

Family Handbook (Updated August 2026)

FRIENDS SCHOOL OF MINNESOTA

FAMILY HANDBOOK



Friends
School
OF MINNESOTA

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(Revised August 2025)

Family Handbook

The information provided in this handbook is designed to communicate general yet necessary information and guidelines that are in place at Friends School of Minnesota (FSMN). As a result, it does not cover, nor can it cover every possible situation, but it does communicate information that over the years has proven helpful to families and students. Families are asked to confirm their understanding and acceptance of its content as a part of completing the digital school forms before the start of each school year.

Hours of Operation

School Office Hours

School Year: Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM unless otherwise communicated.

Summer: Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM unless otherwise communicated.

Academic School Day

Drop-off - 8:15.

Soft start - 8:15AM to 8:30 AM.

School day - 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM.

Pick-up - 3:00-3:15 PM.

Extended Day Hours

7:30 AM to 8:15 AM and 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM. (See Extended Day section for more information.)

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Lunch and Recess

Students have the option to purchase hot lunch or bring their lunch. All students should pack a snack. We will not heat or refrigerate lunches. Pizza day is on Fridays. Lunch orders are made through FACTS. You can email questions about our lunch program to lunch@fsmn.org

Students are expected to follow the directions of the lunchroom and recess supervisors every day to ensure appropriate order and safety.

Snow Days and Weather Emergencies

FSMN follows the decisions of the St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) regarding building closures. In the event of several school closures, we may choose to provide at-home learning rather than canceling school. If SPPS are closed, our building will be closed. Local media outlets are the best places to find announcements regarding SPPS closures. We also send notices via email and text, and we update our website's homepage.

Academics

Placement

Classroom placement decisions involve creating a balance of diverse academic abilities, social dynamics, and individual student needs. Placement is a professional decision made by the FSMN staff based on the academic and social well-being of all students involved.

Homework Guidelines

Homework helps students develop individual study habits and serves as a bridge between home and school, allowing families to be involved in their student's academic growth. We also honor a child's need to play, enjoy other activities and have family time, so we seek to not overburden students. The average amount of homework will generally fit within these guidelines:

Grade	Time spent on homework*	Frequency
Kindergarten	5 minutes per day	1 - 2 times per week
Grades 1-2	10-20 minutes per day	2 - 3 times per week
Grades 3-4	20-30 minutes per day	3 - 4 times per week
Grades 5-6	1 hour per day	Subjects will vary each day
Grades 7-8	1.5-2 hours per day	Subjects will vary each day

*FSMN also recommends 20-30 minutes of reading time each day.

Understanding the Whole Child

Our core commitment is to know and understand each student as a learner and a whole person. We use portfolios, performances, screenings, tests, observation, written work, self-assessment, and reflection to assess student learning. We use a combination of informal communication, narrative reporting, and benchmarking to report this understanding. Additionally, conferences are held in October and March.

Lower School (K-4) Narrative and Benchmark Reports

In K-4, FSMN uses narrative reports and math and literacy benchmarks (sent home in February and June) to communicate students' progress to their families.

Middle School (5-8) Narrative and Benchmark Reports

In middle school, families will receive narrative reports for all classes and benchmark progress reports for humanities, math, science, and Spanish at the end of each semester. Benchmark reports will also be sent home at the end of quarter one and quarter three. Benchmark progress reports are based on student work, including but not limited to: written assignments, projects, unit tests, small and large group discussions, group work, student self-assessments and reflections, and informal observations and conversations with students. The collected work is used to measure each student's proficiency and progress in particular skills and content knowledge.

Middle school teachers also use quality standards to assess student work. This includes things such as timely completion of assignments and recognition of a student's best effort and work quality overall.

Additional Academic Support

FSMN offers limited support services for students with diagnosed learning differences. In consultation with families, we can provide a variety of accommodations and will consider appropriate modifications to course requirements on a case-by-case basis. Families of students who qualify may have the option of pursuing support services through the Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS).

Families of incoming students and/or students with newly identified learning differences will be invited to meet with the Learning Specialist before the school year begins. Teachers, teaching assistants, the Literacy Specialist or the Math Specialist may also be invited to attend these meetings. The purpose of these meetings is as follows:

- To review agreed on accommodations and modifications and ensure that the channels of communication are clear
- To potentially draft a FSMN Learning Support Plan that will be shared with families

Plans are placed in the student's file and shared with all teachers involved with the student.

Universal Screening in the Fall

Screening and progress monitoring for students in K - 8 grades take place each Fall. Teachers and the Learning Support Team use data gathered from these assessments to track student progress and help inform instruction and possible intervention.

