

f2024-2025

# Forest Hills Family Handbook

Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center Inc.

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**FOREST HILLS**

*Private School & Retreat Center*

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## Vision & Mission

At Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center, our vision is to provide a safe, outdoor learning experience that serves the spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual gifts of all children.

- Through daily breathwork, yoga movements and mindfulness practices, children are given the opportunity to turn inward and ground throughout their day.
- Through inquiry and play-based learning, children are given opportunities to experience authentic and meaningful learning, through real-world experiences and questioning. The curriculum portion of our program is approached through a Waldorf teaching philosophy and makes some connections to the Ontario Curriculum in mathematics, literacy, the arts and science. The *Christopherus Homeschool Curriculum* is used to develop daily main lessons. These lessons allows for a learning process that encompasses creativity, imagination, and the individual artistic qualities of each child. Children experience learning with their hands (willing), their heart (feeling) and then their head (thinking).
- Forest School learning philosophies encourage play, exploration and supported risk-taking. These values help to foster a deep connection to nature, promote curiosity and stewardship for all living things, and build self-confidence.
- Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center Inc. is a learning pod/ micro-school and unlicensed child care center for school-aged children throughout the school year, as well as a weekend rental property for community gatherings and educational workshops. It is located on a 25-acre privately owned property, located at 316667 31st Line, Embro, Ontario, in the county of Oxford. Forest Hills Private School is currently in the process of becoming a certified Forest School through the [Child and Nature Alliance of Canada](#).

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## About the Founder

Jordin Smale was born and raised in the little hamlet of Gobles, Ontario. Growing up, her childhood consisted of playing outside, spending time with friends and helping out at their barns, and attending a small rural public school. As soon as she could lend a hand, she joined her parents at their family-owned and operated business until she attended Wilfrid Laurier University and Nipissing University in 2011. Jordin always knew she wanted to become a teacher and guide children in their learning.

Jordin began her teaching career in 2016 as an Ontario Certified Teacher for Thames Valley District School Board. Her qualifications include Primary/ Junior/ Intermediate Certification, with a French as A Second Language Specialist. Working in the school board, Jordin gained valuable experience teaching within a wide array of grades and school environments. In 2021, Jordin became incredibly intrigued by the idea of alternative and holistic education, which included outdoor learning, forest schooling, mindfulness practices and child-led learning. In 2022, she created “The River Holistic Education”, which was a private learning pod business located in St. Marys, Ontario. After a very successful year, the program began to expand, and the need for a larger learning space emerged. One year later, Jordin incorporated “Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center”; a holistic learning pod/ microschool and retreat rental property, located at 316667 31st. Line, Embro, Ontario.

Jordin is a mother of two, wife, teacher and Reiki II practitioner. She is passionate about helping to provide children with opportunities to thrive, find peace and security in nature, and explore their own passions. She also loves being a part of a like-minded



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community and being able to provide parents with support, clarity, education and holistic alternatives, and healing in their parenting journeys.

## **Program Land Acknowledgment and Commitment to Reconciliation**

*We acknowledge and thank the Haudenosaunee and People of the Longhouse as the stewards of this land, and their traditional territories on which we live, learn, work, play and travel, here in Southwestern Ontario. We are mindful that the Dish With One Spoon treaty was negotiated here to promote peace and sharing. It is with gratitude that we are invited as a community into this treaty to continue to respect and honor this land.*

We acknowledge that Forest Hills Private School resides on land that was once inhabited by our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters. We are reminded of our responsibilities to our relationship and connection to the Land and people. We are called to take action and commit to reconciliation by continuing to educate future generations about the past, present and future of these relations. By instilling the values of stewardship and reciprocity in our young adventure seekers, we are hopeful that these responsibilities can be fulfilled.

## **Programs**

Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center offers a combination of [Forest School philosophy](#), as well as [Waldorf-inspired](#) curriculum methods in its programming. This combination allows children to experience nature while engaging in various curriculum topics such as science, engineering, mathematics, language arts, physical education, and socio-emotional skill development. In addition, emphasis on daily mindfulness practices allow for children to feel a sense of spiritual balance throughout their day, as well as be better equipped to understand and regulate their emotions. As these concepts merge together, our skilled Guides help to “guide” children through inquiry, risk assessment, environmental stewardship, and engage with their hands, their heart and then their head.

The themes and activities are seasonally-based and depend on the availability of the land, weather conditions and the ability and willingness of the students.

Examples of Forest School & Waldorf inspired activities include:



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Community Circles - Connecting, sharing, reflecting, singing and welcoming

Storytelling & Nature Journaling - Bird watching, nature exploration, scavenger hunts

Forest Arts - Nature weaving, building little worlds, clay-making, drama and imaginative play

Food Preparation - Foraging, gardening, baking & cooking, homesteading & preservation

Survival Skills - Tool use, ropes & knots, fire building, shelter/den building, animal tracking

Mindfulness - Sit-spots, breathwork, yoga movements, intuition practice, 5-senses activities, gratitude

STEM - Experiments, building & design challenges, maker-space activities

Sports & Games - Imaginative play, nature-based games & movements, sports and physical activities



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## **Co-operative Toddler & Kindergarten Program**

Young children learn best through play and discovery, and the outdoors provides endless opportunities to do so! The preschool ("Hatchlings"; ages 1-3) and kindergarten program ("Sharps"; ages 4-6) at Forest Hills Private School offers children the unique experience of immersing in nature for the majority of the day. Children will be able to explore the outdoor mud kitchen, go on guided nature walks on the path, build dens and little worlds, learn from nature-inspired stories and songs, and engage in outdoor/indoor theme-based learning centers. Children will also be able to find balance in calming and restful activities, such as guided meditations and yoga. All of these activities allow for young children to build meaningful relationships with one another and the land, as well as be exposed to the fundamental building blocks of mathematics, science, literacy, health and physical education, and socio-emotional skills. A napping space is available in the upstairs area of the Main Hall building if children require rest.

The Co-operative Toddler and Kindergarten program is offered during the months of September to June. Parents may register children 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 days per week. The co-operative toddler program is free, and parents/guardians attend with their child for the duration of the morning, afternoon or entire day. Parents attending with their toddler must provide a current Vulnerable Sector Check as a volunteer. The cost of the program for Kindergarten is \$50 per day. Families are able to commit to the program by term; Term 1 (September- January) and Term 2 (February-June).

## **School-Aged Program**

Our school-aged program ("Coopers", ages 6-7; "Merlins", ages 8-9; "Red-Tails", ages 10-12) is designed for students ages 7-12, who are homeschooled or in Public/Catholic/Private School systems and are seeking to supplement and enrich their child's learning. This program is also well suited for families wishing to enroll full-time.

