

WELCOME TO ORCHARD FRIENDS SCHOOL

This Handbook is just one of many opportunities for communication between Orchard Friends School and our families. It is intended to provide important information regarding the practices, policies, procedures and programs which are used at Orchard Friends School.

There are many options for our parents to become involved in their child's education. You are encouraged to contact the Head of School whenever you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Our parents, guardians, grandparents, and other interested citizens are encouraged to participate in the educational experiences of children through our school volunteer program. Please contact our Business Office for further information.

Welcome to the Orchard Friends School family!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

After School Activities	12
Attendance Requirements	6
Discipline	9
Dress Code	9
Drugs, Alcohol and Weapons	11
Electronic Devices	12
Field Trips	7
Fire Drills	7
General Information	3
Homework Policy	12
Introduction	5
Library Books	7
Lost and Found	7
Lunch Program	7
Mission Statement	4
Parent-Teacher Communication	11
School Health	8
Students Under Control of OFS	5
Table of Contents	2
Transportation	11
Welcome	1
Withdrawals/Transfers	6

GENERAL INFORMATION

Orchard Friends School
405 Linden Avenue
Riverton, New Jersey 08077
Telephone: 856-786-1123
Fax: 856- 786-0349
Head of School: John W. Keeley
Email: jkeeley@orchardfriends.org
Web Page: www.orchardfriends.org

School Hours: 8:00 AM to 3:10 PM for Students

Before School Program: 7:30 AM to 8:00 AM
After School Program – 3:10 PM to 5:30 PM

When emergency conditions exist, such as a snow or sleet storm, listen to KYW 1060AM. Our School Closing number is **648**.

In the event of bad weather or busing districts arriving early due to road conditions, students will be dismissed early. OFS will not dispatch children to buses until a staff member has spoken with a parent or emergency contact.

In an emergency situation a phone chain will be utilized in order to contact all members of the OFS community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Orchard Friends School strives to educate children in grades 1 through 10th grade who demonstrate language-based and sensory learning differences. As a provider of non-sectarian services, Orchard Friends School believes that individualizing each child's instruction allows for the greatest opportunity for academic and social growth.

At Orchard Friends School, we care deeply about the social and emotional life of each student. In our program, students learn to value their own self-worth as well as the worthiness of others. We guide our students to a fuller understanding of their place both in our school community and in the world.

INTRODUCTION

This Handbook has been prepared to provide students and their parents with some of the rules and guidelines concerning Orchard Friends School. This Handbook also covers school attendance as well as rules of conduct for students attending Orchard Friends School.

It is the responsibility of the Head of School, faculty, and staff to help students and parents understand and follow the rules of conduct. Parents are urged to read and discuss this Handbook with their children in order to help them adjust more successfully at school.

Parents are encouraged to keep in close contact with our school. The support of parents is needed continuously as we provide a safe and friendly place for children to learn.

STUDENTS ARE UNDER CARE OF OFS

All students are under the care and direction of the Head of School, or designee and the immediate control and direction of the teacher or another member of the staff to whom such responsibility may be assigned by the Head of School:

- when students are attending school
- when students are engaged in a school-sponsored activity on or off school premises
- during a reasonable time before and after a student is on the premises for attending school or for authorized participation in a school-sponsored activity

A “reasonable time” shall mean thirty (30) minutes before the school day or school-sponsored activity is scheduled or actually begins or ends, whichever period is longer.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Students must attend school each day and be on time. When a student is sick or has a family emergency, the student should remain at home. When the student returns to school, the student must bring an appropriate note from a parent/guardian or doctor, explaining why the student was absent.

A student is considered to be present for school if the student is away from school on a school day and engaged in an educational activity that constitutes a school-approved instructional program or activity.

A student who is not present for his/her instructional classes or program at school on a school day will be marked absent.

A student who is absent more than five (5) days within a quarter without sufficient reason, will not receive a passing grade for the quarter. Absences not counted in the five day attendance policy are: court dates, religious holidays, illnesses with medical documentation, and/or chronic and extended illness.