Standardized Testing

Students in grades 6-8 take the Educational Records Bureau Comprehensive Testing Program (ERB) tests each spring. Results are sent home in late June. These standardized achievement and aptitude tests are given to middle school students in the spring to achieve these outcomes:

- Help FSMN assess individual student learning
- Provide information to FSMN about our academic program
- Enable students to improve their test-taking skills

Library

Access

Students from kindergarten through fourth grade have scheduled library classes once a week. Starting in fifth grade, students use the library individually or in groups as needed to choose books related to classwork, to find books for recreational reading, or to do research. They will also have short scheduled visits during humanities classes.

Checkout

Three books may be checked out at a time for a period of three weeks. Books can also be renewed by request at the library or on the library website. Students and families will be notified of any overdue materials. Families will be charged for books not returned by the last day of school.

Website

All students have access to research materials, ebooks, and the school library catalog on the [library website](#). They can also place holds, renew books, and write reviews of books they have read.

General Guidelines for Student Conduct

Dress Code

Students dress informally at FSMN, although the following guidelines are in place:

- Students must always wear a shirt and shoes.
- Rubber-soled shoes that completely encase the foot must be worn during physical education.
- Consistent with our Quaker values, students are not to bring any “war toys” or wear military style clothing (e.g. camouflage) or clothing with slogans/pictures that are insensitive to the inclusive, non-violent culture of FSMN.

In the event that a student is in violation of the dress code, we will gently remind them that they are not in trouble but ask them to wear clothing within the above guidelines. Should there be further problems with dress code, an administrator will contact families.

Peaceful Play

The Quaker testimony of Peace is woven throughout the formal and informal curricula at Friends School of MN. Acting out violence, physically or verbally, runs counter to our core values. We are committed to promoting peaceful, collaborative play which engages students’ ideas and interests; free play is an invaluable opportunity to build social emotional skills, to practice empathy and conflict resolution, and to embody learning. All learning happens in the context of relationships, and the normalizing of violence undermines the relationships that make up the fabric of our school community. We resist the normalizing of violence in any manifestation. We recognize our responsibility to address the epidemic of violence in our society by actively promoting peaceful play and actively addressing play that involves violent themes.

Ask for parents/caregivers:

- Partner with us in communicating to your student(s) our FSMN values regarding peace and respectful play.
- Discuss with your student(s) the importance of consent regarding peer interactions.
- We ask families to consider any factors that normalize violence; technology and particularly video games are examples.
- We realize and respect that every family has a unique relationship with technology and its content. We ask for family partnership in reinforcing the school philosophy of peace in play and in all interactions while at school.

Behavioral Expectations

Part of our mission is to help children learn to balance personal freedom and communal responsibility. We aim to help children develop a strong sense of empathy and growing awareness of how their choices affect others. These principles are the core of our relationships at FSMN.

It is important to recognize that the school’s conflict resolution program is distinct from the school’s discipline policy. Conflict resolution most often involves different perspectives and expectations within a community, while discipline has to do with clear infractions of established norms of behavior.

Teachers and staff will explain behavioral expectations to their students and to those they are supervising.

Community Agreements at FSMN:

1. Care for yourself. Care for other people. Care for your surroundings.
2. Use words to solve problems.
3. Take responsibility for yourself and your actions.
4. Staff and Faculty guide the community with their experience and expertise.

Harassment Policy

FSMN does not tolerate harassment in any form, including unwelcome conduct based on a person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability, age, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance. Suspected incidents of harassment should be reported to the Head of School.

FSMN believes that all employees and students should be able to work and learn in an environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. The school's goals are best accomplished in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, and all employees and students are expected to work toward that goal.

1. Definitions

Harassment prohibited under this policy consists of unwelcome conduct based on a person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability, age, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance:

- When submission to such conduct is a condition of education or employment, or a basis for an employment or education-related decision; or
- When such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with educational or job performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school or work environment.

Some examples of conduct that could be considered harassment are:

- Unwelcome abusive, intimidating, insulting, or degrading remarks;
- The display of objects, cartoons, pictures, or stories that may be perceived as offensive or demeaning; and
- Threats, demands, or suggestions that an employee's or student's educational or work status, advancement, or other conditions of education or employment depend upon tolerance of or acquiescence to unwelcome harassment.

One form of prohibited harassment is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact, or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature, especially when:

- submission to such conduct is a condition of education or employment, or a basis for an employment or educational decision; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of: interfering with educational performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment.

Some examples of conduct that may be sexual harassment under this policy include

- Unwelcome abusive, intimidating, insulting or degrading remarks or conduct of a sexual nature;
- Offensive or demeaning words of a sexual nature, suggestive jokes or stories, or conversations about sexual exploits;
- The display of sexually suggestive objects, cartoons, pictures, or stories which may be perceived as offensive or demeaning;
- Threats, demands, or suggestions that an employee's or student's status, advancement, or other terms and conditions of employment or education are contingent upon the employee's or student's tolerance of or acquiescence to unwelcome sexual advances;
- Unwelcome sexual flirtations, propositions, or social invitations; or
- Unwelcome physical contact or physical proximity.

