded to carefully read the **weapons policy** located in the first section of the Parent/Student Handbook. Please note that **no weapons, real or toy, shall be brought to school for any reason. In particular, plastic guns and/or knives, water pistols, figurines with weapons on them, or any item that is used as a weapon (i.e., scissors, sticks, rocks, pencils, pens, etc.) or has a weapon as part of its make-up is strictly forbidden.** This will be discussed at length with your child at school. Please talk to your child about the importance of leaving such items at home.