Students will engage in various seasonally-planned activities such as nature exploration, nature journaling, forest arts & music, survival skill-building, as well as mindfulness and gratitude practices. These activities will contribute to understanding



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concepts in mathematics, science, literacy, health and physical education, and socio-emotional skills. Curriculum concepts will be taught using the [Christopherus Homeschool Curriculum](#). Emphasis will also be placed on embedding Indigenous culture and teachings into curriculum, with regular guest speakers. In addition, community members willing to share their passions will be invited to host workshops and seminars for both students and parents. Community circles to begin and end the day will also allow for children to develop personal connections and have time to reflect on their learning and the relationships they are building with the land and each other.

Parents may register their children to attend for 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 days per week during the months of September to June. The cost of the program is \$50 per day. Families are able to commit to the program by term; Term 1 (September- January) and Term 2 (February-June).

## **Location & Contact Information**

Forest Hills Private School is located at: 316667 31st Line, Embro, Ontario, Canada

Email: [foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com](mailto:foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com)

Website: [www.fhprivateschool.com](http://www.fhprivateschool.com)

Phone: 519-802-3972 (Jordin Smale)

Emergency Landline Phone: 226-575-4688

Guide Emails:

Jordin Smale: [foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com](mailto:foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com)

Jayne Edighoffer: [jaynee.fhps@gmail.com](mailto:jaynee.fhps@gmail.com)

Jen Habermehl: [jenh.fhps@gmail.com](mailto:jenh.fhps@gmail.com)

Nicola Cully: [nikkic.fhps@gmail.com](mailto:nikkic.fhps@gmail.com)

Laura Edighoffer: [laurae.fhps@gmail.com](mailto:laurae.fhps@gmail.com)

Jacob Macedo: [jacobm.fhps@gmail.com](mailto:jacobm.fhps@gmail.com)

Alisha Smith: [alishas.fhps@gmail.com](mailto:alishas.fhps@gmail.com)

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## History of Forest Schooling & National Commitment to Honoring Indigenous Voices

The concept of Forest Schooling originated in Europe in the 1800s, which placed an emphasis on nature, imagination and childhood innocence. Inspired by this model, the first Canadian Forest School emerged in 2008 in Ottawa, Ontario. Then in 2012, Forest School Canada, was created as an educational initiative through the [Child and Nature Alliance of Canada](#).

Forest & Nature School is founded on the three pillars of Trust, Reciprocal Relationships, and Freedom, where “children and educators build a relationship with the Land through regular and repeated access to the same outdoor space over an extended period of time” (CNAC, 2024). Programming is also based on [The Principles of Forest and Nature School](#).

By inviting, listening to and honoring Indigenous voices into our learning community, we foster deeper connections with one another and the Land. In emphasizing an appreciation of Indigenous teachings into our programming through literature, artwork, and guided ceremony, we strive to continue to rebuild and strengthen these relationships with one another and the land.



# Insurance Policy



278 Pinebush Road, Suite 200, Cambridge, ON N1T 1Z6

Phone: 800-265-4000

Fax: 519-458-4366

CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE							
This certificate is issued as a matter of information only and confers no rights upon the certificate holder and imposes no liability on the insurer. This certificate does not amend, extend or alter after the coverage afforded by the policies below.							
INSURED'S FULL NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS				BROKER'S FULL NAME AND ADDRESS			
FOREST HILLS PRIVATE SCHOOL & RETREAT CENTER INC. 1801 PERTH RD 139, ST. MARYS, ON N4X 1C8				Magenta Insurance Professionals by McFarlan Rowlands 503 York Street, London, ON N6B 1R4			
COVERAGES							
This is to certify that the policies of insurance listed below have been issued to the insured named above for the policy period indicated notwithstanding any requirement, term or condition of any contract or other document with respect to which this certificate may be issued or may pertain. The insurance afforded by the policies described herein is subject to all terms, exclusions and conditions of such policies.							
LIMITS SHOWN MAY HAVE BEEN REDUCED BY PAID CLAIMS							
TYPE OF INSURANCE	COVERAGE BASIS	LIMIT TYPE	LIMIT OF LIABILITY	DEDUCTIBLE	INSURANCE COMPANY AND POLICY NUMBER Subscribing Companies as	EFFECTIVE DATE	EXPIRY DATE
<b>Liability</b>							
Liability		General Aggregate	Not Applicable		CP83971A	Sep. 25, 2023	Sep. 25, 2024
Bodily Injury and Property Damage	Occurrence	Each Occurrence	2,000,000	1,000	CP83971A	Sep. 25, 2023	Sep. 25, 2024
Products and/or Completed Operations	Occurrence	Aggregate	2,000,000	1,000	CP83971A	Sep. 25, 2023	Sep. 25, 2024
Personal Injury and Advertising Injury Liability	Occurrence	Aggregate	2,000,000	1,000	CP83971A	Sep. 25, 2023	Sep. 25, 2024
Medical Payments	Occurrence	Each Person	25,000	Nil	CP83971A	Sep. 25, 2023	Sep. 25, 2024
Tenants Legal Liability	Occurrence	Any One Premise	2,000,000	1,000	CP83971A	Sep. 25, 2023	Sep. 25, 2024
Cross Liability			Included		CP83971A	Sep. 25, 2023	Sep. 25, 2024
Contractual Liability			Included		CP83971A	Sep. 25, 2023	Sep. 25, 2024
<b>Non-Owned Automobile</b>							
Hired Automobile (SEF 94)	Occurrence	Occurrence	250,000	500	CP83971C	Sep. 25, 2023	Sep. 25, 2024
Non-Owned Automobile	Occurrence	Occurrence	2,000,000	Nil	CP83971C	Sep. 25, 2023	Sep. 25, 2024
CERTIFICATE HOLDER NAME AND ADDRESS				DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS/ LOCATIONS/ AUTOMOBILES/ SPECIAL ITEMS			
To Whom it may concern				Proof of Insurance.			
CERTIFICATE HOLDER - NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS				CANCELLATION			
To Whom it may concern				Should any of the above described policies be cancelled before the expiration date thereof, the issuing company will endeavour to mail written notice to the certificate holder named on the left, but failure to mail such notice shall impose no obligation or liability of any kind upon the company, its brokers or representatives.			
SUBSCRIBING COMPANIES ON BEHALF OF INTACT PUBLIC ENTITIES INC., AS MANAGING GENERAL AGENT:			A.M. BEST	Cancellation Notice: 30 days			
Intact Insurance Company			"A"	 <b>Authorized Representative</b> Larry Ryan		<b>Date</b>  September 29, 2023	
Temple Insurance Company			"A"				
Underwriting at Lloyd's of London			"A"				
Liberty Mutual Insurance Company (Property Only)			"A"				

