

**Fort Mill Elementary School  
Parents/Student Handbook  
2017-2018**



**Mrs. Jocelyn Young - Principal  
Mr. Jad Griffin - Assistant Principal**

**WELCOME!**

Welcome to Fort Mill Elementary School! This handbook is used school-wide as a way to communicate with parents and students the expectations and policies at Fort Mill Elementary School. Fort Mill Elementary School follows all policies and procedures outlined by the Fort Mill School District #4 Board Policy Manual (which can be accessed online on the district webpage).

At Fort Mill Elementary, we are striving to build a school community that thrives off of parental, family, and community involvement. We encourage you to support our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) and to become involved with the school. Positive relations between the home and school are keys to every child's success as well as their adjustment to school life. Our school newsletter, *BUZZFEED*, will be sent via email and posted on the school website weekly to inform you of any important events going on in the school. There will also be communication using our automated telephone messaging system which will be used for school and PTO reminders as well as school event reminders. In addition, all teachers and administrators will be maintaining websites with detailed school information.

Fort Mill Elementary School is a place where students, faculty, and families work together as a school community to create a positive and engaging learning environment. We value and respect each student, family, and faculty member and welcome individual differences. We look forward to a wonderful year!

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Jocelyn R. Young  
Principal

**OUR MISSION:**

We, at Fort Mill Elementary, will empower, engage, and motivate all students to become twenty-first century thinkers within a diverse learning environment who achieve maximum academic, social, and emotional growth.

**OUR VISION:**

Fort Mill Elementary School is a place where the whole child will come first every day. In collaboration with all stakeholders, our goal is to foster individual student potential through rigorous, relevant, differentiated instruction and enriching opportunities in a safe, student-centered learning environment.

**OUR BELIEFS:**

At Fort Mill Elementary, WE BELIEVE THAT...

- all children possess the potential to become successful 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.
- administrators, parents, students, and the community are valuable assets in a child's educational experience.
- students learn best in an active, engaging, nurturing, and academically stimulating environment.
- all students will have access to technology and full engagement in technological practices in the learning environment.
- staff fosters individual student potential by utilizing differentiated instruction.
- students reach their fullest potential through practices that value their rich cultural diversity, individuality, and social/emotional wellbeing.

## **SAFETY- ALWAYS OUR TOP PRIORITY!!!**

We want to be sure that our students are safe while they are at Fort Mill Elementary or on their way to and from school. While we take a number of precautions to assure their safety, we need your help too. Here's what you can do:

1. Stop for the school bus when you see it has stopped to load or unload students. Don't try to go around the bus or pass it. Never pass a bus from behind if it has stopped to load or unload students.
2. If you drive your child to school, make sure that you follow loading and unloading procedures. They are developed to ensure the safety of all children.
3. We require that all school visitors sign in and out at the school office. Please sign in and receive a visitor's badge to wear while you are in the school. **You will be required to provide photo identification to enter the school or sign your child out of school.**
4. Be sure to follow appropriate speed limits while on school grounds.

## **RISK ASSESSMENTS:**

The safety and security of all students is of the utmost importance to our faculty and staff. Should a concern arise about a student being a danger to him/herself or others, district protocols for conducting a risk assessment (suicide and/or threat) will be followed to the extent appropriate. These assessments may include interviews with students and staff, a review of student records, and consultation with district mental health staff, local law enforcement, or other community agencies that help support our schools and students. If, as part of its assessment and response, the District determines there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, it may disclose personally identifiable information from education records to any person whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

## **REGISTRATION**

All students attending school in the Fort Mill School District are required to pay a \$30 registration fee per student prior to each school year (waiver letters are sent once by the district to students on free and reduced lunch). In addition to the fees, parents need to fill out emergency registration forms with contact information. If any personal information (custody, address, phone #, etc.) changes throughout school year, a new registration form must be filled out and returned to the office. This is for your child's safety.

## **TRANSFERS**

When a child is moving to another school, the school should be notified at least a week in advance if possible. School records will be forwarded to the new school upon request from that school.

