

The ABC's of Flint Hill Elementary School

A Parent Handbook

Welcome to the Flint Hill community! The PTA works in partnership with Flint Hill Elementary School and is dedicated to promoting the welfare of children at home, at school, and in the community.

This handbook is intended to help you better understand the culture of Flint Hill's community of teachers, administrators, parents and students. More in-depth information can be found throughout our website, www.fhespta.org. If you have any questions, any member of the PTA Executive Committee would be happy to talk with you. Please give us a call!

2013-2014 PTA Executive Team

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Flint Hill Elementary School

2444 Flint Hill Road

Vienna, VA 22181

School Office: 703-242-6100

Attendance Line: 703-242-6161

A

Absences and Tardies. Call the Attendance Line (703-242-6161) and leave a message stating why your student is absent or send a note to your child's teacher via a neighborhood child. If the school does not have a note or phone call from you by 9:00 a.m., the school will call your home or work to verify your child's absence.

If your child will be tardy, please call the Attendance Line stating why your child will be tardy. Upon arrival, a parent/guardian must enter the office to sign the student in. The student will be given an office pass and sent to his or her classroom.

- Unexcused absences/tardies – Reasons for unexcused absences/tardies may include but are not limited to family and/or student vacations, child care situations, non-school-related activities or missed school bus.
- Makeup Work – When students are absent, reasonable opportunities to make up work shall be provided. Makeup work is encouraged so that the student will profit from future instruction. For excused absences, makeup work receives credit; for unexcused absences, makeup work MAY not receive credit.

Art. The PTA supplements Flint Hill's excellent art curriculum through GRACE Art, the art-in-the-schools program of the Greater Reston Arts Center. GRACE Art includes in-class presentations of historical art subjects, followed by coordinating art projects. Grace Art volunteers meet with each classroom once per month.

Assignment Notebooks. Flint Hill provides daily homework assignment books to students in second through sixth grade. If a student needs to replace his/her assignment notebook, a fee of \$6.00 will be charged. Many teachers also post daily homework assignments on Blackboard.

B

Back to School Night. Back to School Night is held in September. It is for parents only and usually starts at 7 p.m. Back to School Night is an opportunity for you to meet your child's teacher.

Bicycles/Scooters. All students living close to school are encouraged to walk or ride their bikes or scooters to school. Students who ride bikes/scooters to school must review the rules in the Students' Responsibilities and Rights handbook for conduct on the way to and from school, and for bike safety. These students are responsible for the security of their own bicycles/scooters, and should not bring them unless they have a lock to secure them to the bicycle stand. Safety helmets must be worn. All bicycles/scooters must be walked on school property.

Birthday Celebrations. Individual classes find unique ways to celebrate birthdays in the classroom. Students are not permitted to bring in birthday treats to celebrate their birthdays at school.

Blackboard. Blackboard is part of Fairfax County Public Schools' 24/7 learning. It is used daily by the "upper grade" teachers of 4th through 6th graders to post short term and long-term homework. Daily use of Blackboard continues through Thoreau and Madison.

In the younger grades, use of Blackboard varies among teachers, depending on the need. Ask your classroom teacher whether s/he will be using Blackboard this year. For information on registering your student(s), go to <http://www.fcps.edu/fcps247.htm>.

Business Partners. Flint Hill currently has three business partners: Outback Steakhouse in Vienna; Sunrise Assisted Living in Oakton; and Interstate Worldwide Relocation.

C

Class Lists. Class lists are posted on the front doors of Flint Hill after 2 p.m. (estimated time) on Wednesday before school begins.

Clinic. The school clinic is staffed by a clinician, Mrs. O'Connor. If your child uses medication that must be taken during the school day, you must contact Mrs. O'Connor and follow the rules established by Fairfax County School Board. The clinic also provides hearing and eyesight screening for Kindergarten and 3rd grade students. Mrs. O'Connor can dispense medication on a **short-term** basis (non-prescription medication for up to three days, prescription medication for up to 10 days) with only the parent filling out and signing the medication form. For

long-term medication, a doctor's signature is necessary on the medication form.