INSURED'S FULL NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS
FOREST HILLS PRIVATE SCHOOL & RETREAT CENTER INC. 1801 PERTH RD 139, ST. MARYS, ON N4X 1C8

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## Policies & Procedures

### Child Protection & Privacy Policy

All personal files and forms (electronic and hard copy) are kept in a secure cabinet in the locked Executive Director's office and on a secure Google account, only accessed by staff with permission. The following data and information is collected from each student:

- Household information and emergency contacts, student photo
- Signed waiver of liability
- Copy of student ID (passport, birth certificate or Baptismal certificate)
- Completed consent form and completed medical form

The purpose of collecting this information is to allow Forest Hills Private School to appropriately respond to an emergency or a health concern, allow authorized personnel to pick-up students, and create groupings according to age, development and readiness. Any personal data shared, including photographic images, is only used in accordance with your consent in the registration form. Please note that where consent is given to share images on the internet, they can be viewed by the general public. We do not share details with third parties without consent.

**Photos/Videos:** Parents may request to opt-out of the use of images of their child/ children for promotional/outreach purposes by Forest Hills Private School, including, but not limited to, photo, audio, and/or video media. \*Note: Your child's picture and video may appear on Forest Hills Private School public social media pages (Instagram & Facebook).

All information collected in the registration forms is considered private and confidential and will be treated accordingly in adherence to this Privacy Policy. Should you have any questions or concerns relating to our Privacy Policy or if you would like access to your child's files, please email <foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com> for more information.

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## **Payment Procedure, Holidays & Professional Development Days**

The daily tuition cost for children in the School-Aged Program is \$50 per day. A non-refundable deposit of \$500 (equal to payment for the last 10 attended days) is required to complete registration for the 2024-2025 school year. Families will be able to make bi-weekly payments by e-transfer, cheque or cash. Invoices will be sent on a bi-weekly basis on Mondays, and are to be paid the Friday of that week. All e-transfers can be sent to <foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com>.

Forest Hills Private School will not operate programs on statutory holidays. No payments are required on these days. \*New for 2024-2025: Staff will be taking part in Professional Development Days ("PD Days"). There will be no programming scheduled on these days. As staff will be working on these days, families who attend 1 day a week will be charged for the first 3 out of the 8 PD days. Families who attend 2 or more days, will be charged for the first 4 of 8 PD days.

The holiday and PD day schedule is as follows:

TERM 1: First Day -September 3, 2024  
Sept. 27th - PD Day (Friday)  
Oct 14th - Thanksgiving Holiday  
Oct 29 - PD Day (Tuesday)  
Nov 27th - PD Day (Wednesday)  
December 23 - January 3 - Christmas Break  
January 27th- PD Day (Monday)

TERM 2: Begins February 3, 2025  
February 17th - Family Day Holiday  
February 27th - PD Day (Thursday)  
March 10 -14th - March Break  
March 28 - PD Day (Friday)  
April 18th - Good Friday Holiday  
April 21st - Easter Monday Holiday  
May 6th - PD (Tuesday)  
May 19th - Victoria Day Holiday  
June 23 - PD (Monday)  
Last Day: June 27th

Payment is required for "Inclement Weather Days". It is at the discretion of the Director and Guides at Forest Hills Private School to consider the dangers of hosting a school day when weather is considered unsafe to remain open.

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## **Terms & Conditions (Cancellation Policy)**

A deposit of \$500 per child is required at registration, which pays for the last 10 days that the child attends. Our school year program is sectioned into two terms (Term 1; September to January & Term 2; February to June).

In the event that a child's registration in a program must be canceled or changed before a program begins or during a program, Forest Hills Private School must receive a written notice of cancellation one month in advance of the cancellation or change date in order to waive a \$100 Cancellation Fee. If Forest Hills Private School receives notice that a student is changing or canceling/ not returning to the program with less than one month's written notice, Forest Hills Private School will charge a \$100 Cancellation Fee. Payment that has been made beyond the cancellation date will be refunded. Forest Hills Private School does not issue refunds for single day absences (ie., illness, appointments, trips). If a student is expected to be absent for multiple days due to extenuating circumstances (ie., severe illness, death in the family, etc.), Forest Hills Private School reserves the right to review this on a case-by-case basis in order to determine if a refund can be issued for the missed days. Refunds will be given in the event that a day's program is canceled due to inclement weather. If Forest Hills Private School programs are forced to cancel due to Public Health related closures, all students will be issued a full refund for any remaining days in the program.

## **Emergency Contact with Guides**

Forest Hills Private School Guides can be contacted on school property during school hours (9:00am-3:30pm) at the school's landline number 226-575-4688 or via WhatsApp at 519-802-3972

Parents will also be able to contact Guides at their personal Forest Hills emails (see "Location & Contact Information" above).

## **Child Entry & Release Forms**

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Parents/guardians must give written authorization for any adults who may be picking up their child at the end of the day or for mid-day appointments. In the event that a staff member does not have written authorization for an alternative pick-up, staff will phone the parent to receive verbal authorization by phone for the new pick-up person. Parents must notify the school's Executive Director (Jordin Smale) via email or message before changing the usual pick-up routine.

### **Sign-In & Sign-Out Requirements**

Children must be dropped-off or picked-up by a person who is at least 16 years old and who is listed on the authorized pick-up list on the child's registration form. Guides will take attendance, which will be kept in the school's records. Please report any absences for your family by emailing our school's Executive Director before the beginning of the day of the absence: Jordin Smale at <[foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com](mailto:foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com)> ATTN: Absent Today.

Thank you for your assistance with this process!

### **Unauthorized Pick-up Procedure**

If someone other than a parent/authorized adult arrives to pick up a child and FH Guides have not been notified in advance by the authorized adult, staff members will:

1. Call the parent/guardian for verbal authorization.
2. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the child must remain in the Guide's care until the parent/guardian has been reached.
3. Guides will remain with the child until an authorized adult gives verbal consent or arrives.

### **Late Pick-Up & Extended Day Policy**

Parents must make alternate arrangements for pick up if they cannot pick their child up by 3:30pm. A late fee charge of \$10.00 for every 10 minutes, or part thereof, will be charged for the aforementioned times. If there is an emergency and you are going to be late, we ask that you call the school to notify us.



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Numerous or persistent incidences of late pick up may result in termination of care. It is important for parents to have an alternate person who can pick up their child when they are late. All available alternate pick-up persons must be on the registration form prior to the beginning of school.

Currently, there are no Before School & After School Care options. In the future, Forest Hills Private School may offer these services depending on the community's needs.

