

# FRIENDS SCHOOL OF PORTLAND COMMUNITY HANDBOOK 2023-2024



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# Friends School of Portland Important Dates 2023-24

August 28- August 31	Teacher Work Days
August 29	Middle School Back-to-School Picnic, 5pm-6pm
August 30	Preschool and Kindergarten Back-to-School Picnic, 5pm-6pm
August 31	Grades 1-4 Back-to-School Picnic, 5pm-6pm
September 5	First day of classes
September 19-21	School Photo possibilities, weather-dependent, 8:30am
September 20	Curriculum Night, 6:00pm
September 27	Flu Clinic, 8:15am-10:30am
October 4	Parent Forum: What does it mean to be an FSP Family? 6pm
October 6	NO CLASSES: Teacher Professional Day
October 9	NO CLASSES: Indigenous Peoples Day
October 10-13	Parent-Teacher Conferences
October 11	All Community Meeting for Worship, 8:15am
October 15	Shared Meeting for Worship at Portland Friends Meeting 10:45am
October 18	Great FSP Book Swap & Sale
October 21	Fall Admissions Open House, 10:00am - 12:00pm
November 10	NO CLASSES: Veterans Day (observed)
November 3	Grade 5-8 Grandfriends' Day
November 6	Community Fundraising Night: Brickyard Hollow
November 21	End Term 1
November 22-24	Thanksgiving Break
December 5-7	Parent-Teacher Conferences by Request
December 1	Grades 3-8 Music Share 6:30pm
December 6	PS-2 Music Share 8:15am
December 14	Middle School & Alumna Evening, 7:00pm
December 15	No AfterCare
Dec. 20- Jan. 1	Winter Break
January 2	NO CLASSES: Teacher Professional Day
January 3	Classes Resume
January 6	Winter Admissions Open House, 10am-12pm
January 15	NO CLASSES: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 16-18	Parent Step up Teas
January 17	All Community Meeting for Worship 8:15am
January 19	Financial Aid Applications Due for returning 2023-2024 families
February 1	Board Day
February 7	State of the School Meeting 6:00pm
February 9	Kindergarten Early Release 1pm, Kindergarten Applicant Day
February 12-16	Love Week
February 14	All Community Meeting for Worship 8:15am
February 19-23	February Break
February 23	Current Student Re-enrollment Due with deposit for 2024-2025

March 1	PS Early Release 1pm, PS Applicant Day
March 7	End Term 2
March 8	NO CLASSES: Admissions Decisions Day
March 13-15	Visiting Artists
March 18-22	PS- Grade 4 Parent-Teacher Conferences
March 29	MS Release Day: MS Student-Led Conferences
April 5	PS-4 Grandfriends' Day
April 15-19	April Break
May 3	Advisory Committee Meeting
May 6-10	Online Auction
May 11	Auction Celebration
May 17	7-8 Grade Play
May 27	NO CLASSES: Memorial Day
May 29	All Community Meeting for Worship 8:15am
June 4-6	Parent-Teacher Conferences by Request
June 7	End Term 3
June 7	Last Day of School; Assembly 1:00pm; No AfterCare; Commencement 7:00pm
June 10-12	Teacher Work Days
June 12	Alumnx Lunch

\*NOTE: Board of Director Meetings generally take place on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm and are open to all.

### **School Day Schedule**

Monday-Thursday: PS-Grade 4: 8:15 am-3:00 pm; Grades 5-8: 8:05 am-3:05 pm

Friday: PS-Grade 4: 8:15 am-1:45 pm; Grades 5-8: 8:05 am-1:45 pm

Meeting for Worship is Monday at 2:25pm except for four times a year when it is on a Wednesday

# Mission Statement

*Friends School of Portland challenges and empowers students to develop their intellectual, physical, emotional, creative, and spiritual potential. We honor our students' natural gifts as they learn to enter the world with confidence, competence, joy, and a sense of purpose. We are guided by the Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, stewardship, and truth.*

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## Administrative Contacts

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## Friends School of Portland

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## Faculty

Ashley Blake	Preschool Teacher
Robin Booty	Assistant Teacher, Kindergarten
Sally Caruso	Classroom Teacher, Grades 1-2
Xanthe Charov	Classroom Teacher, Grades 1-2
Pete Curtis	Assistant Teacher, Grades 3-4
Jonathan Ewell	Assistant Teacher in Preschool, Assembly Coordinator
Nicole Favreau	Classroom Teacher, Grades 7-8
Rachel Fischhoff	Classroom Teacher, Grades 3-4

Carie Garrett	Classroom Teacher, Kindergarten
Aliza Gordon	Classroom Teacher, Grades 5-6
Yasamin Holland	Art Teacher, Grades PS-8
Lindsay Holt	Classroom Teacher, Grades 3-4
Christine Keegan	Learning Strategist
Dareth Law	Spanish Teacher, K-8
Billy Maley	Physical Education and Environmental Education
Pete Nowak	Classroom Teacher, Grades 7-8
Colin O'Brien	Classroom Teacher, Grades 5-6
Eliza Robinson	After School Program Coordinator
Bethany Schmidt	Music Teacher, Grades PS-8
Mary-Catherine Short	Assistant Teacher, Grades 1-2
Aila Tholl	Assistant Teacher, Grades 1-2
Nadja Tikinsky	Middle School Assistant, Grades 5-8

## Our Values

We seek and enjoy that of God in each person. This is our clear focus. We provide children with challenges, a low student-teacher ratio, high expectations for learning and behavior, and clear and open communication. We use resources carefully and we study and learn to care for the world.

**SIMPLICITY:** Uncomplicated routines, uncluttered use of space, and careful use of resources help us stay focused on the unfolding development of each person in our school. The Quaker witness of simplicity reminds us to live wisely, finding the time and space in an increasingly materialistic world to appreciate the Spirit.

**PEACE:** We learn to resolve conflict through respectful conversation and peaceful negotiation, we practice sharing community time and space creatively, and we study the peaceful leaders and movements of the world.

**INTEGRITY:** We act on what we believe, telling the truth, and doing what we say. Some students call this “doing the right thing when no one is looking.”

