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## I. SCHOOL FOR FRIENDS CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office Fax: 202-328-6830

Head of School: [bartis@schoolforfriends.org](mailto:bartis@schoolforfriends.org)

[Operations Specialist: bpalazzolo@schoolforfriends.org](mailto:bpalazzolo@schoolforfriends.org)

Tigers Classroom: 202-328-5411

Eagles/Sea Lions Classrooms: 202-387-6294

Monarch Butterflies Classroom: 202-387-3020

Red Pandas/Leatherback Turtles Classrooms: 202-328-2208

## II. PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

### PHILOSOPHY

School for Friends is a preschool that provides a loving, caring, and supportive educational environment for children 18 months to five years of age. The curriculum reflects the Quaker values of cooperation, equality, and nonviolence.

The school encourages all aspects of a child's development - social, emotional, physical and cognitive - in a setting that is safe, warm, and cheerful. The teachers help the children develop positive self-concepts and understand others from diverse backgrounds.

### PROGRAM

School for Friends offers programs for both toddlers (18 months to 2 ½ year old) and preschoolers (3-5 year old). The curriculum is based on the perspective that children learn through experience—through involvement with other people and with the environment. The curriculum includes activities in the areas of language, art, dramatic play, music, science, and math. Ample time is provided for indoor and outdoor play. Field trips are an integral part of our curriculum.

### STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Each classroom has a lead teacher with the following qualifications: an associate's degree or higher (preferably a bachelors) from an accredited college or university in early childhood education or a related field OR an associate's degree or higher with EITHER at least fifteen credit hours in early childhood education or early childhood development OR a Child Development Associate(CDA) credential.

Each classroom will have at least one assistant teacher with a Child Development Associate(CDA) credential, plus one (1) year of supervised experience working with children in a licensed Early Childhood Education setting.

## **HOW SCHOOL FOR FRIENDS IS GOVERNED**

School for Friends is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of four parent representatives, Quakers, and the Head of School. New parent Board members are selected by a nominating committee appointed by the President from parents who are willing to serve and are approved by the acting Board. Most Quaker members are selected by the Friends Meeting of Washington. School policy decisions are made by consensus.

Is School for Friends a parent-run school? Yes and no. The group of parents who created the school did two things that determined how the school would be governed. They hired professional staff with knowledge of early childhood to direct and teach in the school. They elected to be a Quaker school by accepting a generous donation for start-up costs from the Friends Meeting of Washington.

They wrote these decisions into the by-laws of the School. As a result, parents have a strong voice in the policies of the school through their parent representatives on the board, yet theirs is not the only voice - the school is not a parent cooperative. For more details on the governing of the school, see the by-laws.

## **BOARD MEETINGS**

Board of Trustees meetings are held monthly. Parent Board members serve as representatives of all the parents.

## **HOW SCHOOL FOR FRIENDS IS FUNDED**

Tuition is the largest source of income to meet the school's budget. Parent-organized fundraisers throughout the year augment the budget and provide additional funds for financial assistance and special projects. A modest amount of financial assistance is available to a limited number of families to help meet tuition charges. The scholarship fund has been set up to provide financial assistance and is funded in addition to the fundraisers by setting aside a portion of the tuition collected each month.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The school admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, gender or creed to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, gender or creed in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, and other school-administered programs.

## **HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL**

School for Friends exists because of the cooperative efforts of parents, staff, members of the Friends Meeting of Washington (Quakers), and Church of the Pilgrims.

In 1981, a small group of neighborhood parents and Quakers founded the Friendly Child Care Center, a one-room school at the Friends Meeting of Washington location (the name was later changed to School for Friends). We used a \$6,000 seed grant from the Friends Meeting of Washington to purchase equipment and supplies. From the start, the program provided full and part-time care to working parents of children ages two to five years old. In the first year, we established our scholarship fund within the operating budget. Most of our fund-raising money for the first three years went to the scholarship fund. We have also received grants from the Miles White Society of Baltimore, a Friend's foundation, for the scholarship fund and for parent education.

The Board, staff, and parents have worked together to create the scholarship fund, raise staff salaries and benefits, encourage a high level of parent engagement, and establish a curriculum based on principles of Quaker educational philosophy.

There is a strong sense of continuity at School for Friends. Among the parents, several have returned with their second, third, and fourth children. Many alumni families remain involved through their contributions and participation in school events. Since 1981, we have provided financial assistance to many families. There are few non-subsidized child care centers in the city that have a scholarship fund that assists so many of its families.

Because parent involvement has been necessary and encouraged, parents have contributed (and continue to contribute) their talents and time.

The staff has worked hard to incorporate the principles of nonviolence, equality, and cooperation into the daily curriculum. We have also strived to provide developmentally appropriate educational experiences, through other activities such as field trips.

In 1983 School for Friends received its non-profit status as an independent educational facility.

As we became better established, our reputation as a quality early childhood education program grew. Responding to the urging of the parents, we began to move towards expansion in 1984.

As in the beginning, the plans for expansion were developed by a small group of people and eventually involved the whole school community and prospective parents. New families in 1984-85 contributed a fee that provided the seed money for the expansion. Other fundraising included: grants from the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions 2B and 1D and the Dupont Circle Citizens Association, and individual contributions. It was agreed that School for Friends at Quaker House and Pilgrims would operate as one school. In 1984, School for Friends expanded from twenty-five families to 60 families, from five staff to fourteen staff, and from one classroom to three. In 1991 we added yet another classroom at Pilgrims - the first floor Rainbow Room.

## 1. **THE QUAKER CONNECTION**

### **QUAKER AFFILIATION**

School for Friends is a Quaker school mainly in its concern for Quaker values as reflected in the curriculum. The principles of non-violence, equality, and cooperation are reflected in how the program is run.

Staff members attend a seminar for educators new to Quaker schools during their first year. They also spend a good deal of time considering how to deal with violence (e.g., gunplay and hitting) and superhero play at school. (See the section entitled "Gunplay.")

Some of our board members are Quaker and generally selected by the Friends Meeting of Washington, as is required by our membership in the Friends Council on Education. The Friends Meeting supports our scholarship fund that creates economic diversity in the school.

Two testimonies of Friends are specifically reflected and exemplified in our curriculum. First of all, we seek to recognize that of God in each person through creating and supporting a diverse community. It is our curriculum goal to help children relate to, respect, and work with people different from themselves. Teachers at School for Friends endeavor to have children understand different perspectives as well as recognize others' feelings. We are committed to providing a curriculum that enables each child to celebrate his/her unique talents and heritage and those of others.

Secondly, Friends' peace testimony is exemplified in the way we incorporate developing social skills with the goal of peaceful resolution of conflict. Teachers give the children at School for Friends the support they need to navigate conflicts. Oftentimes we help them learn phrases and techniques of conflict resolution – stating the problem, listening to the other child/children involved in the conflict, and working on a mutually agreed upon solution. Sometimes, conflicts are resolved by helping children remember the rules.

## **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

School for Friends has made Moment of Silence a part of its curriculum, believing in its important contribution to school life. Even the youngest of the children is taught how to use Moments of Silence effectively.

Quaker Meeting for Worship is silent. No one leads the group in ceremony. Quakers believe each person can guide himself/herself toward his/her own truth and that silence is the context in which this process can occur. In a gathering of silence, children learn to listen to their own thoughts. A first-time observer of an adult Quaker Meeting for Worship might say, "Nothing is happening. They just sit there." Likewise, a visitor during a School for Friends Moment of Silence might say, "The children are wiggling. They can't possibly be getting anything out of this." Is there more happening than meets the eye? Is the effort one must make to reach silence worth it?

School for Friends believes it is. In the morning and afternoon, each classroom observes a Moment of Silence for at least a few minutes. During these times teachers help children become comfortable with silence and encourage them to make good use of it. Teachers may choose to give the children an idea to focus on. They can also begin the silence without making suggestions.

Simply establishing silence for a brief moment is quite an accomplishment for a group of 18 months to five year olds.

Regardless of age, children can come to appreciate Moment of Silence as a peaceful time away from the rest of the day.

Sometimes after Moment of Silence, thoughts are shared. What kind of thoughts? Almost anything special to children. They speak of people they love, their pets, and simple observations of nature. Central to the purpose of a Meeting for Worship is an acceptance of what is important to another.

Because our Moment of Silence is not solitary but rather carried out in the presence of others, it encourages a sense of belonging. At School for Friends it is hoped that our children will come to see the group silence as an opportunity to be with others in a special way.

## **2. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **A. ENROLLMENT**

#### **ADMISSIONS**

The following criteria are used to determine which families we admit to the school:

1. Parental involvement with school activities;
2. Gender of the child;
3. Age of the child;
4. Minority group status of the child or family;
5. Quaker affiliation of the family;
6. Previous enrollment of a child in the family;
7. Residence in the immediate neighborhood

We do not admit children based primarily on the date of application.

## ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT FAMILIES FOR FOLLOWING YEAR

Families must notify the school of their intent to re-enroll the following year by March 1st. Families on financial aid must reapply every year by March 1st.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT - Principles that guide the Head of School in making decisions.

Our primary consideration in placement is the welfare of all the children, at the same time taking into account strong individual needs.

Our licensing by the District determines the maximum number of children for each classroom. Our budget requires 70 children.

We look at the specific needs of the child: For example, if a child functions better in a smaller group; if two children are particularly close in a way that is very productive for the emotional and developmental growth of both children; or if a child needs to be the oldest in a group rather than the youngest. The Head of School gets input from the child's parents and teachers. We take into consideration parents' preferences and try to respect them. However, because we must create cohesive and balanced classrooms, we may not be able to accommodate parental preferences. The decision for placement rests finally on the Head of School.

How can you help your children with changes that will take place for them in September? Your preparation of your child plays a big role in how well they make this transition. Adapting to change is one of the most important skills a child develops. Your child becomes more resilient as a result of mastering small changes during which he/she is being supported by his/her teachers and parents. We appreciate your help in this.

The School's policy is that a child will not be transferred from one classroom to another before January. Movement from one classroom to another can have a negative effect on all families and the school that outweighs the potential benefits of a transfer.

### **MIXED-AGE CLASSROOMS**

Sometimes at School for Friends, classrooms are comprised of different ages. The atmosphere and environment we work to create at School for Friends is one of a family and neighborhood where mixed-age friendships are common. In a mixed-age classroom, older children learn how to be leaders and to help others, and younger children develop a wider range of skills through joint activities.

Often children who are equals in a particular area--in physical size, verbal fluency, or athletic skills--are not always the same age. A mixed age classroom brings other opportunities for children to make friendships based on skills and interests.