Another form of prohibited harassment is bullying. Bullying is hurting of one person or group by another person or group, that is:

- repetitive,
- intentional, and
- the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy prohibits harassment by any individual who may deal with employees or students, and applies to anyone who works in the school community. This includes supervisors and managers, employees, students, volunteers, and contractors or vendors.

3. Reporting Harassment

Anyone who feels that they, or their child, are being harassed, or who believes that another FSMN employee, student, or volunteer is being harassed, should *immediately* contact the Head of School or the clerk of the School Committee. FSMN wants to resolve any problems, but can do so only if aware of them. Harassment complaints and concerns will be investigated promptly and responsive action will be promptly taken as appropriate.

Harassment complaints and concerns brought to school employees by students will be communicated to families promptly, and no school mediated interaction between reporter and accused will take place without the expressed permission of either students' families.

4. Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to keep FSMN's investigation of, and response to, harassment complaints as confidential as possible.

5. No Retaliation

It is strictly prohibited to retaliate against any individual who makes a complaint under this policy, opposes harassment, or participates in an investigation of a claim of harassment.

Anyone who feels they, or their child, has experienced or observed retaliation should *immediately* report this to the Head of School or the clerk of the School Committee.

6. Employee Responsibilities

All employees share responsibility for maintaining a working and educational environment free of harassment and discrimination. Employees should

- Read and abide by this policy;
- Immediately report any acts of harassment or acts that could be construed as harassment;
- Cooperate with any investigation regarding harassment or inappropriate conduct;
- Maintain the confidentiality of any complaint or information received or provided in the course of an investigation, only disclosing information to those FSMN personnel with a need to know about the complaint or information;
- Refrain from speculation and from drawing conclusions or gossiping about the subject matter or individuals involved in claims of harassment, or the investigation of such claims; and
- Refrain from taking any adverse or retaliatory action against any individual who has made a claim of harassment, opposed harassment, or participated in the investigation of any claim regarding harassment or inappropriate behavior.

7. Consequences

Any person who is found to have violated the harassment policy will be subject to appropriate corrective action, which may consist of discipline up to and including expulsion from school.

8. Questions About This Policy

Any questions about this policy or a related matter should be directed to the Head of School or the Clerk of the School Committee.

Student Removal

In the spirit of our mission of helping children to balance personal freedom and communal responsibility, we try a number of strategies to help students learn and grow while addressing behavior. In some instances, a family and the school might mutually decide that ending the school day early for a student who is struggling is what is best for the student and the community. This would not be considered a formal suspension.

Suspension

When behavioral intervention strategies prove unsuccessful, and students seriously violate community agreements or regulations, or demonstrate unacceptable conduct they may be suspended from school.

Typically, a student will be suspended by the Head or another designated administrator for the following reasons:

- The student's return to the classroom would undermine safety and/or the school environment.
- To give immediate feedback that a particular behavior is unacceptable.

Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Threatening/abusive language or physical aggression directed toward another community member
- Substantial physical/harm of another community member, whether provoked or unprovoked
- Bullying Behaviors: Psychological or physical harm featuring:
 - intentionality
 - repetition
 - A power imbalance
- Serious damage to property
- Conduct which substantially impairs the school environment
- Leaving school grounds without permission

Suspension includes, but is not limited to the following:

- The student being unable to participate in all after-school activities
- A conversation with the Head or another designated administrator
- A potential conference with the family before returning to school
- A conflict resolution conference is often arranged between the appropriate parties with explicit permission from the families of the appropriate parties

FSMN reserves the right to determine whether immediate suspension is necessary. The Head or another designated administrator uses discretion in determining when and under what circumstances such action is appropriate.

Suspension duration is determined by the frequency and severity of the behavior(s).

Expulsion

Expulsion occurs at the sole discretion of the Head of School. Expulsion will be considered if:

- The student is involved in an extreme infraction of school rules and policies
- Multiple attempts by the school to help prevent repeated infractions have been unsuccessful
- Other circumstances require its consideration in the opinion of the Head of School

Student Non-Return Policy

It is sometimes necessary for a student to leave FSMN after the close of the academic year. If the school

cannot meet the academic or behavioral needs of a student, and/or a student's behavior has an undue negative effect on other children or the school in general, the revocation of enrollment may be initiated by the Head of School.

Conflict Resolution

FSMN's Conflict Resolution Program has been in operation since the school opened in 1988. Drawing on the Quaker commitment to nonviolence and equality, staff developed the program to help students and all community members learn how to create peace in our community. The program uses three elements that are integrated into the daily life of the school:

- **Conferences** - meetings to address misunderstandings and conflicts between two or more individuals. One half-hour is set aside each day for conferences.
- **Group gatherings** - meetings to address issues affecting an entire group. Individual classrooms have regular group gatherings which focus on community problem solving.
- **Modeling by adults** - integral to the program. When the entire community is using the same program, it permeates the behavioral and ethical life of the school.