**COMMUNITY:** We create a close and accepting atmosphere as an essential condition for growth and learning. Warm welcomes, daily class meetings, group singing, handling challenges side by side, and celebrating success contribute to a strong sense of community. We also carry out service projects and field trips in the wider Portland community.

**EQUALITY:** We seek diversity in students and staff, and we learn to truly listen to each person. This means nurturing a dynamic balance between the individual and the group.

**STEWARDSHIP:** We use resources carefully and we learn to care for the world. We study the ecosystems of our Cumberland forest and wetlands in order to understand the interconnectedness of all living organisms. We cultivate small gardens, care for trails, use our net-positive building to educate children and others, and encourage sustainable practices on all levels throughout the school.

**TRUTH:** Quakers believe in the continual revelation of truth and believe that truth is available to each of us. In the classroom, truth is reflected in an open-minded approach to curriculum and teaching, and in an emphasis on critical thinking skills. We guide children to practice scientific investigation and to express themselves creatively and effectively in conversation, writing, and the arts. We use silence and reflection as ways to deepen understanding and extend the search for truth.

# Governance

Friends School of Portland (FSP) is independent, non-profit, tax-exempt and is governed by a board of directors with a wide range of business, legal and educational experience. At least fifty percent (50%) of the Board members are active attenders or members of a Quaker meeting. Board meetings are generally held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Please contact the main office for more information.

## Nondiscrimination Statement

Friends School of Portland is a company of learners who are guided by the Quaker belief that there is that of God in all persons and who are strengthened by the rich diversity of the world. To prepare our students for life and leadership in a complex and diverse world, we welcome students, families, faculty, staff, and directors with differences based upon (but not limited to) race, color, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, family structure and economic background. Consistent with the Quaker principle of equality, the Friends School of Portland admits students of any religion, race, color, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students. The School does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment, financial aid programs, and other school-administered programs, except special consideration may be given to members of The Religious Society of Friends with respect to admissions, financial aid, and hiring of faculty and staff. In our classrooms, every child will be treated equally regardless of religious affiliation.

## Diversity Statement

Guided by the Quaker belief in the light within each person, we seek to cultivate an engaged and diverse community of people from different backgrounds, identities, orientations, beliefs, and circumstances.

We value the shared wisdom that individual and cultural differences and perspectives bring, and we strive to build a community in which each person belongs, is known, and is valued.

We believe that learning and playing in a diverse school community enriches our shared experience and prepares our students for lives of purpose in a diverse world.

## Statement of Antiracism

*How do our lives speak as educators, seekers, mentors, and colleagues in our work of responding to injustice? How do we transform reflection into the concrete action needed to dismantle systemic racism? How do we sustain an active and vigilant engagement with the work of antiracism, seeking to enable a community more open to all, more aware of its complicity in racism, and more equitable in its practices?*

The work of dismantling racism is ongoing and cannot be satisfied with statements of intent. Asking ourselves how the Friends School of Portland community is working to become an antiracist institution is a critical query that must guide real and daily change in ourselves, our policies, and our practices. As a Friends school dedicated to testimonies of equality, peace, and integrity, we are, at each moment, called to answer to injustice. As a predominantly white institution of privilege, the work of dismantling white supremacy **is our work**. We must shine a light on the systemic racial inequalities which exist in our world as well as on the biases we carry within ourselves.

We commit to an ongoing cycle of inquiry-reflection-action that will move us forward in our work toward diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, but also toward active antiracism — in our teaching and learning, in our policies and practices, and in our culture and community. We call on our community to join us in this difficult, necessary, transformative work.

## Commitment to Equality for Gender-Nonconforming People

As a Friends school founded on the Quaker principles of equality, community, and integrity, we affirm that Friends School of Portland is fully committed to creating a welcoming, supportive, and respectful community for all of our students and families. We support our students and community members who are transgender, gender-nonconforming, or gender expansive/non-binary. As a community bound by love and a belief in the Light in each of us, we support their right to be who they are, to express their identity, and to be treated always with dignity.

## Academics

Our belief that there is light in each of us leads to the conclusion that we are all natural learners, and we all have something to teach. These beliefs support an active, inquiry-based approach to learning at FSP. In a community of learners, students and teachers alike frame questions, investigate topics and ideas, practice frequent reflection, and connect learning to individual and group action within our communities. FSP's *Curriculum Guide* and *Learning Guidelines*, updated annually, provide specific information about our curriculum.

### Multi-Age Classes

In a multi-age classroom, a large topic is often presented on several levels. With this approach, students can all engage in every activity at a level that is appropriate for their development. FSP believes that multi-age groupings are important for many reasons. Students at various times benefit both from being the older leader and the younger learner. Since each child's development proceeds at an uneven pace, being in multi-age groups offers children the chance to be themselves amongst a wider range of peers, some of whom will be at a similar stage of development. Students and teachers also build a multi-year relationship, which means that teachers can track a child's development and growth more accurately and thoroughly. Multi-age classrooms require teachers to approach each child from a developmental perspective, focusing on each child's next steps.

### Class Placement

Teaching teams will meet in the spring to determine class placement for the following year. The team weighs a number of factors, including friendships, academic strengths/needs, and group dynamics. Parents may email the Director of Studies in May with questions or thoughts about their child's placement, and we will consider those in the process, though the teaching team will make the final decision. We notify families of classroom placement in the Term 3 report card. We ask that families respect that class placement decisions are final. Students typically remain with the same teacher for two years.

### Learning Styles

The faculty at FSP recognizes that students learn in different ways at different times. Teachers seek to understand each student's learning style and make an effort to present material in a variety of ways to tap into the strengths of all learners. In its admission process, FSP attempts to determine that it can meet the educational and emotional needs of each student. In order to make necessary judgments concerning special needs, faculty and students are best served when parents share whatever assessment information they possess at the time of admission, and parents are, therefore, requested to share the results of assessments and/or evaluations prior to and after enrollment.

### Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Learning

Friends School of Portland respects and celebrates individual gifts, while attending to each person's role in the larger community. Social, emotional, and behavioral learning is the foundation of a joyful learning community and central to each student's growth and development. Through direct teaching, modeling, and mentoring, teachers support children to grow in their empathy, self-control, advocacy, and conflict management skills. We draw on the Responsive Classroom, Developmental Designs, and Restorative Practices approaches to support this work.

### Responding to Rule Breaking

When a student breaks a rule or gets into a conflict with a peer, it is an opportunity for learning and growth. Supporting a student's learning in this area means supporting them to take ownership for their actions, to understand how those actions affect themselves and others, to find an appropriate way to repair relationships that were affected by those actions, and to make a plan going forward.

We expect that all students will treat themselves, our community, and one another with respect, but the process of responding to rule-breaking is individualized to the needs of each student. In responding to rule-breaking, a teacher may ask a student to take space in the classroom, in another classroom, or in the office. The student may use a written reflection prompt or a conference with a teacher or administrator. Natural consequences or loss of privilege may arise from rule-breaking. A student who is having trouble following sledding rules might be asked to find another activity for several days until they can make a plan to engage appropriately in that activity. A student who is disruptive in class may need to take some time out of that class to reflect and make a plan to return. A student's ability to participate in different school activities with independence depends on their ability to do so appropriately, but our goal is always to support a student to make a plan and return as soon as they are able to follow expectations.

Above all, we approach this aspect of our work, as we approach all aspects, with love. By supporting students to engage in a learning process around behavior, we work to cultivate a joyful learning community and to challenge and support students to enter the world with “confidence, competence, and a sense of purpose.”

## **Learning Strategist and Educational Consultants**

The school employs a part-time Learning Strategist to support teachers, parents, and students.

Through the Learning Strategist, the school provides the following:

- Diagnostic intervention
- Small group reading or math support through grade 2
- Case management/coordination with service providers
- Informal assessment
- Support and consultation with classroom teacher
- Support accessing a referral process at MSAD 51 or private evaluations
- Development of a support plan
- RTI for small groups of students through grade 2

Services that a student may require that are beyond this scope are paid for by families.

In the event the FSP teachers observe behaviors that are indicative of a developmental delay, a learning difference, or a behavioral or emotional problem, we may recommend or require a diagnostic evaluation. In order for a child to remain enrolled at FSP, the results of this evaluation must be shared with the school so that we may ascertain how to best meet the student’s needs. As with all student records, assessment reports will be kept confidential.

In consultation with the classroom teacher, educational specialists or consultants engaged by parents may work with a student. At times, the school may require a meeting with parents, teachers, all specialists, and consultants to review the progress of the student and to determine the best learning program for the student. The intent of such a meeting is to provide a unified plan and a team approach to supporting the student. Parents who agree to have specialists or consultants working within the school are also agreeing to have confidential information shared among the professional team working with the student.

## **Procedures to Address Concerns**

The following are policies and practices for addressing concerns about a student which question the suitability of FSP for that student, or for responding to behavior that interferes with the learning atmosphere, endangers the child or another, or is incompatible with community values. We have found that early intervention and working in partnership with parents help to find effective strategies for addressing the concerns. Occasionally it happens that over the course of a year, we may find that a child’s needs are beyond the resources that the school can provide.

### **Learning, Developmental, or Behavioral Concerns**

When a developmental or learning concern requires support beyond the current academic or social-emotional-behavioral program, the teacher will:

- Confer with the Learning Strategist, Director of Studies, or Head of School. An observation may follow.
- Notify parents. If there is written communication by e-mail or letter, the Director of Studies and Head of School will be copied. A copy will be placed in the student’s file. A meeting for support, consisting of teacher(s) and parents, may be convened by the Director of Studies or Head of School to:
- Seek clarity about the expected behaviors or outcomes for the student
- Explore supportive and/or remedial steps including evaluations and outside services
- Provide written summary of the meeting
- Determine a timetable for reviewing progress

The following additional steps may be taken around concerning behavior if a more extensive response from the school is necessary:

- Based on the circumstances, the school will seek restorative solutions that benefit the student and the community.
- An ad hoc Student Integrity Committee made up of a small group of administrators and faculty might convene to problem solve in cases where restoration is complicated or community impact needs to be further explored.
- There may be occasions when separation from school is required. The Director of Studies or Head of School, in consultation with the classroom teacher, will determine the length of separation and the requirements necessary to return to school.



### **Continuation at School**

If continuation at the school is in question for behavioral and/or academic reasons:

- The student's status will be presented by the classroom teacher to the entire faculty and administrators.
- That group will reach unity on whether or not to allow the student to continue at the school.
- The decision will be communicated to the parents by the Head of School. The school may counsel parents to seek another learning environment for the child and will be as helpful as we can in assisting the family in locating the proper setting.
- Parents may appeal decisions in writing to the Head of School. The Head will reconvene the group or make a final decision.

### **Homework**

Regular homework is assigned beginning in third grade. Although our middle schoolers will likely have more homework than younger children as they prepare for high school, our approach to homework in general is one of moderation. Homework may serve several purposes when assigned judiciously. First, it can provide extra practice in key skills. Second, it can help children develop study habits and independence. Third, it can help parents stay aware of their children's learning. However, research and our experience suggest that excessive amounts of homework are not effective at these ages. All of our teachers do send one important message about homework: the best academic gift you can share with your child is reading together each day.

### **Assessments**

Assessment is a dynamic process. Effective teachers never stop observing children and adjusting what they do to meet the needs and opportunities the children offer at any point in time. Assessment also happens at planned intervals using a variety of strategies – conversations, quizzes, samples of student work, oral presentations, and projects – scored with rubrics that show benchmarks of skill development. In addition, we use standardized measures and/or portfolios to track student progress in reading, math, and writing.

Parents will receive a written report from teachers at the end of each term. Should you have concerns about your child's progress, please call your child's teacher or the school to arrange an appointment.

### **Standardized Assessments**

We use standardized measures in reading and math sparingly, generally for three purposes: screening, understanding school-wide trends, and as one measure (of many) of student growth.