There are, however, times during the day when smaller groups of children who are closer in age get together for teacher-directed activities. What makes an activity for a two and three-year-old different from an activity for a four and five-year-old is mainly its length and complexity. Toddlers, two year olds and three-year-olds in a group tend to have shorter attention spans than a group of four and five-year-olds. Most four and five-year-olds are curious enough about a subject, e.g., fire fighters, to focus on a lengthy explanation before active play. Two and three-year-olds in a group generally prefer to be active right away. For example, they like to get up, put on fire hats, and imitate a fire engine by running around the back yard. Later both groups of children can bring what they have learned to indoor and outdoor free play. We find that even children who are cognitively advanced for their age benefit from the mixed age group.

The younger children are intellectually stimulated by older children. And older children, although sometimes cognitively more advanced, develop self esteem and nurturing capabilities in their interactions with young children. A mixed age group offers children flexibility and experience that are not available in same age classrooms. See also "Inclusion".

### SIBLINGS

Our policy toward enrollment of siblings other than twins is that they not be in the same classroom at the same time. This facilitates their forming relationships with others.

### CALENDAR

School for Friends is open all year. We have a summer program. It is closed on all federal holidays, holidays at the end of the calendar year and on an additional teacher preparation days in April and one week in August.

### LICENSING

School for Friends is licensed as a Child Development Center by the government of the District of Columbia, Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). This license is renewed through inspection each year. Among other things, having a license means we have a certificate of occupancy, appropriate program supplies and equipment, a fire evacuation plan, first aid training, proper health and medical forms for children and staff, credentials for staff, and proper staff/child ratio.

### ACCREDITATION

School for Friends is accredited by the Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation. The Academy administers a national, voluntary, professionally sponsored accreditation system for all types of schools and child development centers. The Academy is a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the nation's largest organization for early childhood educators.

Early childhood programs accredited by the Academy have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study, invited external professional review to verify compliance with the Academy's Criteria for High Quality Early Childhood Programs, and been found to be in substantial compliance with the Criteria.

### ENROLLMENT FORMS

Parents must provide the School with certain forms and information as deemed appropriate by the OSSE Licensing regulations and the Board of Trustees. Such forms, contracts, and certificates shall be provided to parents and returned to the School in completed form prior to enrollment. These forms include: Registration Form, Personal Information Form, Child Health Certificate, Oral Health Form (if age 3 or up), Parent Contract, Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization, HIPAA Form, Group Trip Permission Form, Videotaping and Media Permission Form, Activity Checklist Form, Email Form, and Grandparent/Friends Form.

## ORIENTATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

### Policies:

- 1 . The program's philosophy is in all web and printed material
- 2 . Curriculum goals and objectives are in the same material and reviewed at parent orientation/back to school night
- 3 . The program is committed to welcoming children and families
- 4 . Guidance and discipline – is discussed during the family's initial tour and at parent orientation/back to school night

### Procedures:

**Initial child/family visit** - During the month of August (or the month before any child begins mid-year), children and parents are invited into the school for a couple visits – to play on the playground, visit the classroom, and meet the child's teachers. Parents are encouraged to take pictures of the environment to use as talking points at home with the children. The teachers show them the symbol that will be on all their belongings (coat hook, clothes bin, etc.), and in the older classrooms, they choose their own symbol.

Meanwhile, teachers review the **personal information forms** that parents supply as part of their enrollment packet.

**Transitions** - In September in the toddler classrooms, half the children come the first day and stay home the second. The other half comes the second day. Only on the third day are all children present. Parents are encouraged to facilitate transitions as they understand their children, but in general are encouraged to stay only a short while for the first few days. Our goal is for the children to build trust with their new teachers as soon as possible. However, if a parent knows that his/her child needs more time with the parent at transition, the teachers support them. Sometimes teachers suggest to the parents that their child is ready to be left alone but only after rapport has been built up with the parents and a number of days have passed.

**Parent orientation/back to school night** – usually the second or third week of the school year. During that meeting, the Head Start introduces the staff and goes over parent involvement, key policies in the handbook (such as **building security and access, medications, and inclusion or exclusion of ill children**), support for children with learning differences and **special learning needs**, and fall family events. She also discusses strategies for ongoing **communication** with families – signs, notes, emails, phone calls, and most importantly face-to-face discussion between teachers and parents at drop off and pick up.

In the classrooms, teachers ask parents what questions they have - to describe their child, express a concern, or share something they want their child to learn.

Teachers describe the curriculum – how play figures into it, room arrangement and play areas, schedule, curriculum, and **learning goals and objectives**. Teachers then explain the school's **guidance and discipline** policy. Teachers of toddlers focus also on transitions and separation, explaining the importance of having family photos in the classroom. Finally the teachers talk about parent/teacher conferences.

Many other procedures are covered in the parent handbook, for instance

– payment, meals and snacks, sleeping arrangements, and field trips.

## CONDUCT OF ADULT COMMUNITY MEMBERS

As members of a community, adults at the school should strive to provide the children with a model of civil and respectful behavior. Interactions between adults should support a caring and safe environment for everyone.

Given that differences in opinions can arise, it is important that adults are aware of the behavior children observe when there is the potential for conflict. Children can learn a great deal by seeing adults approach and solve differences in a positive way.

Regardless of the problem, we expect community members to approach differences in opinion with an open mind and with respect for the other person and program policies. Language or behavior that is disrespectful, discriminatory, maligning or abuse to others, including children is never acceptable at the school.

No teacher or staff member shall be subject to harassment or inappropriate behavior by a parent, or other responsible adult. Inappropriate behavior includes repeated badgering as well as verbal abuse. Verbal abuse includes abusive language, raised voice, insults, profanity, threats, and upbraiding.

The integrity of the supervision and teaching time of children is the School's paramount concern and priority. In order to maintain that integrity, discussions with teachers of parental concerns should be scheduled outside of the regular classroom schedule. If parents or responsible adults attempt to address concerns regarding their child with a teacher while class is in session, the teacher may direct the adult to either set up an appointment or speak with the Head of School. Even if not immediately free, the Head of School is available to meet by appointment during the regular school day to discuss any concerns a parent or responsible adult may wish to address. Adults should always feel free to call or email the School to schedule a meeting with teachers or the Head of School.

It is the School's goal to foster respectful and productive communications among parents, teachers, and staff. In order to preserve this mutually respectful climate, the Head of School shall take appropriate steps to ensure that teachers and staff are not subjected to harassment or inappropriate behavior. If a parent or responsible adult engages in severe harassment or inappropriate behavior or if harassing or inappropriate behavior occurs on a continuing basis, the School reserves the right to take whatever action may be necessary including, but not limited to, temporary suspension or permanent dismissal of the family from the School.

## WITHDRAWAL OF CHILD

In the event that you wish to withdraw your child from the School, you are required to give the Head of School sixty days' notice in writing, or pay two month's tuition. There will be no exceptions.

## DISMISSAL OF A CHILD FOR BEHAVIOR

### **POLICY**

In an effort to ensure the safety and well-being of all SfF children and staff, if a child's behavior continues to jeopardize the well-being of a class and/or the children, SfF reserves the right to require a family to identify a more appropriate setting for the child. The policy is geared to involve parents throughout the process and to encourage a genuine collaborative effort to help the child learn more appropriate and safer means of expressing him/herself.

## PROCEDURE

1. The teacher with support from the Head of School will notify the parent after a period of persistent, inappropriate and/or unmanageable behavior, for example verbal or physical harm to teachers or other children or disruption of learning in the classroom.
2. Continuance of inappropriate behavior following the initial notice to the parents by the teacher or Head of School will result in a mandatory parent meeting with staff within one week of notification that the inappropriate behavior has not improved.
3. A plan of action including a timeline for additional steps that may become necessary (including therapies and a behavior plan) will be developed and implemented in an effort to alter the inappropriate behavior. The School will use the services of Child Development Consultants, LLC. The typical duration of the plan of action to improve the child's behavior will be two months.
4. If the inappropriate behavior continues following two consecutive months of attempted intervention by the School and parents through adherence to the plan of action, the School may initiate dismissal of the child by giving the parents one month's written notice.
5. In the event the child's parent(s) are unwilling to accept or adhere to the plan of action and the child's behavior does not improve through efforts of the School, the two-month duration of the plan may be shortened and the School may initiate dismissal, with one month's notice.
6. Children who enter the School with a diagnosed condition, which may affect their ability to control their behavior, must provide a written explanation of the child's diagnosis, and a behavioral plan signed by the child's mental health provider. Parents must meet with the teaching staff and Head of School prior to the child's attending in order to review such a plan.
7. Non-compliance with any of the above requirements will result in dismissal from the School with a month's written notice.
8. The School may dismiss a child with a month's written notice if the child presents special needs which the School cannot adequately and reasonably meet, within ADA guidelines.

NOTE: While the School aims to serve all children, the School is also responsible for the safety of all students and staff.

At no time will restraints be used as a means of discipline or behavior control.

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### Objective and Purpose

The mission of School for Friends (SfF) is to provide a loving, caring, and supportive educational environment for children. Bullying is against our core values. Thus, to facilitate our mission, SfF, in consultation with families and teachers, has established this bullying prevention policy. This policy protects the dignity and safety of the SfF community and describes SfF's strategies to identify and prevent incidents. SfF will promptly investigate all incidents of bullying and provide appropriate remedies for all parties.

This policy serves as SfF's bullying prevention plan.

### Definitions

SfF defines bullying as a severe and persistently repeated behavior, whether physical or verbal, the intent of which is to cause harm or that can reasonably be predicted to:

1. Place a child in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person;
2. Cause a substantially detrimental effect on a child's physical or mental health; or
3. Substantially interfere with a child's school performance or attendance.

It should be noted that bullying, as defined here, does not developmentally apply to children under four years of age. Children that age are still learning to control their behavior and our discipline/behavior management policy is in place to address that.

### Prohibition against Bullying

Acts of bullying are prohibited on the SfF grounds or during field trips and at SfF-sponsored events off SfF grounds. Retaliation against a child who reports bullying or provides information about an act of bullying is also prohibited.

## B. GENERAL POLICIES

### TUITION AND PAYMENT

School for Friends is a small institution that operates on a tight budget, mainly on the income derived from tuition payments. It is extremely difficult to operate the school in a fiscally responsible manner if tuition payments are not made promptly when due.

A non-refundable enrollment fee, in an amount set by the Board of Trustees, shall be due and payable to the School upon enrollment.

The school accepts direct deposit (ACH) transfers as payment. The school encourages families who are able and wish to do so to pay quarterly rather than monthly. Quarterly tuition is due on the first day of the following months: September, December, March, and June.