Communicating with Your Child's Teacher. Flint Hill's teachers welcome opportunities to build positive relationships with parents. The PTA encourages parents to be proactive and initiate positive working relationships with teachers. A few helpful hints:

- Teachers are extremely busy during the first few weeks of school. Teachers prepare thorough presentations about school year curriculum and share those with parents during Back To School Night (September 10).
- Teachers do not have access to email and voicemail as often as professionals in other fields do (because they are either teaching or do not have the privacy in the classroom needed to review and respond to specific needs). If you leave a voicemail or send an email to a classroom teacher, expect to receive a reply usually within 24 hours. If you don't hear back, send a second request.
- Remember that your student may feel differently about his/her teacher than you do.
- Teachers want to know about any concerns you have as soon as possible so they can address your child's needs. Please keep any concerns between you and the teacher.
- If your child works with a specialist, keep the regular classroom teacher in the loop by cc'ing her or him on any email correspondence you have with the specialist.

D

Dismissal. Students are dismissed on Mondays at 12:55 p.m. and Tuesday through Friday at 3:25 p.m. If you are picking up your child from the lobby please make efforts to arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before dismissal. Please remember to wait quietly as classrooms wrap up for the day.

E

Enrichment Programs. At Flint Hill Elementary, the PTA's priority is to enrich learning and student life. We do that through a number of programs designed to complement what students learn in the classroom and to challenge them to think in new ways. To learn more about our many enrichment programs, visit the Programs tab on our website, www.fhespta.org.

Excel Award. At the end of the school year, teachers choose two students (one boy and one girl) from each class to receive the Excel Award. Students that earn the Excel Award show the "RITE" stuff: Respect, Integrity, Teamwork, and Excellence.

F

Faithful Falcons. This is part of Flint Hill's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) and relates to Character Education. Starting in January, two students in each class are selected for consistently demonstrating the following attributes: Friendship in December; Appreciative in January; Leader in February; Considerate in March; Open Minded in April; and Nice in May. These students have a popcorn party with Mr. Rivera and receive a Joey Card (free kid's meal) from Flint Hill's business partner, Outback Steakhouse in Vienna.

Falcon Feather Stickers. Your child may receive a feather sticker from a teacher for demonstrating the appropriate everyday behaviors the school encourages, such as helping to clean up in the classroom or bringing in a library book on time. Your child has a day full of opportunities to earn an individual Falcon feather.

Entire classes can earn Falcon Feathers, too. For example, classes earn a class feather if the class is walking quietly in the hall. If a class earns 50 feathers, the class receives a reward such as extra recess or class celebration. Kindergarten classes are awarded after 10 class feathers.

Forgetful Kids. Teachers have noticed that kids learn responsibility faster if parents don't bring in forgotten homework, lunches and instruments (the PTA pays for cereal and milk or PB&Js for kids who forget, so no one goes hungry!). If your student forgets homework or an instrument at home, please hold off on your instinct to run the item over to school every single time. Your student will learn the consequences and will be motivated to remember the next time.

Falcon Five.

1. Respect people and their property
2. Act safely
3. Follow directions the first time given
4. Come prepared to learn
5. Cooperate with others

G

Grade-Level Special Events. While students in each grade participate in special classroom projects, grades 3 through 6 hold special annual events. These are planned by the grade-level teams, and made possible by parent volunteers. If you have a student in the following grades, you can look forward to their participation in these events:

3rd Grade Chinese New Year Celebration

4th Grade Colonial Day

5th Grade Medieval Day

6th Grade Farewell Party

H

Hours of Operation. In Fairfax County, Mondays are shorter school days for students (teachers use Monday afternoons for staff development and planning days). For 2012-2013, Hours of Operation are:

Office Hours

Monday through Friday

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

School Hours

Monday

8:45 a.m. to 12:55 p.m.

Tuesday through Friday

8:45 a.m. to 3:25 p.m.

Happy Apple. In Kindergarten, kids take turns being the Happy Apple. If your child is the Happy Apple for the day, he or she gets to do things like be the line leader, wear a special necklace, and bring the library cart to the library. The first time your child is Happy Apple, the entire class draws a picture of your child. Sometimes your child can bring in a show-and-tell item. In the middle of the year, your child will create a poster when he or she is Happy Apple. The poster will display information like your child's phone number and address. Your child will also show the class that he or she can tie his or her shoes. Initially, names are drawn to determine Happy Apple. After all have had a turn, a monthly calendar is sent home to let you know when your child will be the Happy Apple.

I

Information and Resources.