## **FH Guide Responsibilities**

To learn about our Guides and their individual journeys in education and child care, please visit: [Guides — Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center \(fhprivateschool.com\)](https://fhprivateschool.com/Guides)

Our Guides are passionate about helping children to find their own passions and support their connection to the natural world. The Guides at Forest Hills are professionals in the education field and possess the training and experience that will support the growth and success of each individual child. Kindness, cooperation and respect will be modeled by our staff for the children to witness and emulate. Our goal as a team is to provide a safe space for children to learn about themselves, build confidence and skills, and explore their own gifts and talents.

It is the responsibility of the Guides and volunteers at Forest Hills Private School to ensure the safety of all participants at all times. Forest Hills Private School is committed to creating an environment where everyone feels safe and included.

Any suspected cases of abuse and negligence will be promptly and appropriately dealt with by the staff, as per the "Suspected Child Abuse Policy" ([Child Abuse Policy and Procedures - Google Docs](#)). Furthermore, all Guides and volunteers will have current Vulnerable Sector Police Checks submitted to the Executive Director prior to working. Each Guide will hold current Emergency First Aid and CPR qualifications, and be trained in Epi-Pen use. We will also aim to provide adequate support to ensure all staff and volunteers are confident and competent when following the policies and procedures we have set out in this handbook.

The responsibilities of a Forest Hills Guide are wide-ranging and include, but are not limited to:

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- Ensuring the physical safety of students by co-assessing and co-managing risks on an on-going basis and making students feel comfortable, safe and connected.
  - Modeling the care and respect for the natural world, as well as respectful use of tools and supplies.
  - Ensuring that policies and procedures, rules and guidelines are understood and followed.
  - Developing learning tasks and activities that allow them to be co-learners and curious/enthusiastic about learning alongside students.
  - Encouraging new learning by introducing loose parts, supplies, provocations, and resources that change the environment.
  - Helping to scaffold student learning so that students may continue to build on their previous skills.
  - Communicating with parents daily and ensuring that families understand how to equip students with proper clothing, outerwear, and other supplies according to the changing season, so that they are physically comfortable for learning and exploring.



## **Student to Guide Ratios**

Forest Hills Private School follows ratio guidelines recommended by the Ministry of Education and Forest School Canada. The ratios vary depending on the ages of students and the adults accompanying them. The ratios are as follows:

- Preschool-aged children to staff ratio is 5:1 (maximum of 10 children per day)
- Kindergarten-aged children to staff ratio is 8:1
- School-aged children to staff ratio is 8:1

Reduced ratios cannot be less than two-thirds of the required ratio (with the exception of lunchtime where one supervisor is present). This is in accordance with the recommendations from the Ontario Ministry of Education. Regular volunteers also help to create smaller ratios during small group learning.

## **Forest Hills Volunteer Responsibilities**

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Forest Hills Private School welcomes community members to volunteer and take part in our daily learning and exploration. All FH volunteers are required to submit a current Vulnerable Sector Check from their local OPP before beginning. Volunteer responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring the physical and emotional safety of students alongside Guides
- Understanding the policies and procedures of this FH Handbook
- Monitoring students during lunch time and forest time
- Helping students to dress in outdoor gear
- Assisting Guides during activities and curriculum time
- Preparing, cleaning and tidying up learning materials
- Cleaning and sanitizing learning spaces and bathrooms

## **Parent & Guardian Responsibilities**

To ensure success, children should come to the program with a healthy and nutritious lunch, a refillable water bottle, and appropriate and adequate clothing and footwear each day. Parents and guardians will be required to complete a formal registration package before their child begins their program at Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center. The Executive Director will keep a copy of this package in a secure location (either physical or electronic), while the child is present at the program. Forest Hills Private School will require:

- A completed consent form that will give relevant medical details of the child, permission to administer medicines and/or to admit the child to hospital for emergency treatment
- Emergency contact details and optional permission to take and use photographs and videos of the child for promotional purposes and reports
- A consent/waiver for the child to take part in specific Forest School activities, such as tool use
- Information about the child regarding likes/ dislikes, special needs, possible triggers for anxiety, trauma background, etc.

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At the end of the day, parents and guardians are encouraged to ensure that their child has all of their belongings, and has done a quick visual check of their child, and has made quick contact with a Guide for their child before leaving (ie., check for ticks, check-in with Guide about possible injuries, etc.). Parents are also expected to observe prompt drop-off and pick-up times to avoid overflow of cars and distractions for students beginning their day. All cooperation and support is greatly appreciated!

## **Illness Policy**

Participants (ie., Guides, students and volunteers) should stay home for at least 48 hours after their last symptoms have subsided, if they have experienced:

- Temperature (100.4°F or higher)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Pink Eye or any other highly contagious illnesses

Should the above-mentioned situations arise while at Forest Hills Private School, the parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to pick up their child immediately. In the case of communicable diseases such as measles, pink eye, chickenpox, mumps, flu, strep throat, viral pneumonia, etc., a sick child may return to Forest Hills Private School after their health care provider has communicated that it is safe for them to do so. Any outbreak of communicable disease or lice treatment will be communicated to parents/guardians as soon as possible

## **Emergency Policy and First Aid Procedure**

Forest Hills Private School has detailed emergency procedures with which all Guides and Volunteers will be familiar with prior to the start of the school year. A copy of these procedures is carried by Guides, along with a First Aid Kit, emergency contact numbers list, and medical information about all participants enrolled in the program. All staff are trained in First Aid and CPR, along with the school's emergency procedures. First Aid Kits will be restocked as needed and adjusted for every season. The school property is easily accessible for emergency vehicles. All staff carry a cell phone and walkie-talkie throughout

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the day so that in the event of an emergency, the Executive Director can be notified immediately.

Due to the nature of outdoor learning, there is a daily potential of risk that children may be subject to small and minor injuries (i.e. bumps, bruises, scratches, scrapes). Appropriate First Aid care will be taken for minor injuries. Parents will be notified at the end of the day if these minor injuries occur, either in person or by messaging/ email. If children experience a greater injury or an injury to the head, parents will be notified by phone immediately. Incident Reports will be completed, based on the case and circumstances of an incident involving a child getting hurt. If families require more information, please contact the Executive Director. Additionally, each student will receive a Waiver of Liability form to be completed and signed by a parent or guardian at registration prior to the start of school, as some Forest School activities hold risk.

## **Toileting & Handwashing**

Forest Hills Private School has accessible toilets and showers in the Main Hall, as well toilets in the changerooms. Parents will be asked to remind their children to use the washroom before they arrive.