Conflicts are best handled by those directly involved. For example, if your student is upset with another student, the two students need to talk. Please encourage your student to make use of this process when conflict arises.

FSMN staff are trained annually by our Conflict Resolution Coordinator to guide these processes.

Arrival and Dismissal Information

FSMN takes very seriously its responsibility to provide for the safe arrival and dismissal of our students.

Arrival

- Students should be dropped off as close to 8:15 as possible, but no later than 8:25 AM.
- Arrival at 8:15 allows for full participation in the soft start of the classroom day and ensures they are ready for the 8:30 AM hard start.
- Unless students are in Extended Day or are participating in a before-school activity, they may not be dropped off at the school before 8:15 AM.
- Students arriving before 8:15 AM and not enrolled in the Extended Day program will be brought to Extended Day and the family will be billed at the drop-in rate.
- Students may go to their lockers/cubbies or classrooms at 8:15 AM.
- Students should enter through the front door unless enrolled in Extended Day.
- Students who bike must lock their bikes in the bike rack. Scooters may be stored in the lobby.

Drop-Off Zones

The bus lane in front of the school on Englewood and the car pick-up lane on the side of the school on

Albert are only to be used by families whose students can leave the vehicle without adult assistance. The driver should remain in the vehicle and exit the drop-off zone as soon as their student has safely exited to make space for other drop-off zone users.

Students SHOULD NOT be dropped off in a manner that results in their needing to cross any traffic lanes unaccompanied.

If you plan to park your car and accompany your student into FSMN, you may park on any public street, but please *do not* park in the following locations:

- The bus zone directly in front of the school on the north side of Englewood Ave.
- The car drop-off zone on the east side of Albert between Englewood Ave. and the school parking lot
- The school parking lot
- Please avoid blocking our neighbors' sidewalk access to the street.

Dismissal

Families are asked each year to complete a Dismissal Transportation Plan form for each student. It outlines how students will return home each day and helps FSMN ensure student safety.

Car Pick-Up Line

Line up along the east side of Albert Street and go north toward the school parking lot. This line wraps around the front of the school on to Englewood to avoid blocking the intersection. For this reason all cars should approach the school on westbound Englewood. Please make use of the bus lane to avoid blocking the westbound lane of Englewood.

A staff person with a walkie-talkie will meet your car before you reach the parking lot entrance. Drivers tell the staff person who they are picking up.

Front Entrance:

Families not using the car pick-up line as outlined above should pick up their student using the front entrance.

- Students in grades K-2 are picked up at their classrooms.
- Students in grades 3-8 meet their families inside the front lobby.

Students Who Walk, Bike, or Take Public Transit Home

Students who have permission to walk, bike, take public transit home alone may leave the school at the end of the school day. FSMN does not provide crossing guards nor other support for these students.

Students are expected to observe the following guidelines:

- They may not stay on school grounds unless they are participating in Extended Day or a planned activity.
- They may not return to the school or school grounds by themselves, including the playground,

after they have left for the day.

Changing Dismissal Plans

If your regular dismissal plan changes in any way on any day, you must contact the front office by 2:15 PM so that faculty and students can be appropriately informed. Notification must be from a parent/guardian, not a student, either by phone or email. If we are not contacted by a student's family prior to 2:15 PM, the student will be dismissed according to their regular dismissal plan.

Early Departure

If you pick up your student prior to the end of the regular school day, please notify the front office and your homeroom teacher. Students will sign out in the front office. Please inform us of this change through the front office.

After School Facilities Use

The school grounds (including the playground) are used exclusively by Extended Day from 3:15-4:30.

Attendance

FSMN and families both want what is best for students. This includes regular attendance.

We value each student and want to see them here every day learning and growing. We know it is important for students to have regular attendance in school. Late arrivals and absences potentially disrupt social learning, community building, and academic learning opportunities. We encourage families to plan travel, appointments and other obligations outside of school hours or during vacation time.

- Please contact the front office before 8:25 AM if your student will be absent or late.
- If we do not hear from you by 10:00 AM, you will receive an automated notification informing you that your student is not at school. If you receive this notification and you believe your student is in school, please contact the school immediately and we will correct the attendance record accordingly.
- For any planned absences, the family should contact the homeroom teacher/advisor and the front office. They also should make arrangements with the teacher about what they will miss. We recommend that this task be completed 2-3 days (or more) in advance of the absence.
- Excused absences include illness, medical appointments, religious observance, and emergencies. Any absence for which families do not notify the school office is unexcused. In some cases the school may require documentation to excuse an absence.
- It is the school's discretion to designate an absence as excused or unexcused.
- An illness that lasts longer than three days might require a health provider's letter before absences are excused.