Teachers regularly update parents about children's progress through report cards, conferences, and informal communication, but, because we believe that test results must be understood in the context of a breadth of assessment information, we do not report standardized test results for individual students as a matter of course. If you would like a copy of your child's test results in math and/or reading, please let your child's teacher know.

### **Student Records**

FSP keeps an individual file for each student, including a permanent record card and copies of all school reports and correspondence. In compliance with the Family Education Rights to Privacy Act, any parent of a student in good standing may, in writing, request to see that student's records at a mutually convenient time and place. Records will be reviewed in the presence of an FSP staff person.

FSP will not send any records of any student to a third party, agency, or school without written permission from the parent of that student. FSP will not send reports or records unless all financial obligations to the school have been met.

### **Supplies**

Each summer, teachers send a list of supplies that families are responsible for sending with students in the first week of school. If a family is unable to purchase items on the list for any reason, please contact your child's teacher, and we will work together to make sure students have what they need. Tuition covers reading books, textbooks, skill workbooks, and some supplies. The school provides Chromebooks for students to use in grades 3-8. Students are responsible for keeping track of equipment, books, and supplies and maintaining them in good condition. We will require students to replace, at their expense, school-issued equipment or supplies that have been lost or destroyed through mishandling.

### **Use of Electronic Technology**

Friends School of Portland provides computer and internet access to its students and staff for the pursuit of educational advancement. Acceptable use of FSP computer resources includes any activity that is consistent with the school's educational mission. Any activity that is illegal, malicious, or violates the privacy of others is unacceptable.

Any material promoting violence, pornography, or discrimination is inappropriate. In addition, members of the school community are expected to exercise care in handling equipment and using resources. Despite the school's precautions, the possibility remains that students may encounter inappropriate or hurtful material online. Such cases will be addressed as they arise.

The use of the internet, as well as computers, tablets, and similar devices -- both school-owned and student-owned—is limited to academic use. Social media sites and personal emailing are not permitted during the school day or in AfterCare. Students' personal use of these technologies at home is entirely at parents' discretion. That said, specifically in grades 5-8, class time is used to educate students about the potential consequences and benefits of digital citizenship. Digital photographs taken at school or on field trips may never be shared or posted on any website or social media site.

Because this is a continuously evolving landscape, we cannot provide students with a complete list of rules about what it means to be safe online. What we can do is encourage — through discussions, role-playing, and outside information — students to make responsible, informed and conscientious decisions about when and how they choose to engage with others online.

Students in grades 3-8 are provided with a Google Apps for Education account, to be used both for creating and sharing school-related documents and emails (5th-8th only). At school, students learn how to use the Google suite of apps. While these accounts belong to the Friends School domain, they can be used like any other email account; how these accounts are used outside of school — beyond homework — is up to individual parents.

### **Cell Phones or iPods**

Guided by Quaker values of simplicity and equality, FSP has a “no cell phone” policy for students. Specifically, we ask that students not use cellphones during school or during aftercare unless a student's individual learning plan requires it. We recognize that a few of our students need access to a phone for travel to and from school. If you would like your 5th-8th grader to carry a cellphone for use to/from school, you must submit a signed permission form (to be provided) and phones must be held by classroom teachers during the school day.

### **School-Related Publications/Website**

The School uses student photos, videos, statements and/or work for parent communications and marketing materials, both in print and online. Families are asked for permission in their enrollment packet and annually in the summer. **Students are not identified by name** unless prior permission is obtained from parents/guardians.

### **Community Engagement**

The faculty will coordinate community engagement projects between classes and within the whole school, generate ideas, make decisions about what projects are adopted by the school, create criteria by which these decisions are made, and collect ideas generated by other teachers, parents, staff, and community members for classroom and future use.

For a project to be considered for adoption, it must support one or more of the following:

- FSP's mission and Quaker values
- Class curriculum and student learning
- Connections with the FSP community
- Local community needs
- Exchange of learning and cultural awareness

Priority will be given to projects that encompass several of these criteria. The project must be achievable with available staff/faculty/volunteer time and energy. Classes may select their own individual projects and teachers will be asked to report on class activities.

# Community Life

## Meeting for Worship

In the tradition of Friends, students and faculty engage in a period of silent worship called Meeting for Worship every Monday afternoon at 2:25pm. This gathering is simply a time to sit quietly and reflect upon yourself, your friends and family, and the world around you. Someone may set the tone for Meeting by reading a story or poem or by asking a question. In the tradition of Friends General Conference, Friends School of Portland does not seek to proselytize or convert others to follow the Quaker faith. It is our goal to encourage each student to seek the Inner Light however that may manifest. In the context of silent worship and a focus on universally held values, students with a wide variety of backgrounds will feel honored and respected at FSP.

Families are welcome to attend school Meeting for Worship every week. For those parents who wish to know more about the Quaker underpinnings of our school, pamphlets and other reading materials are available outside the main office. Quaker Meeting for Worship is held 10:45 every Sunday at the Portland Friends Meeting at 1837 Forest Avenue, Portland or on Zoom. A library is also located in the Meeting House.

## Community Meeting

All students and faculty come together each Wednesday morning from 8:15-8:35am. We gather outside or in the Meeting Room for news and announcements (including birthdays). Classrooms take turns presenting a Thought of the Week related to a Quaker value. We hope to be able to invite families to join us once the year has begun.

## Assembly

Our community gathers again Friday afternoons at 1:00 pm at the end of the week to participate in community-building activities that invite us to know one another, connect with the Quaker values, and share in the joy of being together.

*Families are warmly invited to attend all Meetings for Worship, Community Meetings, and Assemblies.*

## Celebrations

Our students represent a wide spectrum of religious and cultural backgrounds and we are interested in helping children understand, appreciate, and respect diverse cultures and the national and religious heritage of others. For this reason, we encourage families to come forward and share with the rest of the community their specific family rituals and holidays. In addition, we plan to celebrate holidays and traditions from around the world. As a school, we will also establish our own traditions as they relate to various holidays.

Each class will establish guidelines about celebrating birthdays at school. Students and parents should be sensitive to exclusion/inclusion issues when planning birthday parties outside of school. Invitations should be extended by phone or mail, not at school unless all students in the class are invited.