Once in the forest, in the event that a child needs to use the washroom, a Guide will help the child find a suitable place to relieve him/herself outside. Guides will follow a “Leave No Trace” philosophy to limit the impact on the environment. If this is not possible, one adult will accompany the child to the washroom inside the Main Hall or outdoor washroom. Water and hand cleaner will be carried with groups at all times. Children will be encouraged to use the washroom prior to any excursion to the back forest. The toilets on site have heights and stools to accommodate all ages. We understand that accidents happen, especially if children are learning how to navigate outdoor learning and various layers of clothing. If a child does have an accident or is not able to make it to the toilet in time, we will use the extra clothes that are sent with the child to school, and send soiled clothes home in a bag (Parents/guardians will be asked to replenish the extra clothes for the following day that the child attends).

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Hand-washing will be encouraged frequently throughout the day. This will include before and after eating meals and snacks, after going to the bathroom, and when children become messy from playing outside. Access to water outside is available for washing, as well as essential-oil based disinfecting hand sprays and wipes.

## **Food Policy**

**Nuts & Allergies:** During registration, families will be asked about food allergies and the risks of anaphylaxis. If no registered students have listed allergies specifically to nuts, then the school will welcome this food. However, if there are students enrolled with allergies to nuts, the school will become a “Nut-Free” Zone. Families will obtain this information at registration.

**Snack-Sharing:** Although there may be times for students to bake and cook food in the kitchen during lessons for sharing, we ask participants to refrain from sharing snacks brought from home, as many families hold different values with respect to food.

**Litterless Lunches:** We encourage students to bring snacks that are litter-free as much as possible to limit the impact on the environment. Some examples of containers to use are Bio-boxes, beeswax wraps, boxes with multiple dividers, miniature mason jars, etc.

**Drinking Water:** Tap water on-site is potable drinking water, designated as safe by the County of Oxford water sample tests that are conducted monthly. Students will be encouraged to refill water bottles at the kitchen tap.

## **Epipens & Medication Administration Policy & Procedure**

To mitigate risk as much as possible, all children who require an Epipen must wear theirs at all times on their person throughout the duration of the day (ex: in a fanny pack around their waist), unless otherwise stated by the parent or guardian in writing. Guides will not be responsible for carrying the Epipen in their own personal bags or on their person.

Any medication must be given to the child’s Guide in the morning at drop-off, with written information regarding the type of medication and instructions for administering it. The “Medical Form” located in the registration package must be completed for any



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pharmaceutical medication that must be administered by a Guide. Depending on the type of medication, the medication may be kept in the child's backpack, the Guide's backpack or securely in the Main Hall. If a medication must be administered at specific times of the day, Guides will set a timer/ reminder to ensure medication is given on time.

## **Poison Ivy**

Poison ivy is present in some areas of the property during the spring, summer and fall months. Guides will be trained to identify the plant, and frequent risk assessments will allow for mitigation and avoidance of these areas (ie., taping off and marking areas). Students will also be educated on identifying the poison ivy, its whereabouts on the property and what to do in the event of exposure (ie., Soap and water as soon as possible). To further limit exposure, students are encouraged to wear long pants or long socks, and close-toed shoes while participating in activities in the forest. If a child comes in contact with the plant, Guides will assist the child in washing the affected area with soap and water within 15-60 minutes of exposure to hopefully remove the plant's oil before a skin reaction can take place. Soap and water will be available to students and Guides in all areas of the school, and soap will be provided in the First Aid Kits. For parents who have given consent to natural remedies, essential oils may also be applied to the affected area, after washing. Parents/ Guardians will be notified immediately if their child is believed to have been in contact with poison ivy.

## **Tick Protocol**

Ticks are present in Oxford County and are most active in temperatures above freezing. To limit exposure, we suggest that students wear long pants, long socks, and closed-toed shoes while participating in activities. We suggest that students also tuck pant legs into socks and tuck shirts into pants to limit possible tick exposure. Various essential oils, such as citronella, peppermint and eucalyptus are shown to deter ticks, and applying before and during school hours is encouraged. Parents are also encouraged to check their child for ticks after every day of school. Daily tick-checks will be conducted at closing-circle time with the Guides and children.

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If a tick is seen on a participant, it is brushed off. If a tick is attached, staff who are trained to do so will safely remove the tick and save it in a clear plastic bag. Parents/guardians will be informed at pickup, and given the opportunity to take the tick to the health unit for testing. All parents will be informed if there has been a tick encounter and they will be reminded to check their children after each day .

Blacklegged ticks, which carry Lyme disease, are not commonly found in Oxford County at this time. According to Public Health, the risk of encountering a blacklegged tick in the county is low. For more information about ticks, visit [Ticks and Lyme Disease - Southwestern Public Health \(swpublichealth.ca\)](https://www.swpublichealth.ca/ticks-and-lyme-disease). For more information about being outdoors during tick season, visit a blog post on the Child and Nature Alliance website: <http://childnature.ca/what-can-we-do-about-ticks/>

## **Head Lice Protocol**

Head lice may affect participants at Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center, and although it is not considered a communicable disease, it is an uncomfortable condition that can spread very rapidly. If head lice or nits are present, we ask that families:

- Contact the Executive Director at Forest Hills Private School immediately so that other families can be informed (the affected individuals will remain anonymous). The student may be encouraged to stay home until lice have been removed
- Seek treatment suggestions on the information sheet provided by Southwestern Public Health: [HeadLiceFactSheetF1 \(swpublichealth.ca\)](https://www.swpublichealth.ca/headlice)

## **Suspected Concussion Policy & Procedure**

Through daily risk assessment, Guides at Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center will be proactive in preventing/mitigating environmental risks that could lead to a concussion (ie., hanging branches, slippery ice, etc.). Guides will be trained to:

1. Safely remove the student with a suspected concussion from the activity
2. Recognize the signs of a suspected concussion (ie., drowsiness, memory)

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3. Respond and take appropriate action if concussion is suspected (ie., Call parent immediately following incident, continue to monitor health of student by asking questions and performing First Aid if needed)

## **Fire & Water Safety Protocols**

Forest Hills Private School will conduct fire drills (3 times in the spring and 3 times in the fall) to ensure students and Guides can practice evacuating the area safely in the event of a fire. Staff will take part in training so that each member understands their responsibilities prior to the start of school programs. All measures will be in accordance with the local Fire Department. Students will also take part in learning about wood stove safety, as the Main Hall is heated by wood.

There is a beautiful, large pond on the property that is easily accessible. Although this water offers immense opportunities for learning about nature, it also offers high risk. Clear boundaries will be set out by the Executive Director and Guides to ensure that students understand the risk and proximity of the water. We will continue to monitor the pond risks and make appropriate adjustments to safety when needed (ie., putting up a snow fence around the pond during specific months, etc.).