All students must be in attendance a minimum of four (4) hours of instructional time to be considered present each day.

Students will be released to the parent/guardian of record only. A parent/guardian must give written notice to Orchard Friends School when requesting that a student be released to other designated persons. School personnel may require persons who are requesting to pick up children from school to show proper identification.

Parent/Guardian is asked to notify the school when a student is going to be absent.

WITHDRAWALS/TRANSFERS – NOTIFICATION

Parents should notify the school of their plans of withdrawal or transfer as soon as possible prior to the last day of attendance. The notification should include the last day of attendance and the next school the student will attend. Before the withdrawal or transfer is completed, all school property must be turned in or accounted for, and all charges paid.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned to extend and enhance classroom experiences when opportunities and resources permit. Each participating student must have a permission form signed by the parent/guardian. Without a signed permission slip the student will NOT be permitted to attend the field trip.

EMERGENCY/FIRE DRILLS

Emergency drills (Fire, Evacuation, and Lockdown) are held at school as required by law. Drills may occur at any time of the day. Students are requested to move quickly and quietly, directed by the teachers, to the designated exit-area. Upon completion of the drill, an all-clear signal will be sounded, at which time all persons will return to the building. The number of Emergency/Fire drills is held according to state mandates.

LOST and FOUND

Orchard Friends School requests each family to mark jackets, etc. with the name of the owner. Each year there are many items left unclaimed in the school.

LIBRARY BOOKS and OTHER SCHOOL MATERIALS

Our students are taught to take proper care of books and materials. Lost or damaged books or materials are the financial responsibility of the parents and students.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Good nutrition is important to the overall well-being of our students. A well-balanced diet which includes adequate vitamins and minerals in order to work, play and concentrate is required. Children do better with minimal intake of artificial sweeteners, colors, preservatives and caffeine. Students are not permitted to have soda in school. Each student may order a hot/cold lunch. Students also have the option to bring their lunches to school. The student should inform the teacher if the lunch requires refrigeration. **If your child has a food allergy, you MUST notify the school immediately.**

SCHOOL HEALTH

If a student has an elevation in temperature, is vomiting, or has diarrhea, that student should not attend school. Parents are required to inform the school if a student has any unusual or chronic health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, etc.

Regarding *Pediculuscapitis* (Head Lice), the following procedure will be used by the school when a student at school is observed to be infested with live head lice. This procedure is aligned with the recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

The parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

A Fact Sheet on education and treatment of head lice will be sent home. This will include a statement to be signed by the parent/guardian that treatment was done.

For a student to be re-admitted to school following a live lice infestation, he/she must be checked, have no live lice, and have a statement signed by the parent/guardian that treatment was done. If no nits are found, further rechecking will not be done. If nits are found, the student will be readmitted and rechecked in 8-10 days. If live lice are found, the student will not be readmitted and the entire procedure will need to be repeated.

Orchard Friends School seeks to provide a safe educational environment for students and staff. This can best be accomplished by assuring that all persons within the school community understand the method of transmission and prevention of diseases which are not contracted through air-borne pathogens, but rather, through direct contact with body fluids and excretions.

Orchard Friends School has adopted a policy/procedure for addressing Blood borne Pathogen Exposure in the school setting which is in compliance with OSHA Standard 1910.1030.

Prescription medication will only be administered as approved by a physician. All medication (prescription and non-prescription) must be submitted to the school in the original container. Use an Order for Medication form (obtained from the Business Office) for the initial request for administration of medication. Complete this form and return it to the Business Office prior to the first day of school. This form is to be used for both prescription and non-prescription medications.

NOTE: A copy of the immunization schedule for the State of New Jersey is contained in the Appendix of this Handbook.

DRESS CODE

General Policy: Students should always appear neat, clean, modest and appropriate. “Appearance” refers to clothing, accessories, hair, or any other item that contributes to how a student looks. Students must respect the school community and consider the effect of their dress on the reputation of that community.