The following protocols are in effect regarding attendance problems:

- After multiple absences, an administrator will reach out to the family to address the concern and offer support

- If attendance continues to be an issue, a conference will be scheduled with the family and a designated administrator.
- Referral to Ramsey County Truancy Officials is possible. Students at FSMN are still subject to mandatory attendance laws in the state of Minnesota.

Attendance on Field Trips:

- If a family chooses not to send their child on a field trip (including overnights), the school **will not** provide alternative programming or in-building supervision.

Extended Day

Our Extended Day program enables us to provide childcare before and after the school day. All FSMN school rules also apply to Extended Day. There are two important things families can do to make Extended Day run smoothly for everybody:

- Always sign your student in and/or out. This ensures your student's safety.
- Once you have picked up your student, please leave in a timely manner. Students may not participate in Extended Day activities after they have been signed out.

Families can sign a contract for regular Extended Day care and can access that information from the Extended Day Director.

Students are also welcome to attend as a drop-in, space permitting. Please call the front office for availability and to register your student at least one day before drop-in service is required.

Some situations when you may use Extended Day on a drop-in basis at no charge include:

- Volunteering for FSMN
- Attending a school-initiated parent/caregiver meeting

When students are required to come to school early (e.g. the Friday Plant sale early drop off requirement), FSMN siblings may attend extended day at no charge, space permitting. Reservations are required.

For further questions regarding the extended day program, please refer to the extended day handbook.

After School Events

Students not registered for an after school or evening activity who want to attend a game, a performance or the like must be accompanied by a supervising adult and not dropped off alone for events. Families may also utilize the drop-in policy of Extended Day to allow students to watch games. Unaccompanied students will be added to Extended Day care and billed at the appropriate rate.

Extracurricular Activities

FSMN offers a variety of extracurricular activities open to students. Registration forms for these activities are available in the front office and on our FACTS ParentsWeb system under Resource Documents.

Sports

FSMN typically offers soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter, volleyball and ultimate frisbee in both the fall and spring. All sports are coeducational. The goals of our sports program include the following:

- To teach teamwork, commitment, and fitness
- To teach lifelong skills
- To foster development of self-discipline, cooperation, sportsmanship, mutual respect, and self-image

All students have equal opportunities to participate. Joining a team involves personal commitment, including practice. If a student must miss a practice/game, they should let the coach know as soon as possible.

FSMN sports expectations:

- We expect coaches, players, and families to demonstrate good sportsmanship by supporting our teams and being courteous and respectful to all players, referees, and coaches.
- Families are important role models in acknowledging effort and being respectful of players and referees on all teams.
- FSMN does not tolerate derogatory comments toward any student athletes of either team as well as comments directed to or about an official or coach.

Students and families are encouraged to communicate directly with coaches on sports-related issues. The athletic director is also a source of information about sports. Schedules and game location directions will be given directly to participants during each season.

FSMN is part of the League of Independent Sports Teams (LIST), which includes similar-sized schools with a comparable approach to sports. We usually schedule one game per week with other co-ed teams. Whenever possible, the school will transport students to away games using FSMN buses. Vehicle malfunction or unavailability of licensed drivers may require families to transport their own students. If this should happen, families will be notified. FSMN, however, does not coordinate transportation between families and will not commission parents/guardians to be drivers of our students.

Clubs

A variety of clubs are offered every year. Any middle school student who is interested in starting a club may talk to their advisor or the activities director. If a staff person is willing to serve as sponsor and if there is sufficient student interest, new clubs can be created.

Illness, Injury, and Medication

Students who become sick or injured during regular school hours are referred to the front office for treatment. The front office staff are first-aid certified, as are most of the school teaching staff. FSMN also has an SPPS nurse who is onsite one day per week, and is available by email during school hours when not onsite.

Medical Information and Documentation

The front office will request medical information in late summer so we can prepare medical reference materials for your student's teachers and for the front office. You will be asked to provide:

- Information on any medical conditions, allergies, or dietary restrictions based on a medical condition that may require treatment or intervention at school
- Permission to dispense prescription medications, signed by a medical professional, if your student needs access to a prescription medication at school
- Permission to dispense over-the-counter medications, including acetaminophen (such as Tylenol), ibuprofen (such as Advil), and diphenhydramine (such as Benadryl), signed by you
- Contact information to be used in case of emergency

The front office will put this information into your personal and medical database in FACTS. Front office staff and the SPPS nurse will keep your student's information up to date and will record medical events and medication given while at school.

Medical Care

Daily Care

Front office staff and the SPPS nurse (if onsite) provide regular comfort and medical care to children for basic needs, including taking a student's temperature, giving vaseline for chapped lips, cleaning small cuts and scrapes and providing bandaids, and applying ice packs for minor bumps and sprains during active play. We will notify you if it looks like your student may have an emerging problem that could need additional care outside of school.