## **THE SCHOOL DAY**

- 7:10am – Student supervision starts in the hallways
- 7:30am – Breakfast begins
- 7:30am – Students enter the classrooms
- 7:40am – **SCHOOL STARTS** – Morning News
- 2:25pm – Student Dismissal

## **DISMISSAL**

All students will be dismissed at 2:25 pm. If you plan to pick-up your child from school please follow the designated pick-up procedures, as there will be a lot of traffic, both cars and buses, around the school at that time. Pick-up procedures are discussed later in the handbook. Students not picked up by 2:50 will be taken to the office to wait for their ride. Students picked up after 3:00 must be signed out by the person picking them up.

## **GRADES**

In the grades K and 1, student progress is reported via a developmental checklist that indicates skills that have introduced, are emerging, or have been mastered. In the upper grades, the following grading scale is utilized.

**A=90-100**

**B=80-89**

**C=79-70**

**D=69-60**

**F= Below 60**

It is important that assignments being given by related arts teachers be taken as seriously as those in the core academic subjects. Students are expected to meet the state standards established for these subject areas. A grade of "N" in a

related arts class can keep a student off of the honor roll, therefore students need to give these assignments equal attention.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Parent volunteers are WELCOME and NEEDED at Fort Mill Elementary. Your assistance can help us improve the overall quality of our school program. You may choose to assist in one or more of the following areas: classroom teacher's assistant, clerical assistant, reading to children, having children read to you, tutoring, or other special projects. If you would be willing to volunteer, please contact your child's teacher to arrange a time and day. **Please do not bring pre-school children with you when coming to volunteer because they are often an interruption to instruction and learning.** We do not allow children in the parent workroom due to safety concerns. Also, no school-age child, relative, or friend may visit in your child's class.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

The parent, guardian, or an adult acting with the consent of the parent or guardian that is on the white information sheet or listed in Powerschool must come to the office and sign out the student on a form provided by each school. The form shall show the date and time the student is dismissed. Only the principal or his/her designee shall have the authority to grant permission for early dismissal from school. Students are not dismissed between **2:00** and **2:25**.

## **IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING CUSTODY**

If you are separated or divorced, we need to have a copy of your custody papers on file. If at any time you feel that a problem of abduction may occur, we need to have knowledge of this in the school office. This is the only way we can assist in preventing this from happening at school.

## **CONFERENCES**

Conferences are a valuable and important part of fostering a positive learning experience for students. The month of October is designated for scheduling formal conferences. Your child's teacher will schedule a time for you to meet. Parents are encouraged to call for an appointment at other times as well. Conferences are normally scheduled after school but may also be arranged before school and at planning times. We do not usually schedule conferences during the school day (except at planning time) as it takes away from instructional time. Parents may call the school office or send a note to set up an appointment. Telephone calls are often good means of having informal conferences.

## **RESIDENCY**

All students that attend Fort Mill Elementary must reside within its specified attendance zone. If for any reason the school is made aware that you do not reside within the attendance zone, you will be expected to withdraw your child and enroll them in the school or district in which they are zoned. Once it has been brought to the school's attention, you will be notified in writing. The school reserves the right to refuse a notarized statement. All appeals must be taken to the Assistant Superintendent. If your address changes and remain in the appropriate attendance zone, you must provide a proper proof of residency.

## **ATTENDANCE - ABSENCES**

All students are expected to be in attendance each day school is in session. Following any absence, a student is required to present a written document from the parent or guardian stating the date of the absence(s), the reason for the absence(s), and the signature of the parent or guardian. The excuse should be presented within two days of the child's absence(s), otherwise the absence will be recorded as unlawful. For perfect attendance purposes, a child must be in school at least half of the school day (3 ½ hours). It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to call after-school day care centers if their child is absent from school. **Vacations and trips are considered unexcused.**

## **LAWFUL ABSENCES**

1. Serious, chronic, or extended illness of the student.
2. Serious illness or death in the immediate family.
3. Recognized religious holiday for the students of the particular religious faith when pre-arranged.
4. Pre-arranged absences for other reasons and/or extreme hardships at the discretion of the principal.