Otherwise, tuition is to be paid monthly, and payments are processed through ACH on the first day of each month.

The school will automatically charge families a \$15 late fee for each tuition payment that is not received by the School by the fifth day of the month and an additional \$5 fee for each additional week that payment is late. A \$10 fee will be charged for any check returned for insufficient funds.

The School recognizes that unforeseen circumstances may make a family unable to make a tuition payment. As soon as it appears to a family that it will be unable to make a tuition payment by the end of that month for which it is due, the family is obligated to notify the Head of School, in writing, of its request for a temporary deferment of tuition payment. Such a request is to be made no later than the 25th day of the month. The request must include information on when and in what amounts corrective payments will be made.

The request will be conveyed to the Treasurer of the School and to one other member of the Board of Trustees. The family will be notified as soon as possible of the School's decision.

In the event of non-payment of an approved plan, the Board will determine what action should be taken, including possible termination of enrollment.

A child will remain enrolled during periods of prolonged absence (due to illness or vacation) if the family plans to have the child return. Tuition is due during these periods of absence. The tuition will not be prorated.

## FACILITY MANAGEMENT

Maintenance of the facility and equipment.

School for Friends is a renter at Church of the Pilgrims. It is the responsibility of the Church to maintain the facility. That having been said, the school employs a “handyman” and the school’s Building and Grounds committee takes on projects to maintain the facility and equipment, too. They have a budget to do so. Teachers identify and report to the Head of School whenever the facility or equipment need maintenance and/or when there is a health or safety problem. Teachers order new equipment when needed and ask the Building and Grounds Committee to make minor repairs.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

School for Friends opens at 8:00 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. The school closes and the staff leaves at 6:00 p.m. sharp. Please pick up your child as close to 5:45 p.m. as possible to allow time for a smooth departure. Be sure to arrive no later than 5:55 p.m. If you cannot arrive by 6 p.m., it is your responsibility--and not the staff's--to arrange for someone else to pick up your child. You might set up an arrangement with another parent for when you cannot make it in time. It is stressful for both children and staff when a parent arrives at 5:59 or 6:00 p.m.

## SIGN IN/SIGN OUT

Our accreditation and licensing regulations require that parents sign their children in and out each day. Teachers and the office feel this gives them yet one more way of keeping track of who is at school today, and who might have left early.

## LATE PICKUP

A late fee of \$5 is charged between 6:00 p.m. and 6:05 p.m. An additional dollar per minute is charged after 6:05 p.m. If a family persists in being late, they may be asked to leave the program as a last resort. When fees for late pick-up reach or exceed \$30, the family and the Head of School must discuss terms of payment, and the child may not be brought to school until the late fees are paid in full.

Late fees are the responsibility of the contracting party, not of other parties who may be involved in the child's transportation.

## CUSTODY OF YOUR CHILD

We request that parents (and others bringing a child to school) bring their child into the building and classroom, make contact with the teachers and not just leave the child at the door. Please help your child put away his/her belongings and lunch. We require that parents notify the School (teacher and the office) in advance if anyone other than the parent is to come and pick-up the child. On your registration form you have given us your telephone numbers and addresses so that we can contact you if a problem arises.

Note: Under DC laws, both parents may have the right to pick up their child, unless a court document restricts that right. The enrolling parent, who chooses not to include the child's other parent on the authorized pick up list, must file an official court document (e.g., current restraining order, sole custody decree, divorce decree stating sole custody). Absent that document, the center may release the child to either parent, provided that parent documents his paternity/maternity of the child.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS

In accordance with DC Licensing, the School maintains the following records among others on your child--attendance, accidents, medication administration, health, and individual development. The School for Friends will not disclose information concerning an individual child or the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) to persons other than the staff or government officials acting in the course of their duties, unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) grant written permission for the disclosure, or unless disclosure is necessary in an emergency situation.

## OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents are welcome to visit their child's classroom anytime. Please feel free to come by for lunch or a snack. If your child has trouble with these transitions, we'll help and also let you know. You are also encouraged to call or email your child's teacher.

## EMERGENCY CLOSURE

Anything that makes the buildings uninhabitable constitutes a reason for an emergency closing, including but not limited to utility failure, fire, natural or man-made disaster, unsafe indoor temperatures or any other dangerous environmental condition.

In the short term, children will be evacuated to the other location of the school as outlined in the Emergency Preparedness Plan. In the long term (if longer than a few days), the School will have to look for an alternate location.

Parents will be notified by email or a phone call of a closure.

A report will be made to OSSE/PQD Program Monitor through an Unusual Incident Report Form. The Head of School or acting director will report the incident to all appropriate Government Agencies. The phone number, fax number and address are listed in the section "Reporting of Unusual Incidents." A report will be submitted within 24 hours.

Documentation of incidents will be maintained in the office files. Staff and parents are informed of these policies and procedures through the parent handbook and procedures manual.

## SNOWY / INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS

On snowy days, the school follows the closing policy of the DC Public Schools. In addition, if DCPS is already closed the School will close if the Federal Government closes for snow. School reserves the right to make a decision to close or open late in order to maintain child-adult classroom ratios required for Early Childhood Education by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

## EMERGENCY PLAN AND PROCEDURES

If a threatening event occurs, the first step in any decision making process would be to find out EXACTLY what the situation is from a reliable source. The news is not available (or appropriate) in the classroom, so some source (perhaps a parent) would have to let us know what was occurring. The Head of School (or acting director – see "decision making process") will evaluate all available information and make an initial plan to mitigate immediate threat to the children and staff.

Notice will be given to parents that school is closing and the following procedures will be put in place:

## ✓ DECISION MAKING PROCESS

After it is determined that there is a threat to be handled, a hierarchy of decision makers needs to be followed. It would be as follows:

1. Head of School or Acting Director
2. Lead Teacher or Acting Lead Teacher
3. Senior Assistant Teacher
4. Assistant Teacher

The decision of hierarchy between employees in the same position is made by comparing years of experience at SFF, i.e., seniority. All efforts will be made to contact the Hed of School to involve her in the decision-making process.

## ✓ EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Child and teacher safety is our primary concern. In most cases, staying indoors in familiar territory equipped for children, is the best plan. If it is deemed unsafe for teachers and children to remain in their classrooms, a safe location will be selected as follows:

- 1) Shelter in Place  
In the case that the classroom is considered unsafe, the teachers will transfer the children to the downstairs Fellowship Hall where emergency supplies will be stored in the locked storage space. The classroom emergency bags (including parent emergency contact numbers) will be taken, along with the cordless phones and teachers' cell phones.  
The Fellowship Hall is known to the children and is next to bathrooms and water with very limited window exposure.
- 2) Relocating - Leave one location & go to the other - If it is deemed necessary to leave the school campus, staff will lead the children to St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, at 1830 Conn. Ave. NW, has agreed that we could stay there while waiting for children to be picked up. They have a similar agreement with a pre-school behind them but have said that there is plenty of space. Phone number is 202-232-2995. Staff will gather medications, emergency medical treatment forms, and supplies listed below before leaving school.
- 3) Lock-down- Call 911. Gather children in the classrooms. Verify attendance. Lock or barricade door, cover look in windows. Make internal announcements. Turn off lights, close blinds. Provide text message updates to Head of School and remain quiet until notified. During lock-down, no one enters and no one exits the building. Sign placed on main entry door. Families are notified as soon as we are able regarding the situation and once everything is resolved according to the authorities.

## ✓ EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Emergency supply lists have been made for:

- 1) Supplies to be stored in the "safe place" on campus, and
- 2) Supplies to be taken with us should we need to leave the grounds. List is separate.

## ✓ COMMUNICATION:

Our power sources may be shut down, precluding some communication options. Cell phone and local telephone networks can become overloaded in a crisis. Every effort will be made to keep parents informed rapidly as to what we are doing and where we are to be found. The Head of School and Operations Specialist will implement the communication plan.

- Telephone – Director will call each family’s home, work, and cell (if available) numbers, talking in person or leaving a message until at least one call has been made to each family. Communication will continue as long as we are able to attend to the overriding obligation to keep the children safe and the communications infrastructure is operating.
- Email – brief messages will be sent to our entire email list by the Head of School or the Operations Specialist via Mailchimp or Remind.
- Signs on each of the main doors would be a main source of information to parents.

#### ✓ UNFOLDING EVENTS

The Head of School will continue to evaluate information provided by radio and Internet and follow the public emergency broadcast system guidance, if available, to be able to respond to events as they unfold.

#### ✓ STAFF DEPARTURE

The person in charge (see hierarchy) will determine when and if employees can begin to leave before all children have left, as children are picked up or otherwise taken care of, or if other emergency situations arise.

#### ✓ UTILITY FAILURE

In the event of an on-going utility failure school will close.

#### ✓ TORNADO WARNING

In the event of a tornado warning, teachers and children will shelter in place.

A report will be made to OSSE/PQD Program Monitor through an Unusual Incident Report Form. The Head of School or acting director will report the incident to all appropriate Government Agencies. The phone number, fax number and address are listed in the section “Reporting of Unusual Incidents.” A report will be submitted within 24 hours.

Documentation of incidents will be maintained in the office files. Staff and parents are informed of these policies and procedures through the parent handbook and procedures manual.

### FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are held monthly, alternating between the afternoon and the morning. The office staff will ring the bell. Arrangements are made in advance if the weather is cold so that children have their proper gear. The children move away from the building during the drill, the lead teachers have their roll books to call roll. Doors should be shut as teachers leave.

## MORNING DROP OFF (credit to Child Development Consultants, Inc. & St. Columba's Nursery School)

Routines really help many children begin their day. Upon arriving at school, children are engaged in an activity. Teachers and parents will collaborate to establish a routine for this transition. Just like at home, consistent drop off routines add predictability and familiarity to a child's day and contribute to smoother "goodbyes". A routine may be as simple as a kiss at the door of the classroom and departing as quickly as possible. Once the children are in the classroom they know that their school day has started, and it would be a good time for parents to leave. At school we have timers, and they help – don't prolong the transition more than five minutes.

The opening minutes of the day are precious ones to teachers who, as they greet each child, actively work to guide their choices for work and exploration during free time.

Let the teachers help facilitate the transition. If a child becomes upset upon the departure of a parent, please don't return to the classroom or hover where your child might see you. Don't let your child know you are ambivalent about leaving. Let the teacher comfort your child. Give her the opportunity to help your child feel better. Their bond will strengthen, and the child will learn that there are other adults in the world whom he/she can trust and be comforted by. Please do not "sneak out" say good-bye and have your child acknowledge that you are leaving.