Injuries and Illness

Sometimes students need extra care and attention when they are coming down with something or have an injury that requires evaluation. If your student experiences any of the following, we will record it in FACTS and let you know by phone or email:

- Requests medication, whether OTC or prescription
- Has a low-grade fever above their normal range
- Is injured during active play and needs rest and ice to resume activities

We respect your time and want to maximize your student's school time. We will first try to support and treat your student with the options that are available to us to help them finish the day at school. If we are

unable to contact primary caregivers, we will contact a family's emergency contact person to pick up your student if they are too sick or injured to be at school. To this end, it is important that the emergency contact information is kept current. Please keep the front office updated with any needed changes.

Respiratory Illnesses and influenza-like illnesses

Students should stay home and away from others (until 24 hours have passed and **both** their symptoms are getting better **and** they are fever free without medications). At this time, students may return to school and take extra precaution for the next five days. Respiratory illnesses include diagnoses such as RSV, COVID-19, influenza, etc.

If a student tests positive for a respiratory or influenza-like illness as described above, the family is expected to follow current guidelines, and **we ask that the school be informed**. When the school is informed, this information will be shared (preserving student anonymity) with the cohort, but no additional school protocols will be activated.

Masks will always remain optional and welcome, but will not be provided by the school.

Lice

We encourage families to check students regularly for lice at home. If lice are found, students **can attend** school provided that they have been treated.

If lice are suspected during the school day, the family will be contacted. Families are asked to communicate their findings with the school. If an infestation has been verified, children with head lice **can attend** school provided that treatments have begun. This policy is aligned with current MDH guidelines. The presence of lice will not be communicated with the student cohort.

When the Student Must Go Home

A student must go home if any of the following are present:

- A fever of 100 degrees or greater (the student may return to school after 24 hours* without a fever of 100 or greater and no fever-reducing medication)
- Vomiting or diarrhea during school (the student may return to school after 24 hours* without further incident).
- A sudden unexplained rash potentially connected to a highly communicable disease such as measles, chicken pox, etc.
- Suspected case of strep. Note: the student may return to school 24 hours* after being on an antibiotic if diagnosed with strep.

*24 hours means 24 hours after the incident at school and will mean missing part of the next day of school.

Illness and Accidents Requiring Immediate Medical Care

Students sometimes experience illness or injury requiring immediate medical care, such as a possible broken bone, possible concussion, or severe allergic reaction. Our response for such cases includes:

- Calling 911 if warranted
- Treating the child immediately based on appropriate instructions and medication at the school (e.g., dispense asthma or allergy medication)
- Calling parents/caregivers, and if unavailable, emergency contacts
- Informing the Head of School, or other designated administrator, if the HOS is unavailable
- Recording all information on an Accident Report form

In practice, these “steps” typically happen simultaneously. Someone will call families (or their emergency contacts if we can’t reach the family) while one or more staff members stays with, supports, and treats the student.

The school carries an insurance policy for injuries that happen on school property that may provide coverage for copays and deductibles. The business office coordinator will connect with families ASAP after an incident involving advanced medical care.

Medications

FSMN follows the medication policy of SPPS. We consult weekly with our SPPS school nurse to ensure compliance and accountability. Prescription and nonprescription medications required by a student should be administered by a parent/guardian at home when possible. When needed, FSMN staff may assist in the administration of medications during school hours, subject to instructions and the following guidelines:

- A signed permission form must be on file for the school to dispense OTC and prescription medications.
- Prescription and OTC medications must be in the original container with the student’s name on the label.
- Written instructions must be provided.
- Expired medications will be returned to families for disposal.

Documentation and Notification

Whenever students are given OTC or prescription medications, the date/time and dosage will be recorded in the FACTS database, as well as the circumstances leading to the decision to provide medication. Families will be notified by email, or called if further care may be needed.

Self-Carrying & Self-Administering Medications

Middle school students may self-carry and self-administer medications when prearranged and approved by the family, a medical professional, and a designated administrator. Examples of medications that may be self-carried and self-administered include asthma inhalers and insulin for diabetes management. In these cases, please notify the front office any time a student self-administers medication for record

keeping.

Communications Standards

We ask that all families maintain accurate and functional contact information by keeping the front office updated of any changes.

The following communication pieces are extremely important for maintaining safety:

- Working phone numbers
 - It is imperative that the school be able to reach a parent/caregiver quickly at any time.
- Working voicemail services
 - If a parent/caregiver cannot immediately answer the phone, the school must be able to leave a message. Voicemail inboxes that are full or not set up keep us from informing families issues at school.
- Complete and up-to-date lists of emergency contacts
 - In the event that a primary parent/caregiver is unreachable, the school will work through a student's emergency contact list until someone can be reached.

We ask that ALL communication between families and students while students are at school goes through the front office. We have a phone free school policy, and while wearables (Apple Watches and other communication capable wearables) are not yet a part of that policy, families and students should not be using them to communicate with each other during school.

Safety and Security

The following safety and security measures are in effect.

Building Access

The front entrance is the primary entrance for families between 8:15 AM and 4:00 PM and is monitored by Front Office staff.