## **UNLAWFUL ABSENCES**

Any absence by a student with or without the knowledge of the parent not meeting one of the conditions for an excused absence as defined above will count toward the cumulative limit of absences. Written notification will be sent by the school when a student has accumulated absences. Under the guidelines of the No Child Left Behind Act, when a child accumulates five absences that are unlawful or not excused by a medical note, parents will be required to attend an

attendance intervention (truancy) conference and assist the principal or his designee in the development of an attendance intervention plan. Excessive absences could result in a family court referral. **The school will only accept a parent written excuse for five total days of absences.**

## **TARDIES**

Fort Mill Elementary School strives to maintain an orderly environment for student education. Students who arrive late not only miss valuable class time, but they also disrupt the classroom. The school day starts at 7:40am. Students who arrive on late buses will not be considered tardy. Safety Patrol will end at 7:40 each morning. Students arriving after 7:40 must be walked in by a parent or care-giver to insure safety while entering the building. Students who are late to school **MUST** be signed in by a parent/adult in the office after 7:40. Tardies can result in a student with perfect attendance missing the perfect attendance recognition. Excessive tardiness will also result in a parent conference to set up an attendance intervention plan that is consistent with the district's truancy plan.

## **MEDICATION AND FIRST AID**

FMES is equipped to only handle minor emergencies and scrapes and bruises. While we have a school nurse on duty, our ability to provide care for sick children is somewhat limited. If your child gets sick at school, we must have emergency phone numbers to call. Parents must be reached before a physician will render aid.

### **Permission for School Administration of Prescription Medication:**

1. School nurses are not able to dispense any medications, both prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter), from the health rooms without a health care provider's order for that specific child.
2. Prescription medications are medicines that require a written prescription from a health care practitioner. In order for a child to be given a prescription medicine at school, the child's health care practitioner and the child's parent or guardian must sign a permission form available from the nurse or available on the school's website.
3. A parent/guardian should deliver the medicine and the permission form to the school. The medicine must be in the original container with the label on it from their pharmacy. No Ziploc bags will be accepted.
4. If a prescription medicine is currently being given at school and needed while your child is on a field trip, the parent/guardian must bring and supply the medicine to school on the day of the field trip. It must be in the original, marked container. Additional labeled bottles may be obtained from your pharmacy. No Ziploc bags will be accepted.
5. For each new prescription medication, a permission form will need to be completed by the parent and health care practitioner.

## **TRANSPORTATION - CAR RIDERS**

For the safety of our students we must follow a plan for loading and unloading cars. In the mornings all children are to be unloaded in the front of the building near the gym/cafeteria area. In the afternoons, all students will be picked up in that same location. Parents are reminded that for safety reasons, students will not be allowed to cross lines of traffic to waiting cars; therefore please do not park across from the loading area to get your child. All cars should stay in **one line** of traffic; we will load your child as quickly as possible. Please put your child's name and grade level in the window of your vehicle on the card provided by the school; this will help speed the loading process. Safety regulations require separate car and bus entrances; consequently, the bus lane is closed to all cars in the morning and in the afternoon. Additionally, parents should not unload children in the teacher parking lot in the mornings. Please do not park and leave your car unattended along the curb in front of the building in the morning or afternoon. If you need to come into the building please park in the visitor spots or in the teacher parking lot.

**If your child needs to go home a different way than normal, for example, they need to be a car rider when they normally ride a bus, you must send a note to your child's teacher. Otherwise, they will be sent home the normal way.**

## **BUS RIDERS**

Riding the bus is a privilege extended to students and good behavior is required at all times. To ensure a safe environment on each bus, the school fully supports the driver in maintaining safe bus expectations. Anyone who violates these safety standards will be subject to disciplinary action by school officials; when necessary, bus transportation will be denied. The state law makes the school bus driver responsible for the conduct of the passengers while riding in the bus under his control. The driver will report to the school authorities any offenses committed by the students on the bus. When a student is reported for an infraction of the bus rules, the school administrator will investigate the incident and take necessary disciplinary action. A copy of the incident report will be sent to the parents. When a student is suspended from riding a bus, he/she cannot ride another bus during the suspension period. Should a student ride another bus while

under suspension, he/she will be subjected to further disciplinary action. Students are assigned to buses at the beginning of the year and the transportation office must approve any variation. **If your child needs to ride a different bus home than the one that picks him/her up, then a special request must be made to the district Director of Transportation (802-1998). Students will be allowed to ride a different bus only if prior approval has been given.** Forms for making these requests are available in the school office.