Watch your words. Express confidence in your child and his/her ability to make friends, try new activities, learn new concepts, etc. At the same time though acknowledge any concerns or fears she may have about preschool without patronizing or minimizing issues. This is a tricky balancing act for sure! Remember, your child takes his/her cues from you. Tell your child that you'll be back at pick-up time, and then trust us to take good care of them.

If your child is inconsolable, we promise to call you if all is not well in just a very short time.

## DEPARTURE/PICK-UP

We have some guidelines on how to have a smooth, relaxed pick-up and preserve a calm classroom atmosphere.

This is an important time for all of us. Teachers and parents want to make contact and talk about how your child's day has gone, and at the same time, the other children are in the middle of important activities that require teacher interaction. In one small room, we have children, teachers, and as many parents as arrive at one time.

Added to this is a transition of authority--your child senses that his/her teacher may no longer be in charge and that the parent soon will be. Assume that you, the parent, are to begin to take authority as soon as you enter the room.

We would like to provide the following guidelines for pick-up. It is your responsibility to inform any baby-sitter, housekeeper, or alternate person of these procedures.

1. Greetings and clean-up -- Greet your child and comment positively on what he/she is doing. Be sure to let your child know that you are here to pick him/her up. Tell your child it is time to clean up toys and supplies and help them if he/she needs help.\*\*

2. After toys are put away, PHYSICALLY GUIDE your child out of the room and say goodbye. Gather lunch box, art work, and messages.
3. Outside the room -- Put on coat, etc. Once you have said goodbye, please do not let your child run back into the classroom. If you cannot find clothing, check the lost and found, the cubby, and under the hook.

\*\*If for any reason your child "falls apart," please take him/her out of the room gently. The other children become very upset by one child's tantrum. Also, it is very difficult for a teacher to continue reading a story, for example. Do not bother with cleaning up at that point. It is impossible to reason with your child if they are crying and having a hard time making the transition.

Making Contact With A Teacher It is important for everyone that a staff person comment briefly on how your child's day went. We will approach you while you are helping with clean up or as you are leaving the room.

If a group of children need to be supervised, however, a staff person may not be available for long. If you would like to talk for more than a few minutes, please call us on the phone or schedule a meeting.

PLEASE DO NOT:

1. Stop and talk with other parents in the classroom. Instead, you might talk with them in the hall or call them at home.
2. Rush your child without cleaning up.
3. Let your child run around (for example, when you are talking to a teacher).
4. Wait out a temper tantrum in the room.

## PARKING

As part of our lease agreement with the Church of the Pilgrims, we follow certain rules about the parking lot. The lot is open to drop off and pick up your child between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Please do your best to use the SFF designated spaces. Attendees of church activities have first priority for spaces, and there are tenants other than School for Friends.

Here are a few requests, suggestions, and rules:

- 1) DO NOT under any circumstances leave your car in the lot during any part of the day while you shop or work. The parking lot is available only for drop off and pick up.
- 2) Please do not block in other cars unless you are leaving a driver in the car. This includes parking in front of the barriers that block access to the small parking area next to the playground. Someone you are blocking may need to get out, and picking up or dropping off your child often takes longer than you think.
- 3) The parking lot closes at 6:00.
- 4) If you live close enough, and the weather is nice, consider walking instead of driving. Others who live farther away do not have this option.

- 5) Finally, and this is related to parking, please hold your child's hand at all times that he/she is in the parking lot. Children tend to dart, and drivers cannot see them. There has been a case of a child hit by a car in the lot. The Church is very concerned about this issue.

### CHILDREN ARRIVING BY CAR

Children transported to school in vehicles must be buckled securely into car safety seats/seatbelts that meet state requirements. Parents will take whatever steps are necessary to maintain and use car safety seats. Another person on the authorized list will be called if this requirement is not met.

### TOYS FROM HOME

Superhero play is prevalent among four-year olds – boys in particular. It is less appealing to younger children mainly because the issues involved (exploration of boundless physical power) is not as appealing to two or three year olds. However, younger children are also the target of marketing of superhero products – shirts, comforters, shoes, lunchboxes, action figures, swimsuits, etc. We discourage bringing such items to school and ask for parents' cooperation in limiting or eliminating the superhero items they send. Spiderman may be ubiquitous, but please choose clothes and other items carefully that you send to school. Part of the problem is that superhero images sometimes lead to indiscriminate aggressive and violent play among children. In addition, the images can distract children from other more productive activities. In those cases, teachers may use their discretion to ban such objects from the classroom or turn offending shirts inside outward. We ask for your cooperation in these cases.

### SECURITY

All doors of the church are locked at all times. Parents have a code to enter. Please do not let a stranger into the building and do not share the code with any one else.

### HEALTH, ORAL HEALTH AND ILLNESS POLICY

Prior to enrollment, a child must have a physical examination, complete health certificate (including an immunization report), and a complete oral health form. A child must have an examination each year to stay enrolled—as required by our licensing. It is our policy to check all children to see that they are healthy. A sick child will not be accepted at school and must stay home.

Immunizations: Any under-immunized child who seems to show symptoms of a disease that is vaccine-preventable and puts the other children in the program at risk will be excluded. See #3 below. (Under-immunized: a person who has not received the recommended number or types of vaccines for his or her age according to the current national and local immunization schedules [AAP])

- 1 . Parents should not knowingly send a child to the School who is sick. Please use the following **exclusion** criteria to assist in this determination.
- 2 . A child who exhibits one or more symptoms of illness identified in this subsection, and has been treated for said symptom(s) by a licensed health care practitioner, may be readmitted to the school only with written permission, and written instructions for continuing care if needed.

Fever: According to DC regulations, children with fevers (100 degrees or above underarm, 101 or above orally, or 102 or above rectally) should not be in to school. Since temperatures generally peak in the late afternoon or during the night and return to normal or sub-normal in the morning, a child with a temperature of 100.5 degrees or more during the evening or night should remain at home for a 24-hour observation period, even if the temperature has returned to normal by morning.

Colds: Runny noses are a common occurrence among preschoolers, and it is not practical to keep them home due to this. However, we urge parents to use their common sense. If the cold is severe, the child is lethargic, or if he/she has a bad cough, please keep the child home.

If the runny nose produces a dark-colored mucus, has not improved in several days, and is accompanied by a fever, a doctor should see the child.

Antibiotics: Children placed on antibiotics should be kept at home for 24 hours to allow the antibiotic to begin working.

Vomiting: According to DC regulations, if a child has vomited two or more times in a 24-hour period, the child should not be in school. In addition, if a child has any number of bloody vomits, has no appetite, or has a fever with vomiting, the child should stay home from school. If the vomiting is associated with a cough and the child looks otherwise well, his/her attendance is at the discretion of the lead teacher.

Diarrhea: If a child has three or more watery, runny stools in a 24-hour period, the child must stay home from school. Diarrhea accompanied by a fever often represents a viral illness that is highly contagious. In addition, the child is at risk for dehydration and should be monitored more closely than is possible at school. In the case of any bloody stools, the child may not attend school and should be seen by a doctor for stool cultures and treatment before returning to school.

Rash: Rashes are common among preschoolers; however, any child with a rash accompanied by a fever should not attend school. In the case of lethargy, rash, and fever, the child should be evaluated emergently by a physician.

1. Teachers should be informed immediately of any changes in a child's health or physical appearance, e.g. source of burns or bruises. This way, the teacher can accurately compare and document wounds and symptoms in the event of an accident or illness.
2. In view of the District's strict law on child abuse, teachers should be informed of any other skin rashes or marks known to be caused by congenital or pre-existing noninfectious causes.
3. If a child becomes ill during the day, in that they meet exclusion criteria, a parent will be notified so that arrangements can be made to send the child home within an hour. The child may be kept in isolation until he/she can be picked up.
4. Parents unable to leave work to pick up a child must be asked to retain some back up assistance to pick up the child within a reasonable time period.

## MEDICATIONS – ADMINISTERING MEDICATION TO CHILDREN

### Guidelines:

1. Teachers trained in medication administration will administer prescription and non-prescription medications according to the following guidelines.
2. Please do not send medicine in a lunch box or ask your child to take it on his or her own. All medicine will be kept out of children's reach in the refrigerator or cabinet and in a locked box.

It might be a good idea to buy two small bottles of medicine and leave one at school for the time your child needs it.

3. We know that sometimes a child is well enough to be at school but still benefits from over-the-counter medicine. We ask that you get a doctor's note stating that your child may receive a given over-the-counter medicine for a period of time. If we do not have a doctor's note on file we will not administer over-the-counter drugs.

- 4 . All medicine, prescription and over-the-counter, should be brought to school in its original container. Your child's name, the name of the medicine, the dosage, and the name and telephone number of your child's physician should be taped to the bottle.
- 5 . For accuracy and for our records, parents must fill out the medication authorization form in the classroom. It will be posted on the refrigerator for parents to see and maintained in the child's file.
- 6 . Staff and parents may find these policies and procedures in the Operations Manual and the Parent handbook

The correct administration of all medications that require specialized administration techniques (e.g. inhalers with spacers, insulin injections, epi-pens, gastric tube feeds) must be taught to the teachers by the parent or guardian of the child who will receive the medication. These medications should have scheduled, rather than "as needed," doses. It is not reasonable to expect teachers to recognize when an "as needed" medication should be used.

Parents should provide the teachers with information regarding potential common side effects of the medications.

Parents should also provide the teachers with basic education on common danger signs of worsening chronic illnesses for which the medication is being administered, e.g. retractions or wheezing in an asthmatic, hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) in a diabetic, or severe allergic reaction. In the case of worsening illness, teachers will call the parent or guardian so that the child can be picked up from school.

## MEDICAL AND DENTAL EMERGENCIES

Procedure--(Posted by each telephone)

1. Call 911. Tell the emergency operator to get you the ambulance service.
2. When you have reached the ambulance service, tell them:
  - what happened
  - what is being done
  - what you need.

If an ambulance is needed, request that it go to the hospital listed on the child's Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization Form.

  - your name, location and the phone number you are calling from (2201 P St., NW, Church of the Pilgrims-- enter the parkinglot from 22nd St. between P and Q). Don't hang up first. The person you are talking to may need more information. Let the other person hang up first.
3. Call child's parents. Tell them what happened, what is being done, and what hospital the child is going to.
4. Take the child's file with you in the ambulance. Lead teacher goes with child. If the emergency is for staff, take the staff's Emergency contact name and number.
  - ✓ Staff has immediate access to each child's "emergency medical treatment authorization" form (in the child's file in the office). The form includes relevant health insurance information for emergency medical treatment and transportation arrangements;
  - ✓ The ambulance will determine which hospital or medical caresite will be used;
  - ✓ There is an adult with current first-aid training certification on site at all times;
  - ✓ Children with known medical problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, and other chronic conditions as well as conditions that require regular medication) have individual emergency care plans.