There is also a pool on the property that remains open during the months of June and September. The pool is only accessible through the change room doors, which remain locked at all times. If children are given the opportunity for swimming lessons and swim time after school hours, children are to be accompanied at all times by parents/adults, and may only be on the pool deck with a Certified LifeGuard present.

## **Risk Management Policies & Procedures**

Experiencing, managing and assessing risk are all important skills that play a large role in healthy childhood development and are integral to Forest Schooling pedagogy. Forest Hills Guides and volunteers will assess and mitigate risk alongside students, as it is important that children acquire these skills with the support, modeling and knowledge of adults. Our Guides conduct seasonal on-site risk assessments and activity risk assessments on an on-going basis, always considering the balance between risk and benefits when doing so.

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These assessments are set out by [The Child & Nature Alliance of Canada](#) in the [“Risk-Benefit Assessment for Outdoor Play: A Canadian Toolkit”](#).

Some of the risks inherent to Forest School and outdoor play include, but are not limited to:

- Injuries from executing strenuous and demanding physical activities (i.e. rolling an ankle on uneven ground in the forest)
- Injuries from failing to properly use tools despite proper instruction (i.e., bow saw)
- Injuries resulting from fire despite proper instruction (ie., fire boundary)
- Coming into contact with plants that may cause injury (ie., thorns, poison ivy)
- The presence of wild animals and ticks
- Inclement weather

### **On-Site Risk Assessment Procedure**

The outdoor learning spaces of Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center must be reasonably safe and easily accessible. Whenever possible, site areas are assessed before programs take place each day. During our assessment, we will seek to identify any significant hazards and take the necessary precautions to reduce and mitigate the risk to an acceptably safe level. Due to constantly changing weather conditions, possible wildlife and visitors, we may be faced with new challenges such as fallen branches or trees, high water levels, the presence of wildlife, or even human litter. These risks will need to be assessed and may alter previously arranged activities. Where checks are not possible prior to the group’s arrival, a site sweep and assessment will be made immediately upon the group’s arrival. Activities may be paused or moved to another learning space to articulate these assessments with students at any point where there is a hazard or risk. Assessing and managing risk is an important skill for children to develop, and it can offer many great learning opportunities.

### **Extreme & Inclement Weather & Closure Policy**

Forest Hills Private School Guides will use their discretion for unsuitable weather and will consult the forecast regularly, keeping the safety of students and their parents/guardians a priority at all times. It is at the parents’ discretion to travel to the school in weather that

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may make roads unsafe. Extreme weather is defined as: strong winds, blizzards, ice storms, risk of tornadoes, and extreme temperatures. The Main Hall, Craft Cabin, Library Cabin and Maker-Space Cabins all offer shelter from the elements. In the event of a closure due to staff illnesses, every effort will be made to seek substitute staff so that the school may remain open.

It will be at the discretion of the Executive Director and Guides for when programming may have to transition indoors. Winds greater than 40 kms are likely to make outdoor learning dangerous, as well as extreme temperatures that may cause frostbite or heatstroke. Although students and staff will dress accordingly, there may be times where students will have to take breaks inside throughout the day.

In the event of a tornado, students and Guides will move to the windowless bathrooms in the Main Hall and remain until the strong winds have passed. Weather and rapidly-changing conditions will be monitored closely to ensure that children and Guides can take shelter quickly. Every effort will be made to communicate to parents prior to such an event.

In the event of hazardous winter and snow conditions, the Executive Director will inform parents of a school closure in the AM or early pick-up in the PM. It is at the direction of the Executive Director and Guides to close the school in the event of extreme weather.

Payment is still required during these closures.

## **Tool Use**

Prior to teaching procedures for tool use, parents/guardians will sign a waiver of liability allowing their child to use tools. It is at the discretion of the Guides to decide if children are ready for tool use. All children will have the choice to use tools, both outside and in the kitchen when learning cooking and baking skills.

These skills will only be taught by experienced and appropriate staff. The program will be scaffolded and directed depending upon the age, ability, and experience of the child. The availability of tools for use will depend on the fine and gross motor skills of individual children. Children will begin with small and beginner tools and graduate to other more

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advanced tools as the educator recommends. All tool skills will be modeled by staff prior to children using the tools.

- For example, a child may begin carving with a vegetable peeler until their motor skills are proficient enough to move on to a small fixed blade or saw. The educator will also monitor the child's kinesthetic and spatial awareness, the use of appropriate terms such as "blood bubble", knife safety skills, and body positioning.

Tools provided by the school will be available for the child to use on the site (\*Students may NOT bring their own tools to school). All tools are kept out of reach from the children and are only accessible when it is an appropriate time for use. It will be the Guide's responsibility to ensure that the children are able to use the tools properly and safely at all times. In case of an accident during tool use, an additional First Aid Kit will be kept in the trail cabin and Main Hall, along with a list of the local emergency phone numbers. Each Guide will be certified in First Aid and CPR, in the event of an emergency anywhere on site.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

At Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center, students are taught and encouraged to build a deep connection to nature and the environment. It has been found that by repeated exposure to the same natural area, students develop a nurturing and respectful love for that environment and the community. When this relationship is built, children will feel the need to protect and preserve nature. However, repeated exposure to an outdoor space does come at a cost and an ecological footprint can be left.

Each area accessed on site will receive a detailed Site Assessment that will include an environmental assessment of the wear and tear on specific site areas. This will change during each season and will depend on the exposure level from the students. Guides will determine if an area is not suitable for accessing on a daily basis and this will depend on weather conditions and previous use from other groups of children. If an area becomes unsuitable for use, due to excessive use or wear from the weather, the area may be closed until the land revives itself. Students will be encouraged to create land revival recommendations in order to be accountable for their land use and wear.

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In the forest, students will be educated to avoid picking anything that is living unless it is being used as a learning opportunity. If this is the case, students will be encouraged to “ask permission and wait for an answer” before picking. Fire-building will be contained by rocks or a fire pit ring, in order to prevent the spread of fires or root fires. All students will be encouraged to be protectors and stewards of the land as they navigate the natural world around them.