### **PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

Fort Mill Elementary wants to establish a strong, supportive PTO. At FMES, we look forward to a close relationship with the parents of our children. We want to have an active and energetic PTO. We would like to encourage all parents to participate in the parent organization. Fort Mill Elementary's parent organization deals with many issues that concern the betterment of your child's education. Please lend your support by supporting the fundraisers and activities planned by the PTO. For more information, go to FMES's PTO Website [www.fmespto.com](http://www.fmespto.com)

### **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL**

Fort Mill Elementary has a School Improvement Council made up of teachers, parents, and administrators that will help to facilitate communications between the community and the school. SIC elections are held in the fall of every year.

### **DISTRIBUTING MATERIALS AT SCHOOL**

All materials to be distributed at school must be approved by either the district office or school office. Invitations to events outside of school (like birthday parties) cannot be distributed in the classroom unless the entire class is invited.

### **SCHOOL PICTURES**

School pictures are taken twice during the school year. They are printed in color and packages of several sizes are available for purchase. Dates for pictures are announced in advance with individual pictures taken in the fall and spring. Class photos will also be taken in the spring.

### **STUDENT TESTING**

Students at Fort Mill Elementary will participate in testing as one of the methods we use to determine educational progress and to determine the need for special assistance. The following tests will be administered at Fort Mill Elementary:

1. **Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) and SCREADY** – These tests are administered in April and May to students in 3rd – 5th grade. These tests measure student performance in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies against “established standards” and are called criterion referenced tests.
2. **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)** – These tests are administered on the computer to students in K – 5th grade. MAP is an achievement diagnostic assessment used by your child's classroom teacher to individualize instruction. Additionally, these tests are used as a baseline to qualify in district and school programs.
3. **Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT)** – This test is an ability measure administered to 2nd grade students, as well as 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students that are new to the district. The CogAT is used to determine qualification into district and school programs.
4. **Performance Task Testing** - This test is a performance measure administered to 2-5 grade students with qualifying scores on CogAT or MAP. The Performance Task Test is used to determine qualification into district and school programs.

The staff and administration of Fort Mill Elementary want to caution all parents about putting too much emphasis on test results. These tests only measure a certain set of skills and a student's performance at a certain point in time. Because of this, we are continuously developing alternate ways of assessing student progress. These assessments offer a much more accurate picture of student performance and provide much greater information concerning needed instructional approaches.

### **NO PLACE FOR HATE**

As part of our school's plan to promote a positive, caring, and safe learning community which includes high expectations for respectful and responsible choices by all, we adhere to No Place for Hate promises which act as our school expectations. These promises include the following:

1. **I promise to do my best to treat everyone fairly.**
2. **I promise to do my best to be kind to everyone —even if they are not like me.**
3. **If I see someone being hurt or bullied, I will tell a teacher.**
4. **Everyone should be able to feel safe and happy in school.**
5. **I want our school to be No Place for Hate®.**

## **DISCIPLINE**

Fort Mill Elementary School is recognized as a *No Place for Hate* school. Because of this, we expect students, parents, and faculty to live by the *No Place for Hate* promises listed above. In order for students to have a positive school experience, an atmosphere of good behavior must be maintained; we expect our children to behave properly. While each child is responsible for his or her own behavior, we encourage parental support of the school expectations. In the event that a student is sent to the office for a discipline referral, a copy of that referral will be sent to the parents. Depending upon the nature of the problem, some possible consequences for inappropriate actions include parent conferences, denial of privileges, isolation, and in school or out of school suspension. In each incident, the consequences will be as appropriate for the infraction as possible. Student actions that disrupt class work, involve substantial disorder, or invade the rights of others could be a basis for out of school suspension or expulsion. Examples of these student actions or major offenses are: theft, fighting, possession of weapons, damage to school property, assault of school personnel, defiance of school authority, profanity, obscene literature, distribution of unauthorized materials, possession of drugs and alcohol, blackmail/threats/intimidation, student disorder, and possession of fireworks.