Poison control's number—1-800-222-1222

## Contagious Diseases

Procedures when a parent informs us that their child has been diagnosed with a disease that requires a response from the school or staff feels child has a contagious disease:

- ✓ Contact the Head of School /Acting Director to help coordinate the response.
- ✓ Reporting requirements for staff and children with illness, including administration of medication and criteria for their inclusion or exclusion:

Contact the DC Department of Health (442- 5842 or 727-6161 before 8:15 or after 4:45) to determine what the school's response should be – for instance, isolation of children, doctor's appointment, not returning without a doctor's note, in addition to how the school will prevent spreading. NAEYC's Healthy Young Children is a good resource for information to pass on to parents. The website for the Centers for Disease Control is [www.cdc.org](http://www.cdc.org), though often information is not specific enough for instructions to parents. Once the plan has been finalized:

Notify all parents (either school-wide or classroom-wide, depending) in person or by phone plus via email.

Each classroom has a list of email addresses for their classroom – it is provided by the Office Administrator via email at the beginning of the school year. If the mailing needs to go to the entire school, contact the Office Administrator for assistance. If the email needs to go out after 6PM, lead teacher, plan to stay a few minutes late. In addition, parents need to be informed at pick-up time – both with a sign\* and in person, particularly if the child must see a doctor before returning or be kept at home.

\*All infectious diseases are posted near the entrance to the classroom where the disease has been identified or in a central location if more than one classroom is affected. If the disease is unfamiliar to parents, information about the disease (identifying, exclusion, and treatment) is also posted. If the District so requires, the occurrence is reported to the department of public health.

The emergency will be reported by the Head of School or Acting Director to the OSSE/ Education Monitor and other Government Agencies through the Unusual Incidents Report Form. The phone number, fax number and address are listed in the section "Reporting of Unusual Incidents. The report will be made within 24 hours.

Documentation of incidents will be maintained in the office files. Staff and parents are informed of these policies and procedures through the parent handbook and procedures manual.

## MINOR ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL FOR FRIENDS

A teacher or assistant will administer first aid and fill out an accident report. He or she will also inform the parents of the accident when they come to pick up the child. In the case of a head injury, a parent is called as a matter of course. In the case of a child biting, the parents of both the biter and the bitee are informed.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT – PREVENTION AND REPORTING

Suspected incidents of child abuse will be brought to the attention of the Head of School. No information will be solicited from the child involved, unless the child volunteers such statements. District of Columbia law requires that suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect by families, staff, or volunteers be reported immediately to the Child and Family Services Agency Reporting Hotline, (202) 671-SAFE (671-7233). In order to act in the child's best interest, authorities will be called before speaking to parents.

A report will be made to OSSE/PQD Program Monitor through an Unusual Incident Report Form. The Head of School or acting director will report the incident to all appropriate Government Agencies. The phone number, fax number and address are listed in the section "Reporting of Unusual Incidents." A report will be submitted within 24 hours.

Documentation of incidents will be maintained in the office files.

Staff and parents are informed of these policies and procedures through the parent handbook and procedures manual.

Each year, the School will ensure that staff will be trained on the current requirements of alleged child abuse and neglect. If all staff are not able to attend, those who do will train others.

Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious.

The following procedure is designed to guide the handling of any allegations of child abuse or sexual abuse by any School for Friends' employee. It has been reviewed by the school's attorney and is consistent with the law and police standards. The school board intends to investigate every allegation thoroughly, but expeditiously in order to preserve the safety of the children and to protect the rights of any employee subject to an allegation of misconduct.

The investigative process will be conducted similarly for each and every allegation. The cooperation of teachers and parents is essential to carry out this process responsibly and in the best interests of the entire school community. The process will involve interviews with teachers and parents who can provide information for inquiry. Those interviewed should understand that the subject of the allegation is presumed innocent unless and until the facts prove otherwise.

Under D.C. law a reasonable suspicion of abuse must be reported to the Police Department, who will conduct an independent investigation.

#### I . Reporting of an incident

Any person suspecting an incident of child abuse or sexual abuse by a School for Friends employee should report it to the Head of School who will immediately inform the Board President (the committee). Once notified the Head of School and the Board President have 48 hours or as soon as possible to determine whether there is a basis for reporting the incident as an allegation. They will interview the parents of the child and the teacher allegedly involved. If appropriate at this stage, the child can be interviewed by a qualified professional agreed to by the parents and the School.

#### II . Preliminary determination

Based on their interviews, the Head of School in consultation with the Board President will determine that there is no basis for the allegation (if the parents agree) or that there is a basis for further investigation. The Head of School and the Board President will attempt to reach agreement with the parents as to the particulars of the allegation to be reported (who, what, when, where, etc.).

#### III . Report to authorities and further investigation

Upon filing of an allegation with the police, the teacher should be placed on administrative leave with pay or, if this would jeopardize the smooth functioning of the school and have other unwanted effects, the committee may consider alternative ways to structure the interaction of the accused and the children.

The Board shall launch its own investigation (or if circumstances warrant, an investigator could be hired) of the allegation. The investigation should be completed within two weeks if at all possible and should include interviews with the following persons:

I. Parents of the child

2. Child (with consent of parents and only to be conducted by a qualified professional)
3. Teacher allegedly involved
4. Others who have relevant knowledge of the teacher's activity with the children.

IV. Final determination

At the end of the investigation, the Board should attempt to close the matter with a final determination. It should in any event file a written report of the investigation. Based on the report, the Board shall make a determination with respect to the teacher's status.

V. Disposition of teacher's status

If it is determined that there was no basis for the allegation, the teacher will be immediately reinstated.

If it is determined that the allegation is substantiated, the Board shall take appropriate disciplinary action as stated in the personnel manual.

Only after a final determination is made by the Board or the police that an incident occurred, will a record of the incident be included in the teacher's file. The record will include a description of the incident and the report of the committee.

### REPORTING OF UNUSUAL INCIDENTS

Each facility must immediately report to the Head of School, to the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) Division of Early Learning (DEL) for those providers that participate in the Child Care Subsidy Program, and to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each affected child, any unusual incident that may adversely affect the health, safety or well-being of any child or children in the Facility. Unusual incidents include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Death of a person occurring within the Facility;
2. Injury to, or illness of, any child that occurs during the hours the child is enrolled in care that requires hospitalization or emergency medical treatment
3. Damage to the Facility, or to any Facility vehicle or equipment, that interferes with the capability of the Facility to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the children and adults in the Facility;
4. The presence of any individual in the Facility who has, or is suspected of having, a communicable disease that must be reported to the District of Columbia Department of Health in accordance with Title 22 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations;
5. The elopement of an enrolled child or any circumstances under which a child is deemed missing or unaccounted for;
6. A traffic accident involving a vehicle owned, maintained, or contracted for by the Facility and in which children are being transported at the time of the accident; and
7. Any other occurrence at the Facility that involves a response by police, fire, ambulance, or any other emergency service.

In the event of an unusual incident, the Head of School, or in his/her absence the acting director, will make a report to the Department of Human Services using the Unusual Incident Report Form within 24 hours. This report will be sent to: OSSE.ChildcareComplaints@dc.gov

The Head of School will inform parents on a need-to-know basis via email within 24 hours. If parents have a complaint, they should make it to the Head of School who will handle it.

All reports of documented incidents will be maintained with files for the OSSE contract.

These policies and procedures will be available in the Procedures Manual and Parent Handbook.

## PLAYGROUND

Please do not stay with your child (whom you are picking up or dropping off) and play on the playground when the classrooms are using the playground. If you have someone else pick up your child (a housekeeper, for instance), please inform that person of this request. We are making this request in order for staff to use effectively the playground for the benefit of the children enrolled. Parents have always been requested not to linger in the classroom, and at School for Friends the playground is an extension of the classroom.

The reasons for this request: 1) younger children (infants included) or older children may not fit in with the age group on the playground;

2) safety - the equipment is not designed for children younger than two. In addition, there have been on some occasions too many people using the space at one time - parents, children not in the classroom, siblings, and housekeepers; 3) and finally, parents socialize, and it is not fair for staff to be in charge of the extra children.

## TEACHERS AS BABYSITTERS

We are one of the few schools that does not prohibit teachers from babysitting for their students after school hours. Schools that have these policies in place do so to avoid litigation, trespassing of social and professional boundaries, and misunderstandings that can arise between teachers and between teachers and parents. The NAEYC *Code of Ethical Conduct* advises against personal relationships with families that might weaken a teacher's effectiveness. That said, Sff strongly discourages babysitting children enrolled at the school. We offer the following guidelines and reminders for parents who do ask teachers to babysit.

Over the years, families have used School for Friends teachers as babysitters and caregivers in their homes. Please remember that babysitting is different from teaching. Our approach at the School is a team teaching approach. We never leave children alone with a teacher. Each team has at least one experienced teacher and one or more support members. Being a member of a team is different from being in charge of a child or group of children for an extended period of time in your home. We would like to suggest that you not assume that because a person is a teacher at the School, that person will be an excellent babysitter. Check babysitting references just as you would any other babysitter or person who provides care in the home. We cannot be responsible for people when they are not in our employment.

Please do not ask the teacher's co-workers for recommendations or to express a "favorite" among those teachers who might babysit.

If you have a complaint about a babysitter who is also a teacher, express it to him/her directly. Please do not ask us to convey concerns. I am sure you can see how this creates tension among the staff.

We ask that you make your babysitting arrangements at a time when the person is not responsible for a group of children: call him/her at home or call the office to leave a message to be returned on his/her own time.

Please remember that the teacher's first job is to serve the collective good of the students; keeping the teacher late on a school night makes the next day hard on the classroom. Similarly, we work hard to train all our staff; please do not "hire away" our valuable part-time staff. Also, use common sense when the teacher is in your home by maintaining appropriate boundaries, refraining from "talking shop" about school policies, other teachers, etc. When the teacher is in your home, she is not there as a representative of the school.

## C. CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

### CHILD'S PERSONAL ITEMS

Send your child to school in clothes that he/she will be comfortable in and be able to run, climb and even paint in. Party clothing and shoes are not appropriate for the kind of active, hands-on learning activities that children do. For example, keep in mind that a dress may be dangerous when your daughter tries to climb. On rainy days make sure your child has a raincoat and boots, which is a requirement. In the winter your child will need boots, mittens, hat, and perhaps snow pants. Please, no cloth shoes on rainy or snowy days. We often go for walks in rain and snow.