## Food

Each family is responsible for providing a morning snack and lunch daily for their child. All food should be simple and nutritious and should not require refrigeration or reheating, as such services are not available for students. For safety, all food should be packed in unbreakable containers. Candy and soft drinks are discouraged.

## Playground Guidelines

- Children are expected to treat others safely, kindly and respectfully at all times. That includes finding ways to welcome others in their play.
- Children do not wrestle with each other, pull on other people or their clothing, jump on or otherwise run into someone on purpose.
- Children may throw pinecones or snowballs at trees if no one is in the way, but may not throw at people.
- Children follow the directions of any adult without argument or stalling.
- Children who bring toys or equipment outside are to bring them back inside at the end of recess.
- Unsafe or unkind behavior may result in a child's spending a few minutes out of play beside a teacher or creating an alternate recess plan, depending on the severity. Deliberate unsafe behavior or violence is serious and should be shared with the homeroom teacher and Head of School.
- We encourage and support friendly, creative play.

## **Bullying**

FSP is opposed to bullying behavior, including, but not limited to, harassment based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. A student who is the target of bullying or harassment, or who witnesses such behavior, should tell the perpetrator to stop. If the behavior persists, the student should seek assistance from a trusted teacher or administrator. A student who is bullying or harassing others will be subject to a school response as outlined in “Behavioral Concerns” above.

### **What is bullying?**

- Bullying is an intentional and unprovoked act. The child who bullies wants to harm the victim; it is no accident.
- Bullying involves repeated occurrences. Bullying is not generally considered a random act or a single incident. Rather, a child is repeatedly picked on by another child or is the target of harassment from a whole group of children. It is the repeated nature of bullying that causes anxiety and apprehension in victims, such that the anticipation of bullying becomes as problematic as the bullying itself.
- Bullying is a form of **violence**. It involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, with the more powerful child or group attacking those who are less powerful. Bullying may be **physical** (hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing), **verbal** (taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, threatening), or **emotional** (spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, extorting, or intimidating).
- Bullying can occur face-to-face or indirectly, including electronic acts. An "electronic act" is defined as the transmission of a communication, including, but not limited to, a message, text, sound, or image by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager.

## **Recycling & Compost**

FSP recycles paper, cardboard, glass, and plastics. Food scraps from each classroom are picked up by a local composting service that provides us with rich garden soil. We are eager to create an environmental education program that teaches about the interconnectedness of all things and people. Each family can help by packing lunches and snacks in reusable bags or boxes.

## **AfterCare**

The AfterCare program is designed as an inclusive, child-centered time of play, self-discovery, and learning with supervision and guidance provided by the members of the AfterCare staff. It is an opportunity for children in preschool through eighth grade to take part in a healthy afterschool snack and then to move outdoors for play and exploration. AfterCare runs from 3:00-5:30 p.m. on Monday through Thursday and 1:45-5:30 on Friday. **In order to be able to attend AfterCare, students must have an AfterCare Contract on file specifying which days.** Parents sign their children out each day in the AfterCare notebook by the front door, noting the time of pickup. This ensures we know that a child has left the building. The signing-out procedures also help us bill families correctly. *If a child is not signed out, parents will be charged for the full afternoon.* If a child is picked up after 5:30, we will add a fee of \$20.

## **Afterschool Activities and Community Resources**

FSP encourages afterschool activities that fulfill student interests. If you are willing to sponsor a club or coach a sport, please talk to the Head of School. Because FSP is small, we are unable to offer certain programs available at larger schools, including large-scale athletics, drama, or instrumental programs. For those students who wish to participate in such activities, we recommend that parents consider the many excellent programs that are available for children in their local community. FSP activities each year may include: Cross-Country Running, Photography Club, Soccer, Woodworking, Yoga, Basketball, Floor Hockey, Cross-Country Skiing, and Cricket.

# Parent-School Partnership

## Communication

Teachers and administrators can be reached by email. We do our best to return email within 24 hours Monday through Friday. For more immediate communication, please call the school office at (207) 781-6321. Please do not use staff personal cell phones for school-related communications except in circumstances where staff members have asked their cell phones be used.

## Direct Communication

We hope that parents feel welcome at the school and encouraged to discuss their child's experiences at FSP. Inevitably, questions or concerns will arise about their child's academic experience or a school policy. The faculty and administration want and need to know your thoughts. From time to time, there will also be situations in which parents disagree with a teacher's or an administrator's actions. In the spirit of our Quaker roots, we expect that any person who is having a difficulty will address the difference directly with the other person. It is our expectation that such a discussion would take place at a mutually agreed-upon time and that the parties involved in the discussion be respectful of each other's opinions, points of view, and feelings. Additional resources are available to the school community to resolve differences. Please contact the school office for more information.

## Parent Volunteer Opportunities

Parent involvement is key to the health of the FSP community. Every parent is a member of our "Parent Alliance" which comes together in annual parent forums, monthly parent coffees on the first Thursday of each month, potlucks, and teacher/staff appreciation lunches at the end of the school year. Friends School parents will have the opportunity to participate in the life of the school and their children's classroom in a variety of ways, such as helping with special classroom activities, participating in admissions events, organizing an afterschool club, and assisting with special events to support the school. Initially, please see the "Family Volunteer Opportunities" form in your child's enrollment packet to indicate your interest in a variety of school-wide opportunities; other specific needs will be mentioned in the e-bulletin as they arise. Throughout the school year, your child's teacher will inform you of any classroom-specific needs. Please feel free to talk with your child's teacher or the Head of School if you have other talents that you would like to share.. We thank you for all the volunteering work that happens – it is a large part of what makes our community strong!

## Parent Affinity Group(s)

An affinity group is a network of people who share a common purpose or interest. Affinity groups organized around cultural identifiers (race, gender, religion, etc.) help create inclusion communities by **allowing space for people sharing identifiers to feel specifically supported and best able to be productive members of the larger community**. At this moment at FSP, there is one such family affinity group in place, Families of Students of Color, a parent-convended group composed of families who have students that identify as being a person/ child of color. This group meets to support children of color and provide a safe space that affirms and celebrates their identities. For more information about joining that affinity group, please contact [jenni@friendsschoolportland.org](mailto:jenni@friendsschoolportland.org).