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

**When a student's actions pose a clear, present, and imminent physical danger to self and/or others and the student has the ability to cause such harm, school staff may use reasonable and necessary restraint strategies, in accordance with a nationally recognized and externally developed professional training program.**

## **RESTRAINT**

For the purposes of these guidelines, physical restraint is defined as a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move his or her arms, legs, or head freely. This definition encompasses mechanical restraints, further defined as a device that restricts the movement or function of a child or a portion of a child's body.

Restraint, as defined by these guidelines, does not include the following:

1. temporarily holding an individual to help him or her participate in education or daily living activities;
2. escorting techniques, where a student is provided limited physical encouragement to help him or her move from one location to another without rising to the level of physically forcing compliance (e.g., hand on the back or a hand on the elbow);
3. chemical restraints (medication for safety or behavioral supports) determined by medical personnel;
4. appropriate use of adaptive equipment or products, provided they are used in accordance with manufacturers' recommended usage.
  - a. Adaptive equipment may include, but is not limited to, adaptive seating products or therapeutically prescribed devices such as weighted vests.
  - b. If adaptive equipment, such as Rifton chair or weighted vest, is used for the purpose of limiting mobility or as a punitive measure, its use constitutes restraint.

The use of restraint is limited to emergency situations where the behavior of the student poses a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others and the student has the ability to cause such harm. Restraint may be used only as a last resort after proper positive behavioral interventions and de-escalation techniques have failed to de-escalate the risk of injury.

Restraint should never be used:

1. as punishment;
2. to force compliance or address non-compliance;
3. as a substitute for appropriate educational support;
4. in response to property destruction;
5. in response to a student's flight, escape, or running away, unless there is imminent risk of injury related to the escape;
6. in response to verbal threats and profanity that do not rise to the level of physical harm unless the student demonstrates a means of carrying out the threats;
7. longer than needed to resolve the risk of actual harm.

The use of prone restraints (face down on stomach) with the exception of approved Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) endorsed floor restraints, supine restraints (face up on the back), or any hold or maneuver that places pressure or weight on the student's chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back, neck, or throat are strictly forbidden. Moreover, the degree of force used must not exceed what is necessary to protect the student or others from imminent bodily injury.

## **NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION & REVIEW**

The use of restraint in the school setting triggers the district's obligation to create and maintain specific documentation regarding the incident. Documentation must include:

1. actions attempted prior to the restraint in an effort to manage or de-escalate the situation;
2. a clear description of the safety concerns posed to the student or others;
3. student's behavior before, during, and after restraint;
4. location of the restraint;
5. amount of time in restraint;
6. a description of the physical restraint techniques used and training personnel received prior to implementing restraint;
7. names and position titles of personnel involved with the incident;
8. date and time the administrator was notified;
9. date and time the parents were notified and by whom;
10. name and position of person(s) completing the documentation.

## **TRAINING**

Restraint training must be provided, and reviewed, at least annually, by a credentialed trainer through a nationally recognized, externally developed professional training program. The training must include the following components:

1. prevention of behavior problems through a positive behavioral supports climate;
2. conflict prevention and conflict management skills;
3. de-escalation skills that enable staff members to respond to students in ways more likely to calm, rather than escalate, the situation;
4. information on physical and emotional risks of escalation and restraint;
5. instruction on personal safety skills for staff who work with students who are more likely to present safety concerns;
6. prohibition on the use of prone restraints (face down on stomach) with the exception of approved Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) endorsed floor restraints, supine restraints (face up on the back), or any hold or maneuver that places pressure or weight on the student's chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back, neck, or throat.