## Outdoor Learning: Supply List and Recommendations

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child is prepared and dressed accordingly for the seasonal weather to ensure comfortability, and thus learning success. Becoming uncomfortable due to inadequate or inappropriate outdoor gear takes away from valuable outdoor learning opportunities that can take place. It is crucial that students have extra clothing in their backpacks that they are able to change into if they become wet or dirty. Parents should also ensure that all personal belongings are labeled with their child’s first and last name to avoid requiring a lost and found. Below is a recommended list of clothing for the seasons and temperatures:

Weather	Clothing
Warm (Early Fall, Late Spring)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Short or long-sleeved shirt</li><li>- Sweatshirt/ Light, rainproof jacket</li><li>- Durable and breathable pants</li><li>- Hat/ Sunglasses</li><li>- Closed-toed shoes or boots</li><li>- A bag with an additional set of clothes and extra pair of socks in backpack</li></ul>
Cold (Late Fall, Winter, Early Spring)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Base layer shirt and long underwear of fleece, wool, or polyester to wick away moisture (no cotton)</li><li>- Middle layer of wool or fleece</li><li>- Outer shell of waterproof, wind resistant shell, and breathable, including jacket and pants</li><li>- Waterproof and insulated boots</li><li>- Thick wool or polyester socks (no cotton)</li><li>- Warm hat that covers ears</li></ul>





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- \*Optional for Preschool-Aged Children Only : A bin (preferably with a lid) that will hold all of your child's extra gear. The bin can remain at school and parents will be notified when items need to be replenished.

Every day that your child attends, we recommend the following:

- A backpack containing the following supplies:
  - Extra socks, crocs/ slippers for indoors
  - Extra mittens (in cold weather)
  - Reusable water bottle
  - Two plastic bags (to put over dry socks, in the event of a boot "soaker")
  - A healthy, litterless lunch (\*Please no candy or artificial food dyes)
  - Bug repellent/ sunscreen

Note: if participants need to apply sunscreen and/or bug repellent, parents/ guardians are asked to apply this before the child comes to school, either at home or in the parking lot when they arrive at school. Staff may help your child to reapply later in the day.

Please do NOT bring:

- Toys from home (unless needed for comfort for Preschool and Kindergarten)
- Pocket knives, firestarters or other tools (Tools are provided)
- Any electronic devices including cell phones, mP3 players, gaming devices

\*Forest Hills Private School is not responsible for any personal property that is lost or damaged.

## **Learning & Development**

### **A Typical Day**

A day in the life of a student at Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center will vary from day to day, depending on the age and interests of the children, the curriculum themes being focused on, what the land has to offer and the weather for the day.

A typical day may look like:

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- Opening Circle: story/songs, connection building, breathwork, meditation/yoga, discuss tentative plan for the day/ new possible risks, weather information, snack
  - Activity 1: Waldorf curriculum lesson either indoors or outdoors (ie., math, literacy, baking, art, etc.)
  - Lunch & Free Play (indoors or outdoors)
  - Activity 2: Forest Schooling activities (ie., Review boundaries/risks, hike to back bush and build shelters, Forest Arts/ nature games, exploration)
  - Closing Circle: Breathwork, gratitude, reflections on the day, snack
  - Clean Up & Pick-Up: Pack up belongings, walk to pick-up point and wait for parent

Note: "Sharps" group attends Forest Schooling activities for Activity 1. "Coopers", "Merlins" and "Red-Tails" attend Forest Schooling activities for Activity 2.

## **Planning, Observation and Documentation**

At Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center, pedagogy is based on a hybrid of Forest Schooling practices and Waldorf-inspired curriculum. Guides use the seasons and various themes to plan activities and tasks so that students may experience developmentally appropriate learning opportunities. Forest Schooling activities may be planned intentionally, based on the desire of the children and their preferences. Powerful learning opportunities may also take place when children are given the time and space to explore the outdoor learning space and guide their own learning. Waldorf curriculum is planned using the [Christopherus Homeschool Resources](#). Small child to Guide ratios allow for Guides to observe learning closely with individual children and offer additional guidance or alternative programming. Learning may be documented through pictures/ videos, in Main Lesson books, by observing various artistic expressions and creations, through questioning and discussion, and by anecdotal notes that may be sent to parents. Children do not receive formal assessments or grades for their learning or final projects.





## Child-lead and Emergent Learning

Learning at Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center will look different than learning in a conventional school.

Forest School learning is led by children, is experiential and inquiry-based, and is encouraged through play and exploration. Students are able to learn about their own interests and passions, develop an appreciation for nature, and learn and develop new skills of their own desire.

According to the Child and Nature Alliance, Forest School “views children and youth as innately competent, curious and capable learners” ([2020 Principles of Forest/Nature School](#))



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[childnature.ca](http://childnature.ca)). Each day will include unstructured, free play time, which is fundamental to healthy development and learning. Through play, children make connections to the world around them. Social play teaches participants how to effectively communicate, negotiate roles and responsibilities and take turns. Play may look like creating a pot of “soup” from mud and stones and pretending to serve it to guests at a restaurant. Guides are encouraged to step back and allow children to play, and to only intervene for safety and to mitigate risk. If invited to provide support, then Guides will do so.

Waldorf-inspired learning is very complimentary to Forest Schooling, in that it shares many of the same values, and curriculum concepts may be easily intertwined. Allowing flexibility in this intertwining will contribute to the success of the curriculum portion of our program.

Waldorf learning:

- Is not heavily focused on academics in the Preschool and Kindergarten ages, but builds pre-math and pre-literacy skills through stories, songs, imaginative play and games in the early years
- Places a great emphasis on storytelling told “by heart” to make subjects come alive
- Integrates the Arts into all subjects
- Supports one consistent teacher for a group of students over the span of multiple years
- Involves the use of “Main Lesson Books” with main lesson blocks in the day, that may cover one subject for weeks depending on the concepts being learned
- Encourages the use of natural and sustainable materials for learning, such as chalk and beeswax crayons

## **Behavior Management Strategies**

At Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center, Guides and Volunteers will work with students to develop a clear set of boundaries and guidelines. We aim to promote self-awareness of abilities and limitations, self-regulation and emotional intelligence, respect of self and a growth mindset, cooperation and nonviolent communication, and risk management. Some of the behavior management strategies that will be used to support children include:

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- Focus on the behavior rather than the child
  - Consider the child's development level and needs
  - Implement behavior management in a positive and consistent manner
  - Model and assist the child to learn appropriate behavior and conflict management techniques
  - Help children to develop self-control, self-confidence, decision-making skills, the ability to communicate effectively and sensitivity in their interactions with others
  - Use and reflect on the Zones of Regulation when feeling big emotions
  - Consult an Occupational Therapist and other holistic programming for support in behavior

Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center Prohibits: All forms of abuse, harassment, molestation, corporal punishment, bullying, neglect, humiliation, deprivation of basic needs, and confinement.

If a child is exhibiting any inappropriate behaviors on a consistent basis, the child may be required to have a support person in place or to temporarily/ permanently leave the program. Forest Hills Private School records inappropriate behavior on Incident Reports, which may be reviewed by staff and parents/guardians at the end of the day for the incidents. Every effort will be made to ensure that all children will find their place in our school community.

Forest Hills Private School reserves the right to suspend or expel a child from the program should their behavior be deemed unsafe. Decisions to re-enter the program and create a plan to return will be made on a case-by-case basis. At all times, the safety and learning environment of the school will be the greatest priority for students and staff.