## Supervision of Children at FSP Community Events

When at the school, either for drop off or pick up, or at a community function, parents should always assume the responsibility for their children, being mindful of the school's usual expectations for behavior: safe, respectful, friendly, and ready to learn. It is important to allow teachers to have time to interact with others at community events without the responsibility of monitoring all of the children. Of course, all adults, including teachers, will step in, as necessary, when a child's behavior is inappropriate.

In general, behaving appropriately means that we do the following indoors:

- Walk inside, do not run
- Use furniture and equipment respectfully
- Use inside voices

**These specific guidelines also apply at those times:**

- Parents need to know where their children are at all times. Children who go outside need to be accompanied by parents/guardians.
- When the Meeting Room is used for an event, children should stay in the Meeting Room or the main hallway in the lower level.
- The second floor and all classrooms are off-limits.

- On some occasions, such as movie night, classrooms are used. Permission for classroom use must be arranged ahead of time with the teacher and at least two adults need to be in the room with the children.
- Children who do not follow guidelines will be taken to their parents by any adult who is concerned that safety and/or friendliness are in jeopardy.

We look forward to enjoying our time together at these special events. It does take a village!

## Annual Giving

The Annual Fund is FSP's annual fundraising campaign, which runs in conjunction with the school's fiscal year from July 1-June 30. Like most independent schools, FSP cannot rely solely on revenue from tuition to fully fund its operating budget – the cost of our education would be out of reach for many families if we did. So it is essential that we raise funds through grants and individual donations.

Every family is asked to make an annual gift that is appropriate to their circumstances. Every gift of every amount brings us closer to our goal of 100% parent participation. Gifts range in size from \$5 to \$15,000 and come from current parents, faculty, board members, advisory committee members, past parents, grandparents, alumnx, small businesses, and corporations which match donations made by their employees. All gifts are tax-deductible. Families are asked to make a pledge to the Annual Fund in the Fall. Request letters are mailed twice every year – in the fall and spring – and follow-up communications are primarily via the weekly e-bulletin. Throughout the school year, there are special event fundraisers like our Annual Auction, pop-up book shops, restaurant fundraisers, and a spring phone-a-thon. Questions about FSP's fundraising can be directed to Brooke Burkett, Development Director: (207) 558-6214 or [brooke@friendsschoolportland.org](mailto:brooke@friendsschoolportland.org).

## Arrival, Departures, and Absences

### Arrival

We open the front doors and begin welcoming children in at 7:55. **5th-8th graders must arrive by 8:05. Students in preschool-4th grade must arrive by 8:15.**

Families of preschoolers should park, greet Sara at the front door, and then walk children into the courtyard or through the courtyard door into the classroom (weather dependent). Parents may accompany Kindergarteners into the building if they wish. We ask that parents say goodbye to their 1st-8th graders outside of the building. For the first few days of school, 1st-2nd grade teachers will be outside during arrival to help those children transition into their classrooms.

**If you are late, please accompany your child to the school office.**

### Dismissal

**Dismissal for preschool-4th grade is at 3:00.**

Preschool families: please park and pick up your child just outside the preschool room in the courtyard or inside the preschool classroom (weather dependent).

Kindergarten families: please park and pick up your child outside of the side Kindergarten door.

1st-4th should be picked up in the circle at 3:00 pm. 1st and 2nd graders will be waiting on the north side of the school's entrance, or in the 1-2 tent in very wet weather. 3rd and 4th graders will be waiting on the south side of the school's entrance, on the sidewalk or in the preschool tent in very wet weather.

**Dismissal for 5th-8th graders is at 3:05.**

5th and 6th graders will be waiting on the south side of the entrance, using the preschool tent in very wet weather. Families with children in both middle school and ps-4th grade may pick up at 3:05.

Friday dismissal will run on a similar plan, but with different timing to accommodate early release:

**Dismissal for preschool-4th grade is at 1:45.**

**Dismissal for 5th-8th grade and siblings is at 1:50.**

### Absences

**If you know that your child will be absent or late to school, you must call the School Office at 781-6321.** It is helpful to know before 7:45am so that teachers can be informed at the morning staff meeting. Please leave a

message on the school's answering machine if no one answers the phone. The school will attempt to contact parents after the beginning of the school day if a child is absent and a parent has not called. We discourage parents from taking children out of school except for illness, injury, or family emergency. Regular attendance is necessary for academic and social success.

**Please follow the following procedures for late arrivals or early departures:**

If you are inadvertently late, please accompany your child to the front desk and sign them in there.

If you are picking your child up early, please call ahead. You'll sign out your child at the clipboard by the office and sign your child back in if you return.

*Regular attendance is critical for school success, both academic and social-emotional.*

### **Elective Absences**

We encourage families to plan elective trips during school vacations so students don't miss important learning and social time. From time to time, opportunities do arise for families that require missed school time. Families who are considering taking their children out of school for more than 3 days for an elective absence must email and/ or arrange to meet with the Head of School, the Director of Studies, and the student's teacher/ advisor, preferably at least one month in advance, in order to start a conversation about what extended time away might mean for a particular student. In some cases, Friends School may not be able to accommodate students who are absent from school for extended time. Teachers are not required to provide makeup work for elective extended absences.

### **Chronic Absenteeism**

Students in Kindergarten-8th grade who are absent 18 days or more over the course of a school year are considered chronically absent.

If a student has accrued 10 total absences, we will send a letter to parents/caregivers to let them know. Parents/ caregivers or school personnel may request a team meeting to discuss a plan to support regular attendance.

If a student misses 15 days of school or more (excluding required quarantine for covid-19 or additional medically excused absences, in accordance with a student's plan), we will convene a team meeting with parents/caregivers to make an attendance plan, which may include required summer tutoring or other strategies for the student to make up missed learning.