The training program used must include some method of assessment that ensures appropriate skills are in place. The program must also provide documentation that a participant has successfully completed the training, either through a certificate or other credential. Fort Mill Schools must keep a list of those who have completed training, including a description of the content of the training, on file. The school district retains discretion as to which personnel should receive restraint training. However, training must be provided to enough staff members that the school district can ensure a sufficient number of staff is available if restraint is used.

## **FERPA INFORMATION**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools, which receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. For further information regarding your rights under FERPA, please refer to the "For Parents" section of the school district's webpage at [www.fortmillschools.org](http://www.fortmillschools.org).

## **CLOTHING**

School is a child's "place of business" and we expect children to come to school with this attitude. Children should come dressed ready to work. We also expect adults coming into our building to respect this feeling and assist us by setting a good example. Any clothing causing a distraction at school is discouraged. A change of clothing may be required if clothing is not felt to be appropriate for school. The School Board policy concerning clothing requires:

Grades K-5

Proper shoes must be worn at all times for safety reasons. Shoes with cleats may not be worn.

Logos or clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, tobacco, racism, hate, gang affiliation, nudity, or profanity is not allowed. No clothing or accessories are allowed to disrupt the educational process. The administration reserves the right to determine what is appropriate for school.

Students may wear shorts, dresses, skirts, etc. which are of appropriate length. Tops must be long enough that they can be tucked into pants or shorts. Basketball jerseys must be worn with an appropriate garment (i.e. tee shirt). No headwear (hats, caps, hoods, etc.) or sunglasses may be worn in the building.

**The following items are not appropriate for school:**

Flip flops, spaghetti straps, tattered or torn clothing, underwear that is visible, tank tops, muscle shirts, t-backs and cross-backs.

Violations will result in the following:

First and subsequent offenses: phone call to parent

## **BRING YOUR OWN TECHNOLOGY (BYOT) – 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades**

Students are permitted at the discretion of their teacher to bring his/her personal electronic devices to school to support instruction and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. Use is restricted to educational activities under the supervision of his/her teacher. It is a privilege for students to use their personal electronic device at school and this privilege can be taken away if students act irresponsibly or violate school policy (see “If Privileges are Abused” section below). Bring Your Own Technology devices that are acceptable for the use above include the following: iPads, tablets, and e-readers such as Chromebooks or kindles. Teachers choosing to take advantage of this will send home a BYOT Classroom Policy at FMES permission form for you to sign if you wish for your child to participate. **No student will be permitted to use personal technology devices unless the agreement is signed and returned.**

### **BYOT RULES:**

1. Students take full responsibility of their devices and are brought to school at the owner’s risk. FMES and its staff are not responsible for theft, loss of, or damage to personal electronic devices. Personal electronic devices cannot be left on campus before or after the school hours.
2. Students must *immediately* comply with teachers’ requests to shut down devices or close the screen. Personal electronic devices must be in silent mode and put away when asked by teachers.
3. Personal electronic devices must be charged prior to bringing them to school and run off their own batteries while at school. Students can also bring in chargers if needed. Please label both pieces of equipment.
4. At the discretion of Fort Mill School District, a Guest WiFi connection may be made available to students. Students joining devices to the Fort Mill School District Guest Wi-Fi agree to adhere to the district’s Acceptable Use Policy. Guest WiFi will be filtered for content in the same manner as other district computers. However, the district cannot filter or restrict access for students who bring 3G or 4G enabled devices and use a cellular connection instead of the Guest WiFi to connect to the Internet.

### **IF PRIVILEGES ARE ABUSED:**

1. If student doesn’t follow the rules for BYOT, they will receive a verbal warning which will be documented by the child’s teacher.
2. Upon the second warning, the personal electronic device will be confiscated for the remainder of the day, parents will be notified, and student will be subject to disciplinary action.
3. On the third offense, the personal electronic device will be confiscated, parents will be contacted for a meeting with the child’s teacher at which the personal electronic device will be returned to the parent, the student will not be allowed to bring the personal electronic device back to school for a period of time specified by the administration, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **LUNCH, BREAKFAST, AND SNACKS**