Parents may be required to sign a Waiver form in the event that a child becomes physical with a Guide. Many Guides at Forest Hills Private School have received training for preventing and minimizing aggressive behavior in children in a school environment, including "Behavior Management Systems Training" and "Crisis Prevention Intervention Training".

## **Equality**

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## **Inclusion**

Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center strives to be as inclusive as possible for all children and families. Due to our low student-to-Guide ratios and the freedom within our flow of the day and curriculum, there is more flexibility allotted in assisting students as needed. If a child requires one-to-one support, a support worker is welcome to come to the site as long as they provide a Vulnerable Sector Check, are familiar with Forest Hills Private School policies and procedures, and agrees to the principles of Forest Schooling and Waldorf pedagogy. Forest Hills Private School Guides would be thrilled to work collaboratively with other specialists or professionals to assist in the development and learning of all students. If available, please email any information related to Individual Education Plans to <[foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com](mailto:foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com)> so that Guides may do their best to accommodate all students. If there are consistent behaviors that are deemed detrimental to other students and staff, we will refer to our Behaviour Management policies for the best solution for all.

## **Accessibility Policy**

Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center is committed to equal opportunities for all and strives to provide an environment in which everyone feels welcome, valued, and safe. Our policies help to ensure that we promote the individuality of all. When planning a visit or registering for a program, information may be requested from parents about a child with access or medical requirements, so that they may be fully included in the program. We will work to adapt activities to ensure that everyone can participate fully and safely.

## **Communication**

### **General Communication**

Due to the nature of our student-lead programs, students will be asked for their input and to voice their interests and ideas for future planning. Open communication amongst the



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students, parents and Guides is key to making meaningful connections and helping students find their passions.

Staff will be communicating with families in person, via messaging or by email, in order to keep everyone aware of new announcements, upcoming events, and important updates and reminders. Guides will contribute to weekly documents to jointly track the process and interest of the children, as well as possible pathways for further learning. Forest Hills Private School hosts monthly “Parent Meets”, where parents may come together to discuss the program, their child’s progress and anything they would like to bring to the attention of the Executive Director or individual Guides.

We encourage all students and parents/guardians to give us regular feedback about their experience at our school. Feedback and concerns can be expressed via email or messaging, however, speaking in person or over the phone is preferred. Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center aims to be as open, honest and straight-forward as possible with parents/guardians with regards to any issues. Maintaining positive two-way communication helps problems to be resolved more quickly and with ease.

## **Emergency Communication**

In the event of an emergency, parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be contacted by the primary telephone number given in the registration package. If the primary contacts cannot be reached, the secondary emergency contact will be contacted by telephone. Guides will remain with the child until the parent/guardian has arrived. In the event of an emergency that the child needs to be transported via Emergency Medical Services, a Guide member will accompany the child to the next location and will remain with the child until an authorized parent or guardian has made contact.

## **Grievance Policy**

At Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center, we believe that everyone has the right to be heard and treated justly. This Grievance Policy has been put into place for all members of the FH community to feel safe and respected by actively addressing and preventing acts of racism, abuse, bigotry, harassment, discrimination, and other misconduct or unjust

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treatment. This policy aims to respond to and reduce such incidents in the Forest Hills learning community in order to create empowering, inclusive, and safe environments for all.

Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center will take all reported grievances seriously and respond in a manner that is fair, prompt, consistent and transparent. The Grievance will be addressed in a manner that gives community members the assurance that it will be recorded, taken seriously and addressed fairly. The individual reporting the Grievance will not be subjected to retaliation or victimization as a result. This Grievance policy applies to all members of the Forest Hills learning community, but is not limited to:

- Staff members
- Board Members
- Volunteers
- Parents/ Guardians
- Partners/ Donors
- Program participants

In the event of a Grievance, the report must be submitted in writing to <foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com>.

Community members will not be subjected to coercion, discrimination, reprisal, or unreasonable interruption of services for voicing complaints or recommending changes.

This Grievance policy will continue to develop based on feedback by any and all Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center community members.

It is the responsibility of each member of our community to treat one another with respect and to remedy harms done to others whether intentional or unintended. All community members who feel safe and are able, may first attempt informal person-to-person and community-supported approaches to resolving conflicts whenever possible.

Steps in Resolution:

1. Attempt to address the issue on your own: Address the person directly, naming the behavior and how it impacted you. You may want to first gather support and advice

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from others you trust before responding. Explain that the behavior is against Forest Hills Private School & Retreat Center policies and give the person time to correct their behavior. We encourage community members to deal with conflicts in a respectful manner at all times.

2. In the event that the issue is unable to be addressed or resolved privately, a formal Grievance report should be made as soon as possible. **A formal Grievance can be completed here:**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeNHJkeqABLue0blxg-KEMVxuQVhnkf1AN5WhxFyveQbdr5wg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeNHJkeqABLue0blxg-KEMVxuQVhnkf1AN5WhxFyveQbdr5wg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

and emailed to <[foresthillspriateschool@gmail.com](mailto:foresthillspriateschool@gmail.com)>.

3. Forest Hills Private School will respond to the Grievance within 5 business days.
4. Every effort will be made to complete an investigation within 15 business days, and complete a proposed resolution within 30 business days of determination.

Upon receiving a Grievance from a person requesting follow-up, the Executive Director will reach out to the person within 5 business days to hear their experience and determine the course of action that best supports and protects the person reporting.

Next steps toward a resolution may include:

1. The Executive Director meets one-on-one with the person(s) the Grievance was filed against to share feedback, reinforce values, and determine an action plan to remedy the situation
2. Conducting a prompt, thorough, and fair investigation.
3. Putting the accused person on pause by temporarily suspending their ability to be on school property
4. Holding a mediation session between the affected person and the accused person. This may involve a third-party with appropriate credentials.
5. Dismissing the accused person from involvement with the Forest Hills learning community.
6. Training for the accused person or for a larger group of community members.
7. Supporting the person affected in reporting the incident to authorities.

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A thorough investigation will be completed, ideally within 15 business days. A resolution will be proposed and implemented within 30 days. If you are not satisfied with the investigation or resolution, you will then have 15 days to appeal the decision by contacting the Executive Director. All grievances will remain confidential.

## **Questions & Concerns**

All questions and concerns may be emailed to <[foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com](mailto:foresthillsprivateschool@gmail.com)>. The Executive Director will respond as quickly as possible. If you do not receive a response within 2-3 business days, please look for a response email in your junk/spam folder, as it is possible that the response may have been filtered there. If the question or concern is an emergency, please call Jordin Smale, Executive Director, at 519-802-3972.

We are so grateful to be on this journey with you!