Your child needs in his/her cubby or bag, a complete change of clothes at all times. Please check your child's cubby each day and take home wet clothes. All clothes, especially raincoats and boots, must be labeled. We cannot keep track of items without names. Check our lost and found for lost items of clothing.

Please ensure that your child has a labeled blanket and whatever he or she needs to sleep with (stuffed animal, etc.)

You supply diapers for your child. Diapers must only be changed on the changing table in the bathrooms.

We discourage bringing candy, gum, or money to school. Occasionally your child may want to bring a toy to share or help make that transition from home. However, the daily bringing of toys can lead to lost toys.

Please bring photos of your family for us to talk about and display. We will need an individual photo of each child for his/her coat hook.

### TOILETING/DIAPERING

Toilet training is related to child's physiological and psychological readiness. We take this transition seriously and ask families to meet with the teachers to create a plan that will work both for home and the school. We do not attempt to toilet train children independent of parents' efforts.

However, younger children who see older children using the toilet often begin to model the older ones' behavior.

We use only commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use (the health provider documents the medical reason). For children who require cloth diapers:

- The diaper's outer lining is made from waterproof material that prevents feces and urine from escaping.
- Staff changes both the diaper and outer lining as a unit.

Clothing that is soiled by urine or feces is immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering

Staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces

- At least every two hours when children are awake and
- When children awaken.
- Diapers are changed when wet or soiled – within 5 minutes of discovery unless circumstances clearly make it difficult to do so.

Staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the school. At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child when the child is being changed on a changing table.

The changing table must be cleaned and sanitized after each child's use. Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.

Containers that hold soiled diapers (diaper pails) have a lid that open and close tightly by using a hands-free device (a foot pedal). Diaper pails are kept closed and are not accessible to children.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

The schedule is posted in each classroom. For a more detailed schedule of activities, refer to the plan book in your classroom.

Here is a sample of a daily classroom schedule:

### Daily Schedule

8:00am	School Opens – children arrive - free choice play in areas and some teacher directed activities
9:30am	Bathroom – careful hygiene and self-help skills encouraged
9:40am	Morning Snack – nutritious snacks and socializing
10:00am	Circle – moment of silence, story, movement Morning teacher directed activity
11:00am	Outdoor time - free choice play and occasional teacher organized games.
12:00pm	Bathroom and wash hands
12:10pm	LUNCH! Learn about good nutrition and practice social skills.
12:30pm	Children may leave table when done and play in classroom; free choice play continues inside or outside or extension of morning activity
12:45 pm	Clean-up and Bathroom
1:00pm	Naptime (older non-nappers – at least 30 minutes rest on cots, quiet play or books afterwards)
3:00pm	Wake up and Bathroom
3:20pm	Afternoon snack –snacks and socializing; prepare to go outside
4:00pm	Outdoor Play – free choice play and occasional teacher organized games
5:00pm	Indoor Play – teacher directed activity and free choice play. Some children picked up.
5:45pm	Clean-up time followed by books or a music and movement activity
6:00pm	School closes

## SUPERVISION

These policies and procedures are located in the operations manual and parent handbook (on the website), and in all written orientation materials for new teachers (which they receive before working with children).

### Accreditation Requirements

- Teaching staff supervise by positioning themselves to see as many children as possible.
- Teaching staff supervise children primarily by sight. Supervision of children older than two for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight (e.g., those who can use the toilet independently or who are napping).
- Teaching staff supervise twos by sight and sound at all times. (All twos should be easily seen [if not in the direct line of sight, then by looking up or slightly adjusting one's position] by at least one member of the teaching staff. Staff do not need to be directly looking at each child at all times to meet the requirement for sight supervision.)
- Teaching staff are aware of, and positioned so they can hear and see, any sleeping children for whom they are responsible, especially when they are actively engaged with children who are awake.

### Types of incidents

- Children left unsupervised by teachers, including a child who leaves the group but remains in the facility, for example,
- Children left on the playground. Scenarios -
  - Children playing outdoors do not hear the teachers.
  - Teachers do a head count on the playground to be sure all children are accounted for, but they do not account for a change in the children present that day.
- Children left unsupervised in the classroom, bathroom, or other part of the building, for example,
  - A group of children goes to the indoor gross motor area with one teacher; another group goes later with another teacher.

A child remains behind unnoticed because each teacher assumes the missing child is with the other group.
  - A class goes out to the playground, leaving behind unnoticed a child who fell asleep.

### Contributing factors

- A variation in the normal routine. Teachers must be cautious when an unusual circumstance occurs (for example, when a teacher previously in charge of the headcount is out, and the substitute does not take on that responsibility), taking time to think through the implications on routines of the change.
- Teachers do not take the time to ensure that every child is present and accounted for before making a transition. Frequent head counts with an accurate attendance sheet in hand are useful.

### Critical times of the day

Naptime, Outside play time, Field trips, Restroom routines

## Steps for prevention

- Implementing procedures – staff carry out periodic attendance checks, have checklists with children's names on them to check against faces, and use the sign-in and departure procedures. During field trips, caregivers keep children together by having an adult hold each child's hand, or otherwise keep the child physically connected to an adult at all times. A designated adult, preferably a teacher, will supervise the children at the front and another adult/teacher at the back of each group. When children leave the building for the trip, they are wearing a tag with the school's information.
- Training and retraining staff – Employees' job descriptions summarize basic supervision requirements. Orientation training covers safety issues including supervising children. All teachers undergo a probationary period of three months during which new teachers are oriented and closely supervised by more senior or experienced staff. During the end-of-probation evaluation and annual evaluation, teachers are evaluated to ensure they are capable of putting their knowledge into practice. Training addresses how staff position themselves in the classroom or on the playground to ensure that all children are monitored.
- Teacher-to-Child Ratios and Group Sizes – There is a system for ensuring that teacher-to-child ratios and group sizes are maintained at all times. SFF employs floaters and uses a substitute teacher service that can be called when needed – for instance when a teacher does not come to work because she is ill.

The school minimizes regrouping children in order to maintain teacher to child ratios and group sizes. One staff member is not left alone with a child or group of children – except in the preschool classrooms when a teacher must take a child to the bathroom, in which case, the door is opened between the classrooms.

- Making structural changes – The equipment in the classroom is arranged in a way to enhance visual or auditory supervision of the children. Staff must position themselves to ensure that twos can be seen and heard at all times. There is a security system in place to prevent children from entering the building from the playground without adult supervision – a code is required for entry. In addition the administrative staff's office and desks are near the entrance. Fences protect children in outdoor play areas. The gate opener is out of reach of children.
- Engaging children and families – request that parents follow drop-off and pick-up procedures. Parents must make contact with the teachers at drop-off and pick-up time. We request that families inform the program in the event that their children will not be attending due to illness, vacation, etc. If a child does not arrive at the program as scheduled for three days, the program contacts the family. Teachers review safety rules as part of the children's curriculum.
- On-going monitoring plan – Staff members are evaluated on supervision practices during their annual evaluation. Teaching staff members are observed as part of the evaluation process. Oral and written performance feedback is provided to staff members. Procedures to be followed for reporting and investigating an incident involving a lapse of supervision are contained in the Operations Manual under III.C. – Reporting of Unusual Incidents. All staff members have a copy of this document. Teaching staff are requested to report supervision non-compliance to the Head of School, who in turn is to report to District licensing and accrediting bodies, including NAEYC, when appropriate.

Parents are responsible for supervising their own children once they arrive for pick-up, and at drop-off until the children have been turned over to the teachers.

## NUTRITION

The school offers a morning and afternoon snack consisting most frequently of milk in the morning and crackers or bread with cream cheese or cheese. If your child has a special diet, please let us know.

Children bring their own lunches and a drink (either milk or water in a thermos). We eat family style.

## FOOD PREPARATION, SERVICE AND STORAGE

Food prepared, served, and stored at School for Friends is done so in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines.

Staff take steps to ensure the safety of food brought from home:

- ✓ They work with families to ensure that foods brought from home meet the USDA's CACFP food guidelines.
- ✓ All foods and beverages brought from home are labeled with the child's name and the date.
- ✓ Staff make sure that food requiring refrigeration stays cold until served.
- ✓ Food is provided to supplement food brought from home if necessary. The program takes steps to ensure food safety in its provision of meals and snacks.
- ✓ Staff discard foods with expired dates.

Liquids and foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach.

Staff cut foods into pieces no larger than ½-inch square for twos, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability.

Forbidden Foods--Staff do not offer children younger than four years these foods: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

We request that parents not send these foods in children's lunchboxes.

Please bring all cooked food that you want to stay warm and do not want refrigerated in a Thermos or a heat-insulated container.

Containers such as Rubbermaid or Tupperware are not sufficient. Thermoses and heat-insulated containers reduce the chances of a child catching a food borne illness when properly used. Proper usage includes heating food to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit before placing it inside the Thermos or heat-insulated container. Since the temperature will decrease while sitting at room temperature, it is important that the initial temperature of the food is high enough so it does not drop below 135 degrees Fahrenheit before lunch time. If food is left out to cool down, it becomes unsafe and should be discarded.

Children are included in the high-risk population so we must pay extra attention to avoid sickness.

What your child has for lunch depends on your budget, time, and what he/she likes or dislikes. With those parameters in mind, here are some suggestions from several food groups. Also listed are the non-nutritious items that should not appear at the School for Friends lunch table.

### DAIRY PRODUCTS

hard-boiled eggs/ egg  
salad cottage cheese  
cheese

yogurt-you can create your own flavor by mixing plain yogurt with a small amount of juice concentrate, fruit jam, spices, or fresh slices of fruit.

## VEGETABLES

most anything in season, but especially:

cucumbers, sliced

celery--stuffed with cheese spread or peanut butter cherry tomatoes

sprouts

squash--sliced or sticks of zucchini

## MEAT/FISH/FOWL

chicken, turkey or other fowl (on the bone, off, or in a sandwich)

\*ham, chopped, sliced

\*cold cuts hamburger/meatballs

tuna or other fish (cold)

liver (chopped or not)

\*hot dogs or sausage

\*often high in salt, and nitrites, but are ok as occasional alternate sources of protein

## FRUITS FOR DESERT

most anything in season

dried fruits including raisins

## STARCH/BREADS/FIBER/ETC

pita bread/pocket bread

sliced bread--whole wheat, oatmeal, bran, etc. rolls/muffins

crackers--preferably not too salted rice, plain or with vegetables added cold noodles or macaroni

cereal--such as shredded wheat, wheat chex, puffed wheat, cheerios, dry or with milk to be added at meal time

## ODDS AND ENDS

jello-with fruit mixed in soups, salads, casseroles gorp/nuts

tofu

## WHAT NOT TO PACK: PLEASE!!!!

sweets, especially candy, potato chips (salt and oil)

soda pop or "juice drinks" (10% juice and too much sugar)

## NAP

The children nap every day from 1:00 to 3:00, with a calm, enjoyable circle time just before nap. Each child rests with his or her blanket and stuffed animal from home. The teachers rub or pat the backs, arms or heads of those children who want or need assistance relaxing.