Fairfax Public Schools Handbook: Distributed when students enroll

Family Gram: Newsletter prepared by Fairfax County Public Schools

Principal's Corner: Mr. Rivera's monthly newsletter

School Directory: Available online to PTA members

PTA Weekly Update: Weekly email update

School Lunch Menu: Sent home in Tuesday Folders or available at www.fcps.edu/fs/food/food_at_school/

Flint Hill Website www.fcps.edu/FlintHillES

Flint Hill PTA Website www.fhespta.org

K

Kiss & Ride. This is a system to drop off and pick up students at school. For student safety, it's important to review and follow the Kiss & Ride rules described on the Flint Hill website, www.fcps.edu/FlintHillES/about.htm. Please do NOT drop off kids at the SACC door.

Keep In Touch is an email notification system of Fairfax County Public Schools. Subscribe to KIT (www.fcps.edu/kit) and select the types of news updates you'd like, such as delayed openings and school closings. Flint Hill also sends KIT messages to families about school news.

L

Lost and Found is located by the cafeteria. Items left at lost and found are donated to charity twice a year. *Make sure to label all coats, hats, gloves and lunch boxes!*

Lunch. You can eat lunch with your child(ren) in the cafeteria. Check with your child's teacher to find out what time your child's class attends lunch. Make sure to check in at the office, put on your nametag, then meet your child's class in the cafeteria.

Once students start school at Flint Hill, they are assigned a Personal Identification Number (PIN) for use in the cafeteria. This PIN is your child's

cafeteria account number, and remains the same every year. You can pre-load money into the account through www.mylunchmoney.com, or by check (not cash). If you send checks, make checks payable to *FHES Food Services* and include your child's name and PIN on the check. Your child will receive a stamp on his/her hand when only \$5.00 or less remains in his or her account. Money transfers from year to year.

Remember to keep money in your child's lunch account! If your child forgets lunch or runs out of money in his/her account, the PTA and school provide a light lunch of cereal or PB&J and milk.

Lice. There are probably reported cases of lice in every elementary school across America each year. If lice are found or reported in your child's classroom, a note will usually be sent to you through your child's backpack.

M

Morning Announcements are a daily student news program. Flint Hill students learn about school news each morning on their classroom television monitors. Sixth grade students deliver the news. Mrs. Stephens (cee.stephens@fcps.edu) oversees this program.

Moment of Silence. Fairfax County Public Schools participate in a moment of silence each morning. At FHES it occurs before the Pledge of Allegiance. Please set a good example for our students by observing the silence when you are in the building at this time.

Mylunchmoney.com is a service you can use to pre-load funds into your child's cafeteria account. Once an account is established, parents may also check the fund balance, view seven days of purchases, and receive an e-mail when the balance gets below \$5.00. www.mylunchmoney.com

O

Open House. Open House is held the Thursday before school starts. You and your child can visit his or her classroom and meet the teachers.

P

PBIS. This is Flint Hill's Character Education program, called Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support. At the beginning of each school year, each family receives a PBIS handbook, which outlines the systems in place to create a respectful learning environment. If your child receives a Falcon sticker, it's because s/he has been recognized for living up to the "Falcon Five" expectations. Be sure to pat your kid on the back when s/he wears a sticker home!

PLC. FCPS and Flint Hill function as a Professional Learning Community (PLC). The school focuses on: **Learning** rather than teaching, including the use of best practices; **Collaboration** including people, process and tasks; and a focus on **Results** with data and goal-driven systematic pyramid of interventions.

PTA Weekly Updates. The PTA Weekly Update is emailed to you every Tuesday by Flint Hill's PTA. This is a great way for you to see what is going on in your child's school on a weekly basis.

Publishing Center. Flint Hill has an amazing Publishing Center. Students are interviewed, tell a story to an adult, and a book is created that is written by your child. Classes also create books. These books are absolute treasures.

R

Running Program. Every student is encouraged to run or walk one lap on the track each day after lunch...more if time allows. Five laps around the track equal one mile. Students track completed laps on running cards (each card is worth 5 miles). For students in grades 3-6, one running card is due each quarter, with one card being equal to a C average. Toe tokens (beads to string on shoe laces) are awarded for every card, with special tokens being awarded for 25, 50, 75 and 100 miles. Students that complete 100 miles or more receive a trophy at the end of the school year.

S

SACC. School Age Child Care offers fun, safe and educational care for 5-12 year-olds before school, after school and during school vacations in most Fairfax County elementary schools. It is run by Fairfax County Government, not FPCS. For more information visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc/Sacc.htm. There is usually a waiting list for SACC, so register early!

School Pictures. Students take pictures twice a year. Students take individual pictures in the fall and class pictures in the spring. In the spring, students take a second set of individual pictures.