Nutritious breakfasts and lunches are available at school every day. Breakfast is served daily from 7:30-7:55. Students are required to eat lunch in the cafeteria, either purchasing lunch or bringing lunch from home. Extra milk is also available for purchase. Students are discouraged from bringing canned/carbonated drinks to the lunchroom and encouraged to drink milk unless a note is brought from home. Menus are sent home on a monthly calendar and can be accessed on the district website. Students may pay for breakfast and lunch daily, weekly, or monthly. We also offer mealpayplus.com, an online payment service for parents. We strongly encourage parents to pay on a weekly or monthly basis. Students paying on a daily basis often forget and because of accounting procedures, we will not have money at school to lend. Please remember to send your child’s lunch money on a regular basis. Students that accumulate excessive charges on their account (three or more) will be provided with an alternative meal and will not have a choice of lunch. Adults who wish to eat with their child should contact the school by 9:00 am that day to reserve their meal. Meals may be purchased in the cafeteria as you go through the line; it’s helpful if you will send a note to your child’s teacher on the day you plan to come. Second, third, fourth, and fifth graders can purchase extra food and snacks in the cafeteria. Extra food and snacks can only be paid for on a student’s account once a parent has sent a letter approving the sales. Only one letter is necessary per school year.

Those who qualify for free or reduced price lunches and breakfasts must fill out forms and return them to the school office or district office immediately.

The cost for meals at school is:

Breakfast:	\$1.35 regular	\$0.35 reduced
Lunch:	\$2.25 regular	\$0.45 reduced

## **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES/CELEBRATIONS – Acceptable Food Guidelines**

Homemade or home baked foods are no longer allowed to be distributed to students within the classroom or applicable classroom setting. Acceptable foods for distribution are those items that were prepared in a commercial and/or licensed kitchen, and most importantly, are packaged with a label clearly listing the contents and ingredients of the food item. With the continued rise in severe and often life-threatening food allergies, this policy is designed to provide consistency and minimize allergy risks in all classrooms district-wide, while maintaining a safe and positive learning environment for all students. It is important to note that the policy does not apply to a student's personal lunch. The policy is part of a larger, comprehensive Food Allergy Guideline approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2014, which can be found on the district's website at [www.fortmillschools.org](http://www.fortmillschools.org) under "Board Policies." Further questions can also be directed to the principal, school nurse, or by contacting the district office at 803-548-2527.

## **MONEY REMINDER**

Parents, if you send money or a note with your child:

1. Put it in a sealed envelope.
2. Write the child's name and teacher's name on the outside of the envelope with a note inside telling for what purpose the money is to be used.
3. Lunch money should be placed in a sealed envelope with the child's name, teacher's name, and lunch number.

## **CHECKS**

Checks written to pay for your child's lunch, insurance, field trips, and lost or damaged books should be made payable to Fort Mill Elementary School. Please note your child's name on the check so that we can credit the child with payment. Please also add your phone number to the check if it is not already indicated.

## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

1. Homework should be specific reinforcement activities; no new skills or material should be introduced as a part of homework.
2. Written homework should be such that it can be completed with minimal parental help.
3. Homework will also consist of teachers sending home, on a regular basis, class work to encourage parental involvement and support.
4. Teachers will check written homework assignments with pre-established consequences for non-completion.
5. Homework assignments should be such that they can be completed within a reasonable length of time, taking into consideration the age and ability level of the child. A good rule of thumb for this is approximately ten minutes per grade level per day; for example, a third grader may expect to have about 30 minutes of written homework per evening while a second grader should expect about 20 minutes. This does not include daily reading that should occur for all students.