If a student misses 18 or more days (excluding mandatory quarantine for covid-19 or medically excused absences) they may not be able to continue to be enrolled at Friends School of Portland.

### **Appointments**

Parents are asked to schedule doctor, dentist, and other appointments for students after school or during vacations in order to avoid missing classes and other school activities. If an appointment must be scheduled during school hours, please let your child's teacher know what time your child will be away from school. Please be sure to sign out in the clipboard outside the office as you leave and sign back in when you return.

### **Weather-Related School Closures**

For school closures related to severe weather or other emergencies, FSP will generally follow MSAD 51 (Cumberland/North Yarmouth schools) decisions. School opening may be delayed or school may be canceled for the day. These days will not be made up at the end of the year unless they exceed five days. You may monitor information on Channel 6 and on the WCSH6 website: [http://www.wcsh6.com/weather/severe weather/cancellations closings/](http://www.wcsh6.com/weather/severe_weather/cancellations_closings/). We also post closures on the FSP Facebook page.

We urge parents to **sign up to receive text messages from us about school closures via Remind**. Parents will receive an invitation via email to join Remind (a free service) this fall.

# Safety and Security

## Communication

**In the event that you need to contact your child or your child's teacher during the school day, please call the office (781-6321).** We check messages regularly throughout the day. **Please do not call or text your child or child's teacher directly during the school day.** Email works well if the matter is not time sensitive.

Basic information about the school and planned events can usually be found at the school's website: [www.friendsschoolportland.org](http://www.friendsschoolportland.org). **A weekly e-bulletin is sent to all parents Monday afternoon with weekly news and reminders. This is the primary way the school office communicates with parents: we expect that parents will read the e-bulletin each week.** A quarterly school newsletter goes to parents and the larger FSP community. In addition, each teacher will send classroom newsletters on a regular basis. To make sure you receive this important information, please keep the school informed of your current email address.

In the event that a child's parents occupy separate households, FSP will communicate as openly and directly as possible with both parents and stepparents involved in raising the child. We can provide duplicate copies of newsletters and progress reports to both households. Especially in situations where the child is traveling between two households in the course of a week, we suggest that both parents, if possible, meet together with the teacher at conference times to facilitate communication about the child's school experience.

## Medical Issues

FSP has an ongoing consultative relationship with a pediatrician. State law requires that FSP have on hand certain records for all students, including immunization records. Prior to each school year, parents will receive the appropriate forms, which are also available on the website. The completion of these forms is a requirement for enrollment. It is important that all emergency contact information be correct and that the school has permission to provide emergency treatment for each student. Please notify the school if there are changes in daytime emergency contact numbers. Emergency contact information will remain in the FSP office. Medical records will be secured in the office.

In the case of an illness that manifests itself during the school day, the child will be kept quietly in the conference room or school office until a parent is notified and the child is picked up. Parents need to make arrangements to have sick children picked up from the office within 30 minutes of the school's call. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact designated on the medical form will be notified. In the case of a serious illness or injury, emergency medical services may be contacted.

A sick child does not learn well and may spread illness to others. A child will recover more quickly if s/he has a restful day at home. We ask that students remain home until symptoms are improving and they are fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours and/or 24 hours past vomiting or diarrhea. A fever is considered 100.4 or higher. The CDC recommends that students recovering from respiratory illnesses take additional precautions to prevent transmission, including masking and extra handwashing, for five days after returning to school.

As of September 1 2021, all students, except for those with medical exemptions as documented in accordance with Maine law, are to be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, polio and varicella. Additionally, all students enrolled in grades 7 and 8 must be immunized against meningococcal disease. In accordance with the CDC, we recommend that students be up to date with all appropriate vaccines for the prevention of respiratory viruses including Covid-19 and flu.

Though we no longer require notification about Covid-19 cases, there are a number of communicable diseases about which we do need to be informed in a timely manner. These include varicella (chicken pox), measles, pertussis, hepatitis, mumps, rubella, and meningitis, among others. Please check with us or with your child's pediatrician if you have questions.

We ask parents to notify FSP if lice are discovered at home. If we suspect a child has lice at school, we call parents to help them know what to do next. Parents may pick their child up at the end of his or her normal school day. Children must be treated at home the same day they are discovered--lice treatment shampoo and combing, washing of bed linens and hats in hot water or dried in a hot dryer, and consistent follow up in the days after the discovery (see CDC guidelines: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html>). The condition for return to school is that there are no live lice visible on a child's head. In preschool and Kindergarten, we ask parents to take home bedding to wash in hot water and return. Without naming names, we send home a note to parents of children within that classroom so parents can keep an eye on their own children's scalps. All parents are encouraged to wash school



bedding when a classroom has a child or children with lice. Parents and teachers should speak with children about not sharing hats, pillows, combs or brushes. Lice do not carry diseases, nor are they a sign of poor hygiene.

Whenever possible, please administer prescription medications at home since it is difficult to ensure dosages will be taken on time at school. Students may not take or carry any medicine in school without the school's knowledge. Parents are provided with a form to complete and send in with any medications they are sending to school for their children. All prescriptions must be held under lock and dispensed by school staff. The school may not dispense any medication without parental approval.

The school office has basic first aid supplies, which can be dispensed with parental permission. If you wish to send in a supply of a specific item for your child, please feel free to do so. Make sure it is in its original container, marked with your child's name and accompanied by a completed and signed permission to administer form.

## **Food & Animal Allergies**

Children with documented food allergies or other potentially life-threatening allergies must submit a formal "allergy action plan" completed by a physician, outlining how an allergic reaction should be handled at school. Copies of this form are available in the main office. Classrooms will only be free of the allergen (i.e. nuts or furred animals) as deemed necessary by a physician.

## **Dogs**

Dogs are welcome outside the school only and must be leashed. Dog owners must clean up after their pets.