School Supplies. There are two ways to buy supplies. You can order supplies from the PTA or you can buy your own. The PTA usually sends home a form for ordering supplies at the end of the school year for the next school year. These forms are usually given out at the Kindergarten orientation in the spring. If you want to buy your own supplies, there are supply lists on Flint Hill's website, www.fcps.edu/FlintHillES/supply/supply.htm.

Scouts. Flint Hill students can join Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts. Cub Scouts Pack 987 includes more than 50 boys in Tiger Cubs (1st grade or age 7), Wolf Cubs

(2nd grade or age 8), Bear Cubs (3rd grade or age 9) and Webelos (4th grade or age 10). Interested families can contact Sean McIntyre at cubmaster@pack987.org, or visit www.pack987.org.

Flint Hill's Girl Scouts comprise troops of Daisy Scouts (K – 1st grade), Brownies (2nd – 3rd grades), Juniors (4th – 5th grades) and Teen Scouts. Interested families can contact Laura Beth Vietor at 571-499-0194 or mailto:laura_elizabeth@hotmail.com

SET stands for Skills Enhancement Time, which is the time used by teachers to re-teach and/or remediate concepts taught. SET time can also be used as an enrichment period.

Snack. Students are able to bring a snack to eat in the classroom. Snacks must come from home and should be healthy (the school cafeteria will no longer provide snacks). Many teachers ask that snacks do not require spoons. Snacks must be free of any allergens that are banned from the classroom, such as peanuts (about half of Flint Hill's classrooms, and all Kindergarten classrooms, are peanut-free). No candy, please, especially after Halloween!

T

Think Sheets are a communication device between teachers and parents, and are part of Flint Hill's Positive Behavior Support. Think Sheets are used to help students reflect upon their actions and make positive choices in the future.

Tuesday Folders. Each Tuesday the school sends home a yellow envelope with timely information from the school, the PTA and your child's teacher such as newsletters, notes, student work, PTA notices and other written communication. The envelope is usually yellow, but it can be another color. This important package needs to be reviewed and any important forms should be returned the following day. In years past, this envelope was filled with about a tree's worth of papers that would need to be reviewed. In our effort to go green, the PTA now sends a PTA Weekly Update to complement the paper envelope for school. Make sure you receive your PTA Weekly Updates by visiting our website (www.fhespta.org) and sending a message in the Contact Us section.

V

Volunteering. If you volunteer during the school day, please:

- **Enter through the front door (Door 1) and check in at the front office** (There is a computerized check-in system that will generate a name tag for you. Shirley Eason or another other staff member can help you register for the system). You will need to be buzzed in at the front door.

- **Wear your nametag visibly.** Kids and staff members alike should be able to see your nametag.
- **Observe silence in hallways** and during the morning moment of silence (all FCPS schools observe a moment of silence; at Flint Hill it occurs before the Pledge of Allegiance). Some classrooms do not have permanent walls, and hallway voices – including whispers – can distract the students.
- **Refrain from casually asking the classroom teacher about your child's progress.** Teachers take parent requests about student performance seriously, and are happy to discuss a variety of topics with parents. When it comes to individual questions about student performance, teachers like to prepare and ensure conversations can happen in private.

Volunteering in the Classroom. There are many opportunities to volunteer in classes. Parents can volunteer to be the room parent, help at class parties, help kids write books through the Publishing Center, provide GRACE Art lessons or lead work groups. Ask your teacher about his or her volunteer needs, and check out our website, www.fhespta.org. Contact any committee chair if you'd like to help out!

W

Working through Concerns. Sometimes parents have concerns about something that happened in the classroom, or may disagree with a teacher's approach to a given situation. Staying within the bounds of a respectful school environment, the PTA urges parents to take the following steps in working through concerns with classroom teachers:

1. Pick up the phone. As soon as possible, and before discussing the concern with anyone outside your family, call and leave a detailed message for the teacher about the topic. Ask that teacher to call you back to discuss the situation. If you would like to talk for a few minutes, say that. If you would like a more formal conference, request that.
2. Expect your phone call to be returned usually within 24 hours. Classroom teachers have few opportunities to check voicemail or email during the school day, and may be checking messages in the evening or very early the next morning.
3. See if a direct discussion with the teacher addresses your concerns. If you feel that your needs are not being met, it may be appropriate for the two of you to agree to involve a school administrator in the discussion. Involving other people before this point is counterproductive.
4. If you and the teacher create a plan to help your child, follow through on the plan at home. Teachers see true improvement in students whose parents reinforce the teachers' directions at home.