**\*Please note: In an effort to reinforce student responsibility, maintain equity, and keep our classrooms safe, students and parents will be prohibited from returning to the classroom after the school day has ended to pick up books or homework left in the room. Exceptions can be made for glasses or coats, but must be approved by administration.**

## **HOMEWORK SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS**

1. Designate a homework spot and time and be available to assist if help is needed.
2. Encourage your child to write down assignments and check on a daily basis to see what homework is due.
3. When assistance is needed, talk your child through the problem or question until he/she can find the solution.
4. Help your child check his homework and discuss specific problem areas.
5. Be observant for signs of problems and if homework becomes too challenging, meet with your child's teacher.
6. Remember to help your child balance household responsibilities, play, extracurricular activities, and study time. Homework should not take up all of their afternoon time.
7. Review with your child the classwork that the teacher sends home.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

Promotion or retention will be determined according to district policy and shall be the cooperative recommendation of the teacher, principal, and the parent. Final decisions will be the responsibility of the principal. A student shall be promoted to the next grade level if his educational, physical, social, and emotional growth is satisfactory. He/she shall not be promoted if he has not made adequate progress and it is generally agreed that he will benefit by retention in the same grade for another year.

## PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

1. Progress reports will **ONLY** be printed and issued to parents of 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students IF the parents/guardians request a paper copy. Otherwise, please access your child's grades using Parent Portal.
2. Kindergarten and first grade will be using a Standards Based Report Card, which will be similar to the handwritten reports that have been given in the past.
3. All K-5 grades will be issued report cards on a 9 weeks grading period. These should be signed by one of the parents/guardians and returned to school the following day.

Furthermore, student progress can be determined from the work samples that are regularly sent home with the students. Please note that no form or written report can possibly give you as complete information as can be received through a conference with the teacher. Formal parent/teacher conferences will be held at the end of the first nine weeks with others scheduled during the year at the discretion of the teacher and parent. We hope you will confer with the teacher on the scheduled conference dates and whenever additional information will be helpful. Please send a note requesting a conference at times others than those scheduled.

## PARENT COMMUNICATION

1. All school communications will be sent home on **WEDNESDAYS ONLY**. This does not take into account teacher communications. Also, emergency communications may need to be sent home from time to time.
2. A weekly newsletter, **BUZZFEED**, will be emailed and posted to the school website weekly. The newsletter is designed to keep parents up to date with activities and happenings at school and provide reminders about recurring events such as PTO meetings. The newsletter is also aimed at informing parents about special awards and honors received by the students and staff. Often, hints are provided that may help parents assist their children with academic activities. Weekly phone messages will go out for school and PTO reminders as well as school events.
3. The school and district also use the Alert Now phone messaging system. We have emergency and non-emergency accounts set up for notifications about school events, weather delays, and other pertinent information. If you are aware that you are not receiving these messages please contact the school so we can update your information in our database.

## CARE OF TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS

Textbooks are provided by the state and the school is accountable to the state for them. Students are responsible for all textbooks and library books issued to them during the school year. To ensure that textbooks will be in good condition for students to use each year, we ask that students keep book covers on the books for the entire year. All lost or damaged books must be paid for. At the end of the school year students will be charged for damages beyond normal wear. Monies collected for lost/damaged textbooks and library books are designated for replacement costs. If a lost book is later found, the money paid would be refunded. If lost or damaged books are not paid for, the student's report card will not be released.

## LOST AND FOUND

Items found at school are turned in to the office. If they are not claimed right away they are placed in the "Lost and Found" in the cafeteria. About twice a year we clean out the closet and take items not claimed to a local clothes closet. We strongly encourage you to have your child's name on clothes, lunch boxes, notebooks, etc.

## FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

We hold monthly drills to help our students understand the proper procedures should we ever have an emergency. Fire drills are held each month and a tornado drill is held in March. Lockdown drills will be conducted throughout the year. Our staff also receives yearly training on the proper procedures to follow should we have a problem with the nuclear plant.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are centered on units of study and feature different activities for different grades. This insures that students have a wide range of experiences at the ages that they would be most appropriate. Parents are asked to sign permission forms for their child's participation. **No child will be allowed to go on a field trip unless this form is signed.** Volunteers are needed as chaperones on many of these excursions. Chaperones must complete an application for a full background check which is run by the district office. Chaperones might be requested to ride the bus for a trip. Chaperones are expected to attend the entire length of the trip, which includes leaving and arriving back at the school to insure student safety (following the bus both ways). Chaperones are not permitted to bring other children (younger siblings) on a field trip.