## **Personal Belongings**

**In all but the most inclement weather, all students will be going outside during the day for recess and study.**

Students are encouraged to wear casual clothes to school. Appropriate footwear is especially important and must be worn for comfort and safety. Children without appropriate clothing may not be able to take part in some school activities. An extra pair of active footwear may be left in your child's cubby along with rain gear. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather and should allow for comfortable movement in the classroom and on the playground. Classroom teachers may suggest that students keep an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothes in school in case the need arises for a change. All clothes should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

With so many resources available to our students through the school's programs, FSP asks that students limit the personal belongings that they bring to school. Electronic games, devices, and toys often limit peer interactions and can distract students from the business of school. The presence of personal belongings in school can also lead some students to feel less than equal to their peers in material possessions. Inappropriate personal items brought to school will be held until a parent retrieves them at the end of the day. In addition, FSP bears no responsibility for personal belongings that are lost or damaged while at school.

We have a lost and found collection. Due to lack of space and the need for tidiness, at the end of each term, unclaimed lost and found items will be donated to charity.

## **Dress**

While there is no dress code at Friends School of Portland, students regularly learn and play outdoors in all weather; clothing that can get dirty and appropriate outdoor gear is essential. We also ask that clothing celebrating or promoting violence/ weapons or drugs, including alcohol, be left at home.

## **Prohibited Items**

Any illegal items or personal belongings that threaten the safety or well-being of oneself or others are strictly prohibited. Prohibited items include weapons of any kind, including knives, lighters, and other implements that, used inappropriately, could hurt someone. Also prohibited are all illegal substances (such as alcohol, medications that have not been approved by a parent and physician, cigarettes, and recreational drugs) as well as everyday substances that, used inappropriately, pose health and safety risks (matches or model airplane glue, for example). Children are not to use heat-producing appliances such as microwave ovens or irons unless they have specific permission and are supervised by an adult.

## **Health and Safety**

Safety procedures are in place to deal with potentially dangerous situations. Friends School of Portland has zero-tolerance for abuse in school programs and activities. Before employment begins, FSP requires all faculty and staff members to participate in Sexual Abuse Awareness Training and participate in a Criminal Background Check. Teachers and staff are mandated reporters for suspected child abuse or neglect and are given specific training about

Child Protective Services procedures. All teachers and staff have also been trained in basic first aid, CPR, and precautions for blood-borne pathogens.

In the course of the school day, teachers or staff will accompany students when they are outside of the FSP classroom area. All students are under adult supervision in the building, and they may be given explicit permission to work alone in a separate classroom space. For the safety of your child, he or she will not be released to a person not listed on the "Parent/Guardian Pick-up Form" submitted at the beginning of the school year. A parent MUST notify the school by phone, email or note sent with the student when regular transportation or pick-up methods vary.

## **Security Procedures**

FSP has worked with the Cumberland Fire Department and Chief of Police to establish fire and intruder/stay-in-place procedures. We hold monthly fire drills and annual stay-in-place/lockdown/evacuation drills just for faculty, and occasional evacuation drills with the school community. You play an important role in our ability to stay aware of all visitors. Please check in with the office manager any time you come into the building, and remember to sign in or out if your student comes late or leaves early. Please speak with our Head of School if you are interested in more details about the safety protocols we have in place in the case of an intruder.

FSP is in close communication with the Cumberland Police Department and the MSAD51 Superintendent's office for their recommendations and updates to best practices. Our teachers are trained annually in safety and security procedures, in the decision-making aspects of when to Lock Down and when to evacuate, and in the logistical implementation of all procedures.

Friends School has a Safety Committee that meets to review and consider updates to its procedures.

### **Hold**

A Hold protocol may be used in the event of a reported external threat in the broader community or a threat in motion outdoors. In a Hold procedure, FSP immediately locks all exterior doors, pulls students in from all outdoor activities, and asks teachers to plan for indoor learning instead. Unlike a "Lock Down," students continue to go about their school day indoors. Teachers communicate with students or answer questions as needed in a developmentally appropriate way.

### **Lock Down**

A Lock Down protocol may be used in the extremely unlikely event of an active intruder entering the building, if evacuation is ruled out for safety reasons. Teachers are trained in Lock Down best practices, which are updated annually with consultation from third parties.

*In both a Lock Down and Hold, school will use the Remind App to send alerts. School will let parents know: a synopsis of the perceived threat, the recommendation, and whether we are asking for any adaptations to pickup plans.*

## **Re-enrollment**

FSP will offer re-enrollment to all students and families who have demonstrated that they are a good match for FSP. Once offered re-enrollment, each family must return the re-enrollment agreement and deposit by the date stipulated on the agreement in order to reserve a place. After that date, vacancies will be filled from the general applicant pool and waiting list. Any late or delinquent tuition for the current school year must be paid in full before a student may be re-enrolled for the coming year. Enrollment decisions may be reconsidered if academic or behavioral concerns arise in the second half of the school year. FSP reserves the right to withhold re-enrollment contracts from students and parents who present behavioral problems that are destructive to the educational community. The Head of School will make this determination in consultation with the faculty.

**Re-enrollment agreements with deposits are due Friday, February 23, 2024.**

### **Tuition and Financial Aid**

Because the majority of our costs are paid by tuition, the prompt payment of tuition is essential to the proper functioning of the school. Failure to pay tuition in a timely manner may result in late charges or dismissal which does not relieve you of your financial obligation. If you encounter an unexpected financial hardship, please notify us as soon as possible so that we can explore possibilities of financial aid or rescheduling tuition payments. Please note

that any unpaid balance from the previous school year must be paid before your child can attend school in the coming year.

FSP offers three basic tuition payment plans. Under the first plan, tuition is payable in one installment by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Under the second plan, tuition is payable in two installments, one by July 1<sup>st</sup> and the second by the first class day after January 1<sup>st</sup>. Under the third plan, tuition is payable in ten equal installments through FACTS Management Company beginning in May.

A link to the FACTS payment plan is available on the website: [www.friendsschoolportland.org](http://www.friendsschoolportland.org) >>Admissions.

Tuition assistance at FSP is based on need as determined through FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment Service and reapplication is required yearly. A link is available on the website: >>Admissions>>Tuition Assistance. Families already enrolled at FSP will receive priority in allocation of tuition assistance if application deadlines are met.

**The deadline for financial aid applications through FACTS is January 19, 2024.**