- The back door is accessible between 7:30 - 8:15 AM and between 3:00-6:00 PM for Extended Day students and families only.
- During the school day, the back door is locked and code disabled. Codes may not be given to non-family members/guardians/caregivers.

Sports access

- Utilize the back door only between 3:15-6:30 PM.
- An FSMN staff person will be present during those hours to greet guests, control access to the main building, and monitor the area for safety.
- The doors between the gym area and other parts of the building will be locked during sporting events.

No external doors may be propped open (unattended) at any time.

Safety Drills

In accordance with state laws, FSMN will annually conduct the following safety drills:

- Five fire drills
- Five building security drills
- One severe weather drill

Weapons

The possession or use of handguns or other weapons while on FSMN property is strictly prohibited. Please report any suspected violations to a school representative. If you believe someone's safety is immediately at risk, call 911 or seek other emergency help.

Transportation & Field Trips

Students typically ride in school buses to attend field trips. Licensed bus drivers and approved staff drivers may transport students in the FSMN bus. Students are expected to follow school rules and the rules of the establishment on all field trips. Students who demonstrate difficulty with following established expectations may be removed from the current trip and will be required to stay home on the subsequent field trip.

Visitor Policies and Procedures

Non-Alumni Minor

Non-alumni minor visitors may visit classrooms for one day if the following conditions are met:

- Requests are made to the teacher/advisor and submitted to administration one school week in advance
- The visitor is appropriate for the grade being visited (pre-school visitors are not allowed)
- The visit is not being used to preview the school for application for admission
- Non-alumni minors may not accompany students on field trips

FSMN reserves the right to decline any visitor.

Alumni

Alumni and former students may visit middle school classrooms during the advisory period, lunch or recess after checking in at the front office. Alumni must contact the Alumni Relations Coordinator in advance to schedule a visit during school hours. FSMN reserves the right to decline a visit if it will interfere with the learning process or other scheduled events.

Adult and Minor Visitors

We seek to maintain a welcoming climate that is safe for everyone. Therefore:

- Visitors must sign in and out in the visitor log in the front office.

- Visitors must wear “Visitor” ID badges while in the building.
- Contractors and vendors are required to check in at the front office and to wear visible IDs and/or Visitor ID badges while in the building.
- Staff will monitor visitors to be sure ID badges are visible. If badges are not visible, faculty and staff are expected to politely ask the visitor to sign in.

Parent/Caregiver Visits

We value parent involvement at FSMN. We are not, however, able to accommodate drop-in visits by family members. The school will communicate with families about great ways to be involved in school life (such as reading with students during D.E.A.R. time, committee participation or helping with an open lab activity).

Pets

Only service animals (not therapy/comfort animals) and approved classroom pets are permitted in the building.

Smoke/Vape-Free Environment

FSMN’s building and grounds are smoke/vape-free.

Movie Selection and Guidance

FSMN recognizes the value that film can bring to learning. We also recognize the need to be thoughtful about its use. As a result, the following protocols are in place:

- Teachers/staff will preview all materials to be shown to students.
- In addition to the preview, staff will reference reviews, using a reputable screening tool like commonsensemedia.org.
- Families will be notified (no less than one week ahead of time) about the movie options, including a description and links to reviews of material.
- An alternative option to watching the film will always be provided.
- Time will be allowed for post-viewing student/adult feedback.

Materials that are relatively straightforward, such as the science kit videos, PBS materials and music performances, will be shown in the classroom without parent notification.

Technology Policies and Practices

School-Wide

All FSMN technology used at school or at home will be used in a responsible, respectful manner. Students will bring any questions or concerns about appropriate use to an adult. All student activity on any technology used at FSMN can and may be monitored and/or reviewed by an adult.

Students in grades 1-8 sign the [Technology Use Policy](#) early in the school year.

All personal, portable technology, including but not limited to, cameras, music devices, and video game devices, will remain turned off and inside of backpacks while at school (including Extended Day) unless otherwise directed by an adult.

The internet will be used for educational purposes only. It will not be used for the following:

- To give out personal information
- To conduct financial transactions
- To meet someone online
- To conduct non-educational communication
- To play Internet computer games unless proposed by a teacher for educational purposes
- To visit inappropriate websites

Students should immediately report to school personnel if they encounter a person and/or site who attempts to meet them outside of school, asks for personal information, or makes them feel uncomfortable for any reason. FSMN provides access to a student network. This network filters internet content for the purposes of child safety. If you have questions about this, please contact administration.

Middle School Technology Philosophy and Policy

Technology is an essential tool for education at FSMN, and we recognize the need to limit its use to ensure our students can engage with each other and the non-digital world around them. To this end, each class utilizes technology in areas which require it and limit technology in areas that do not. We also have general technology policies that apply throughout our middle school.