Children are not rubbed on the legs, chest or buttocks. We insist that every child remain quiet, but children who consistently do not take naps are allowed to read books, work puzzles, or enjoy other quiet activities on their cots after a half hour or so of resting. We suggest that children not have a morning nap since they will all be going down for a nap in the afternoon.

QUESTION: Will teachers keep a child awake during naptime?

Our primary concern is the children's health. Most children 18 months to four years old and an occasional five-year-old, need an afternoon nap for them to grow and develop properly. We assume that if a child takes a nap, she needs the sleep; just as at lunch, if she eats, she needs food.

Children who do not nap and need to do so are often irritable and unsafe in their play later in the afternoon (3:30-5:30) because they are tired, particularly children who are in school nine to ten hours a day. However, we recognize that individual children may not need to nap. If a parent does not want the teachers to encourage sleeping, we will not rub that child's back, but he or she must still rest quietly in order for the other children who need to nap to get to sleep.

A secondary concern is the teachers' schedule. All fulltime staff work eight hours. The main time for much needed breaks (it is not possible to take breaks at lunch) is at naptime. In addition, two days a week teachers use naptime to plan the week's activities and hold necessary staff meetings. Children who do not nap require lots of teacher attention to remain both occupied and quiet; it is nearly impossible to hold a staff meeting or plan when more than a couple children are not resting quietly.

QUESTION: Will the staff keep a child awake so he will go to bed earlier at night?

Often the child is not currently going to bed early, and the staff is being asked to help facilitate good bedtime habits. We wish to be supportive of families. However, there is not necessarily a cause and effect relationship between no nap at school and an early bedtime. It is not the school's responsibility to break a pattern of late bedtime. Staff can make suggestions to parents about how to establish routine. Requests by parents that staff aid them in changing bedtime habits must be weighed against the children's need to nap and the staff's needs to use the naptime for teacher activities. If you have questions or concerns about the nap policy, feel free to talk with us directly.

## OUTDOOR PLAY

At School for Friends, we feel that outdoor play is an integral part of our day. We spend an hour each morning and an hour each afternoon outside, weather permitting. You might also see books go outdoors for reading under a tree in the summer or even an occasional picnic or naptime outdoors. It is a time for scientific exploration. We tend not to go outdoors if the temperature or wind-chill is below 20 degrees F or if it is a code red alert in the summer. When outdoor opportunities for large motor activities are not possible because of conditions children may play in the indoor gross motor room – Fellowship Hall.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may be by foot--a walk around the block or to see a construction site; by bus or subway--to the library or insect zoo; Groups (especially those with younger children) have to practice walking together and demonstrate an understanding of street safety rules before they can tackle public transportation. First aid kits are carried on all field trips. Teachers carry cell phones to call for help whenever necessary.

## PLAN FOR HANDLING LOST OR MISSING CHILDREN ON A FIELD TRIP:

On a field trip, the group should remain where they are. One teacher (with any parents or volunteers) should participate in a search while other teachers remain with the group. Search in places like the bathroom stalls and places where the group previously has been.

Security officials in the location where the group is should be notified and involved in the search. Announcements over the public loudspeaker system should be made, with the physical description of the child, his/her clothing, and the school identification. The school should be called. The child's parent should be called.

## PARTIES

The children love to celebrate birthdays. We encourage parents to bring in cupcakes or a cake and join us for a simple birthday party after lunch or at snack time on the day of the child's birthday. Party favors are not necessary.

Please note: If you are hosting a birthday party outside of school, do not use school mail pouches to distribute invitations unless all children are invited. This saves hurt feelings —families notice.

## ANIMAL AND PET POLICY

1. Classroom pets or visiting animals appear to be in good health.
2. Pets or visiting animals have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.
3. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals.
4. Program staff make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal

## GRADUATION

We like to hold some sort of celebration/party for each child as he or she leaves the school, usually with a special snack and songs. When a group of children leaves at the same time, the group may do something special with their parents. (A formal graduation ceremony with caps, gowns and certificates is an adult ceremony that children can wait to experience when they grow older. We like our celebrations to be child oriented.)

## GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Our goals are to help children develop self-discipline and skills in getting along with others. We understand that these tasks take a long time and carry on into older childhood. Setting limits can help a child develop that self-discipline. We give clear guidelines and explain why we have rules, e.g., not hitting, taking turns, etc.

Because children model themselves after adults, we try to handle conflicts by listening, talking, and negotiating so children can learn how to get what they need and want in acceptable ways. We encourage children to express their feelings, and we work with them to solve problems. Teachers do not physically compel (force/coerce), or threaten to physically compel a child to do anything when disciplining them. We do not use spanking or denial of food. As required by the Department of Health and Human Services – "Discipline shall be constructive and developmentally appropriate, and shall include child guidance and management techniques using redirection, separation from the problem situation, talking with the child about the situation, and encouragement for appropriate behavior. The following methods of discipline shall not be employed: a) Physical harm, including punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, biting, yanking and poking; b) Fear and/or humiliation; c) Derogatory remarks and/or profane language; d) Confinement in a locked room or enclosed area; e) Forced feeding, or withholding of food, rest, toilet use or outdoor activities or play; and f) Physical and/or chemical restraints. Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in

duration and shall be appropriate to the child's age and developmental level and to the circumstances necessitating the discipline.”

## CLASSROOM RULES

The following are some of the basic classroom rules which we encourage everyone to follow. You may wish to discuss these from time to time with your child:

Take turns.

Listen--respond when the teacher calls. One person talks at a time.

Walk, do not run, in the classroom and hall. Clean up materials when you are done.

## ASSESSMENT PLAN

1. Purposes – Assessment is the planned and systematic process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting what children do and how they do it and then analyzing the information as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child, including determining children's interests and needs.
2. Procedures – informal methods such as observation, checklists, and work sampling (dated and stored in individual child folders). Activities and achievements may be documented with photographs. Observation by the child's familiar classroom teacher is the primary mode of assessment. Currently SfF uses Teaching Strategies Gold. Teachers are trained through an on-line course offered by Teaching Strategies to use these portfolios.
3. Uses – The results of assessment will be used (a) to adapt and improve the curriculum as well as specific teaching approaches and practices and instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of the children and to provide the optimal learning environment and (b) to inform overall program development and improvement, particularly each year when the program is evaluated by the community (parents, teachers, board, and administrative staff), and if necessary (c) to arrange for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment for a child when indicated.
4. Conditions under which children will be assessed – in their classroom group and only rarely one-on-one with a teacher in the classroom.
5. Timelines associated with assessments - Although gathering information will occur throughout the year, the main times for developmental screenings will be twice yearly – in the fall (within the first few months of children's participation in the program) and spring.
6. Procedures to keep individual child records confidential – Information will be organized in individual children's files and work portfolios. Results of screening and assessment will be accessible and discussed only with those who have a right or a need to know (typically the child's parents or guardians, Head of School, other teachers, and specialists who work with the child). Only with the parents' written permission will assessments be shared with specialists.
7. Ways to involve families in planning and implementing assessments
  - Teachers will ask parents about their own children as an important resource, for example, interest surveys at parent orientation night.

- 8 . Methods to effectively communicate assessment information to parents – through the twice yearly parent/teacher conferences and any other conferences called by either the parent or teacher. Assessment is used to describe the developmental progress and learning of the children. Every attempt will be made to share the information in a language with which the family is most comfortable.

## INCLUSION

School for Friends hires specialized consultants to support teachers' efforts to meet the needs of children and families to participate fully in the program, including children with disabilities, behavior challenges, or other special needs.

Procedures – School for Friends has a contract with Child Development Consultants, Inc. These consultants have skills in speech and language, behavioral challenges, and sensory integration. The services they provide are free of charge to parents. After an initial request from teachers or parents and questionnaires filled out by both parents and teachers, their staff observe the child at the school and provide teachers and parents with a working plan to make the classroom more successful for the child and, if necessary, suggest referral for further testing and services.

## GUNPLAY

"My child learned to play with guns at school! And School for Friends is a Quaker school. Why don't the teachers do something about this?" School for Friends is a Quaker school, and the staff takes seriously the Quaker value of non-violence. We also take seriously our role as an educational institution. We believe children should learn something more at school than simply what behavior is acceptable to adults. We have a philosophy in regards to gunplay. It, along with super-hero play, has generated more thought, workshops, discussion, and reading among the staff than almost any other issue. We have actively explored the issue for many years. And as a result we have learned that we are not being responsible by simply banning gunplay.

Banning zero tolerance requires that the teachers do a lot of policing ("don't do that") rather than teaching. For a few years we did forbid all gunplay, but found that it proliferated anyway. In addition, for most of the children, it led to hypocrisy. They learned pretty quickly that when a teacher approached to tell them to put down their stick they were using as a gun, they could say it was an airplane or fire hose. The teacher would be caught in a dilemma of either allowing what she knew was gunplay to continue or disputing the child's word.

We discourage the bringing of actual toy guns to school. We allow the children to participate in gunplay when the play is child generated. The teachers do not initiate gunplay. However, whenever gunplay is obsessive, that is, it interferes with other play or is no longer productive, teachers limit it (outdoors only, for instance) or encourage engagement in other play. When children say, "I'm going to kill you," we respond (and encourage children to respond) in a variety of ways. (1) If gunplay bothers the teacher, she may say, "I don't want to be killed or have a gun pointed at me." Children almost always honor this request since the teachers are also working on having children respect other's requests. Or (2) we acknowledge that it is play and say, "I'm not playing that game." That is, we don't participate in the pretend play. Usually, children move on to someone else who will play with them. Or (3) we show the effect of guns and act out being wounded, which leads to more extensive pretend play. It also sometimes leads to a discussion of who the "enemy" is and why you need to shoot him or her as well as to discussions about death, etc.

Children see a gun as an extension of themselves; it makes them powerful. A gun can reach beyond their abilities and cause exciting changes in their environment. Children need to experience power like this. And gunplay gets reactions from adults!

Many of the issues that we as adults bring to gunplay do not exist for children - for example, considerations of war, domestic violence, and law and order. That does not mean that we do not have an obligation to teach children our values. But since gunplay represents something completely different for children, they seldom understand why we object to it even when they can repeat back to us our reasons.

As teachers we actively and constantly encourage solving problems with words. We communicate this value at all times, not just in regards to gunplay.

## SEXUALITY DEVELOPMENT

Children (in preschool, kindergarten, first, second, third grade) often ask questions that demonstrate their curiosity about their bodies, other people's bodies, where babies come from, and ways that boys and girls are alike and different. In our program, we will respond to children's questions honestly, but not overwhelm them with information for which they are not ready. We will communicate with families about current interests or situations that occur at school.

Children sometimes touch their genital areas or those of other children. Although these behaviors are not unusual in young children, we will remind children that touching their own genitals is private behavior and that they may not touch private parts of other children's bodies.

Our school has books and articles about healthy sexuality development in young children in the office. We encourage you to investigate these resources. Please let us know if you have any questions.

## NURTURING

While teacher styles may differ, the spontaneous nurturance of children is appropriately expressed in the following ways: hugging, holding, holding on laps, kissing, carrying, rocking, rubbing and patting backs, and holding hands.

Nurturing is important because it:

- creates an environment more like home
- is more immediate and communicative than verbal contact
- is a way of showing love
- makes a child feel secure
- is restorative when a child has been bruised
- is a way of expressing sympathy
- calms and relaxes
- helps focus
- is individual, one-on-one

Children respond to physical contact. An adult models okay forms of physical contact and touching. People have a biological need for nurturing and physical contact.

## CARETAKING - based on an article by Janie Rosenberg

Sometimes SfF parents must wish they had something tangible to hold onto - a repertoire of academic skills - to prove to themselves that their child really is learning at school. Each day at SfF learning goes on. The variety of skills that children at SfF acquire are partly based on long range goals, and they sometimes lack that visible quality that permeates some preschool curricula. It is important for children to have a variety of experiences. The opportunities children have to climb structures, ride trikes, and explore sand and water are important and enjoyable activities. As children discover the world of books and dramatic play and participate in music and movement activities, they expand their knowledge of the world around them. When children create with blocks, manipulatives, art, and carpentry materials, they focus on developmentally appropriate tasks. All of this curriculum is available to children everyday, yet it's not the core of our program.

The unique experience of a full-day program is found in the caretaking components of the program. Caretaking includes a wide range of experiences that are typically found in the child's home.

These caretaking tasks are the everyday life experiences that nurture the growth of young children. It is essential that full-day preschools provide the essence of this home experience. The home provides the model for quality child care. Young children express their needs for these home experiences and appreciate their full value. They make the connection between nurturing and caretaking.

The naptime routine at Sff is a very intimate activity, designed to support the vulnerability children experience when falling asleep. As each child has a private time with a teacher, having a back rub, much of the child's anxiety subsides. The children sleep on the same cot everyday, which is placed in the same area of the room. Dependability and trust is established. This type of caretaking provides an opportunity for nurturing and a relevant curriculum that naturally emerges from the daily routines.

Caretaking is not only the care a child receives from a significant adult but also includes the child's self-care skills. A significant amount of time is spent each day in the clothes changing process. The teachers can always find a way in which the child can actively participate in this process. Young children are encouraged to begin by simply pulling up their own pants. There is always some part of the process that the child can do alone or with minimal assistance. The teacher facilitates this process by encouraging and validating the child's participation. The adult articulates the entire experience as it is happening, describing in detail what the adult and child are both doing. It requires more time to include children in this sort of task, but it results in increased self sufficiency. Some children are even able to diaper themselves. When children increase their ability to dress themselves, they also increase their experience of active mastery. Young children need to feel successful at real self-care tasks in order to experience their competence and growing autonomy. These caretaking activities are not incidental to the program. The teachers do not rush through these tasks in order to provide other important curriculum. In full-day programs, caretaking is part of the curriculum. Mealtime is also one of the important caretaking components of the program. Snack foods do not miraculously appear on the table. The children are involved in the process. Children may go to the market to purchase the food for Sff snacks. The preparation of special snacks takes advantage of the children's expanding competence and increases their pride and self-esteem. Teachers sit and eat with children and engage them in conversations at snack and meal times. Conversations extend beyond rules and expectations for behavior at the table.

This same philosophy of caretaking is also implemented in the bathroom routine. The children get their own soap and, when able, their own paper towels. Again, the child is encouraged to actively participate in this process. Instead of doing tasks to and for the children, we allow them to discover what they can do themselves.

Sometimes prospective Sff parents comment on whether their child would be better off in a school that focuses just on academics. Being a first generation parent of a child in child care must be extremely difficult because of the lack of a model. Full-day programs can be a place where young children can grow and thrive. Hopefully working parents aren't sending their two year olds to preschool to have the same type of school experience they had in kindergarten. The nurturing and caring times spent with adults don't have to be limited to the diminishing number of young children who remain home in the care of one parent.

The children enrolled in preschool have wonderful role models of parents with different careers. At an early age they see the options that will be available to them. These children can also benefit from the caring at preschool. As parents and teachers explore the realities of preschool, they will find that Caretaking is the most essential and important component in a quality program.

### HOLIDAY POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is intended to spell out our objectives and decision-making process in approaching holidays in the curriculum. This policy reflects the needs of the children and families as well as the principles of anti-bias education and Sff philosophy.

Annual school celebrations mark the passage of the year and connect children, staff, and families. Such celebrations include the fall family social potluck, the classroom Cultural Heritage dinners, the Children's Fair, the Simple Meal, the Staff Appreciation Picnic, etc.

In addition, we often learn about holidays from families and when we explore different cultures. Children talk about and demonstrate how their family celebrates holidays at home.

SfF holiday activities serve to meet the anti-bias education goals. Holiday activities:

- Support the children's family traditions and cultural identities
- Support SfF's identity as a Quaker school
- Expand children's awareness and appreciation of others' cultural traditions
- Create school traditions that children, families, and staff can share and that serve as marking points throughout the school year
- Broaden children's understanding of people and events that express social justice values (for example, Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
- Acquaint children with national holidays

Staff (teachers and the Head of School) will discuss and decide which holidays to use and how. We will work with families from diverse backgrounds to find mutually satisfying solutions to holiday issues. We will also work with families who do not want their child participating in holiday activities.

Staff and families will decide together which national, community, school, and family holidays the children will *learn about*.

Religious holidays – There are many religious traditions in our school. Parents have a right to provide religious training. Therefore we do not *celebrate* religious holidays in the classroom, though families may demonstrate how they celebrate them at home.

#### Approaches to avoid:

- "Tourist approach" – Only celebrating a variety of holidays as a form of multicultural education; actually this is only the beginning. The purpose of a multicultural curriculum is to attach positive feelings to experiences so that each child will feel included and valued, and will also feel friendly and respectful toward people from other ethnic and cultural groups.
- Overwhelming stimulation to children – we limit the number of days spent on holiday activities to a very few just preceding or following the holiday
- Busywork making, cutting and gluing. In these cases, holidays do not always meet the goals stated above, but they do drive the program. There is an emptiness in such an approach.

Planned approach –

- For example, three ways of approaching December –
  1. Winter celebrations – differences and similarities
  2. School as a calming influence – there's enough holiday outside the school
  3. Examine local interests that are unique.

Remember that Christmas even if celebrated in a non-religious fashion (lots of red and green), is at root a religious holiday

Easter – spring, rebirth, and new life

## D. PARENTING RESOURCES

### PARENTS' ORIENTATION

In September there is a general orientation for the parents scheduled in the evening. At this meeting, the parents are able to meet one another and learn more about the program in their child's room.

### PARENT WORKSHOPS

Each year the school plans a series of evening workshops, a Parenting course, for School and Meeting parents at a minimal cost. In the past we have also held individual workshops on "Fathering", "How To Talk To Your Child About Sex", "Adoption", etc. Let us hear your suggestions for workshops.

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Parent involvement is an integral part of School for Friends. Parents are welcome and often included in daily activities. Active participation of parents in the management of School affairs is the cornerstone of our educational philosophy. Because of the small size of School for Friends and the nature of its operations, parent participation is both critical and required. Aside from the Board of Trustees, composed in part of parents, there are a number of committees on which parents sit. Active involvement on committees is essential.

In addition to the committees listed below, we frequently call upon parents to fix items and occasionally substitute for a staff member so that he/she may visit another school to observe or attend a conference.

Building and Grounds – Makes sure the property needs of the School (rooms, equipment, and grounds) are in top working condition and determines priorities for routine maintenance, renovation, and improvement. Works to address physical safety concerns promptly. Each year there are specific projects for this committee.

Annual Appeal – Builds the School's funds by conducting the Annual Giving Campaign with the consultant. The campaign includes phonathon calling. December through May.

Diversity – Recommends policies and practices to strengthen the school's diversity (ethnic, family structure and economic)

Children's Fair – Coordinates the School's annual children's Fair, including planning, organizing, set-up, and clean-up. Spring time, leading up to May fair.

Simple Meal – Prepares a meal after Meeting for Worship at Friends Meeting of Washington. Usually in March.

### PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Individual regular parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year in November and May. They are half an hour in length and occur during the afternoon of the school day. There will be a sign-up chart for parents to select their time slot about a month in advance.

Attendance at these conferences is required of the parents. The teachers will have written a report detailing your child's progress at the School. If at any time it is deemed necessary, either the parents or the teachers may schedule a special conference to discuss difficulties a child may be experiencing. To schedule such a conference, a parent should contact the lead teacher in his/her child's room or the Head of School. Staff will find adult translators as needed.

## REPORTING OF COMPLAINTS

The well-being of the child should always be paramount. If there is a disagreement between a family and teacher, the two parties should attempt to work out the difference through meeting and talking together. If the difference cannot be resolved, either party may request that the Head of School intervene to listen and help come up with a mutually agreeable solution. If the difference is between the family and the Head of School, either party may request intervention from the Board President.

This procedure for filing a complaint is published in the parent handbook and the procedures manual. Complaints will be documented and maintained in the office files.

## WAYS TO GET MORE OUT OF THE PROGRAM

- 1) Newsletter--read our monthly newsletter for events and classroom happenings.
- 2) Bulletin Boards--check the bulletin board in the hall regularly for information and announcements of events and services for parents.
- 3) Call your child at school if you feel you want to talk to him or her.
- 4) Have your child telephone you! -- at a time arranged with the teacher.
- 5) Come for lunch or snack and eat with your child.
- 6) Have some of the children visit your work place or come to your home for snack.
- 7) Feel free to use the telephone or restrooms.

*Updated July 2019*