General Policies

- School Chromebooks do not belong to students. They are tools provided by the school that can and will be confiscated if these policies are violated.
- Students may not change the appearance of chromebooks, including stickers, scratches, and other marks.
- Students must come to school with a fully charged chromebook.
- While at school, Chromebooks and other technology may only be taken out or used at the direction of the teacher.
- Students may only access websites that directly relate to curriculum or teacher instructions. All other tabs, even those from earlier classes, must be closed. This policy is in place to minimize distractions during class.
- Technology is not to be used during the following times, though some exceptions can be made by teachers in the interest of assigned academic work and group games.
 - Welcome time before Advisory
 - Community Building during Advisory
 - Passing Time
 - After school activities & functions

Technology Use by Class

- Technology:
 - Most summative (large, long-term) assessments are on Google Classroom to more easily track progress, ensure no materials are lost, and more easily polish final products.
 - Typing practice, essay formatting, and slide construction are also digital to teach students how to practice these essential 21st century skills.
 - Students engage in educational games at teacher direction.
- No Technology:
 - Most formative (small, short-term) assessments are on paper to practice handwriting, note taking, and quick responses.
 - DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) (with the exception of accommodations), journal writing, note taking, and spelling work are also entirely off Chromebooks.

Math

- Technology:
 - Approximately 70% of class work utilizes Desmos's digital curriculum, which has interactive elements to engage students in math content.
 - All assignments are posted online as a digital backup in case of lost worksheets.
- No Technology:
 - Assignments and tests are all completed on paper.

Science

- Technology:
 - $\frac{7}{8}$: Interactive activities, models, and videos are utilized to deepen instructional knowledge.
 - $\frac{5}{8}$: Coding and 3D Printing units teach students how to utilize technology in productive ways.
- No Technology:
 - $\frac{7}{8}$: Physical textbook work and lab writing are all conducted using paper materials.
 - $\frac{5}{8}$: Watersheds, tree studies, bridge building, and similar engineering projects are all technology free.

Music

- Technology:
 - All MS grades tackle a weeks-long digital music unit that allows them to compose their own works.
- No Technology:
 - All other MS music units are Chromebook free to experience the joy of music making.

Spanish

- Technology:
 - Assignments are posted on Google Classroom to ensure no student loses them.
 - Students experience videos to hear the accents and cultural experiences around the world.
 - Students engage in educational games.
- No Technology:
 - Students consistently practice their Spanish language skills orally and in writing.

PE

- No digital technology is used.

Art

- All middle school students create a digital portfolio.
- 7/8 has a digital photography unit

No Technology

- All other units are chromebook free

Natural Consequences for Policy Violations

Inappropriate use of school technology necessitates natural consequences to ensure learning.

- If a student arrives at school with an uncharged chromebook, they must charge it during advisory time, utilize a backup that does not leave its classroom, or go without it.
- If a student misuses technology in school, they will receive one redirection per class. If that student misuses technology again in class, their chromebook will be confiscated until the end of the day. If chromebook use is absolutely necessary for success in class, their chromebook will instead be subject to close monitoring and/or a focus session that confines the sites the device can visit. Regardless, families will be notified.
- If a student's chromebook is confiscated or restricted three times in a short period of time, the chromebook will not be returned until a scheduled meeting with family takes place.
- Repeated violations of this technology policy may be subject to more stringent consequences.

Phone Free at Friends School

Under the Phone Free at Friends School cell phone policy, we are limiting the presence of cell phones at school to only those students whose commutes to and from school necessitate access to a cell phone.

These students may be students who:

- Walk/bike to and from school
- Take public transportation to and from school
- May be dropped off by a different person than the person who is picking them up

If a family feels it is necessary for their student to bring a cell phone to school, that phone will be checked in at the office upon arrival and will be picked up from the office at the end of the day and will

not be used until the student has left the building (in the case of walkers/bikers or public transit users) or the student has entered their car (in the case of car pick-up line users).

Outside of the above situations or other case-by-case situations, the school's preferred default practice is that cell phones stay at home.

Because all cell phones brought to school will be checked in at the office during the school day, it is our hope that the "phones stay at home" default is adopted broadly enough that the number of phones being checked in at the office is low enough to be easily managed.

We have this policy for a few key reason:

1. The presence of a cell phone at school is largely unnecessary. Students and their caregivers may communicate at any time through the front office.
2. We want FSMN to be a respite from the 24/7 draw on student attention that cell phones demand. We know so much more about the effects cell phones have on student relationships, social-emotional wellbeing, and mental health.

As a part of this policy, we ask all staff to refrain from any cell phone use in the presence of students, unless absolutely necessary for urgent internal communications.

While smartwatches and other wearables are not yet included in this policy, these devices **should not be used for communication during school hours**. Again, students and their caregivers may communicate at any time through the front office.

Crisis Action Plan

FSMN has a Crisis Action Plan. Contact the Head of School with questions.

Updated August 2026