Specifics: Dresses, skirts and shorts must be of modest length and provide full coverage. Ripped and ragged clothing is not allowed. Clothing, accessories or tattoos that portray drugs, alcohol, tobacco, firearms, sex and violence or are not permitted. Clothing should not be worn that exposes underwear, the midriff, or areas normally covered by underwear. The Head of School will have final decision on what is considered acceptable.

Appropriate shoes should always be worn. Flip-flops are not permitted due to safety issues.

DISCIPLINE

Staff Involvement – All school personnel will be informed and responsible for all School Committee administrative rules regarding discipline. Our community is built upon the importance of the individual. The entire staff will provide appropriate models of compassion, truth, cooperation, and will encourage appropriate and constructive behavior in each student. Our staff is prepared to respond to the problematic behavior which often comes from the frustration of learning differently. We will be careful to set clear rules and expectations for our students. Each teacher has a clear-cut set of guidelines and expectations for the students in the class. Teachers will work with the students to teach them what is expected in class and will support the students in the learning process.

Protocol for Handling Disruptive Behavior – A colored card system is in place in each classroom and visible to the students. Each card represents a level of behavior which indicates the student’s current level (green, yellow, red and blue). Implementation of this system is as follows:

Step 1 – Warning. The student will discuss with the teacher the inappropriate behavior.

Step 2 (Yellow) – The student will discuss with the teacher the inappropriate behaviors and the behavior will be written in the student’s Log Book.

Step 3 (Red) – The student will discuss with the teacher the inappropriate behaviors, Minor infractions are written down and sent home to be signed by the parent/guardian.

Step 4 (Blue) – Referred to the Head of School. If this is the student's first Blue Card notice, an infraction form will be sent home for parent/guardian signature and the Administration will contact the family by telephone. If this is the second Blue Card notice, the infraction form is sent home for signature, the Administration will telephone the family, and a meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian to discuss the behavior and its consequences.

Students who demonstrate the following behaviors will automatically be referred to the Head of School: any violent actions towards staff or students, threats of bodily harm to anyone, and leaving the building without permission.

Suspension – Students who demonstrate behavior which keeps a teacher from teaching, keeps other students from learning, or makes others feel uncomfortable or unsafe, may be suspended from school by the Head of School. The Head of School will gather information from the involved parties and make a decision which is in the best interest of all involved.

Expulsion – A student may be required to leave the school building when it is clear that his/her academic, social, emotional or behavioral needs cannot be met at Orchard Friends School. Every attempt will be made to meet the student's needs, but it is not always possible to meet all needs. The decision to expel a student will be made in accordance with New Jersey standards.

Corporal punishment is not permitted at Orchard Friends School.

Physical Contact with Students – A multisensory and experiential approach to teaching is utilized at Orchard Friends School and is most successful in accommodating the various learning styles of our students. Due to the interactive nature of this instructional approach, it is necessary for the staff to use physical contact in various forms. Examples of this type of physical contact include: holding a child's hand while crossing a street, helping a child adjust his/her body position on a scooter board or providing trunk support when attempting a somersault from a therapy ball in Occupational Therapy, or providing sensory input to the oral area in order to facilitate lip closure.

It is at the discretion of the Head of School to deny participation of any activity based on discipline issues or infringement of safety of others in the school.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL and WEAPONS INFORMATION

The use or abuse of such harmful substances such as alcohol, tobacco products, inhalants, illegal drugs and unauthorized medications is not permitted on school grounds or in the school building.

Weapons of any type, real or play, are not permitted in school or on school grounds. A weapon is any object that is used to hurt or intimidate a person or animal. Lighters/matches are not permitted in school or on school property.

All violations of the Drug, Alcohol and Weapons policies as adopted by the School Committee of Orchard Friends School will be reviewed by the Head of School with input from staff.

If you or someone you know is living a life that includes the abuse of alcohol or drugs, please call the Drug/Alcohol Abuse Hotline at 1-800-662-HELP.

TRANSPORTATION

Orchard Friends School does not provide transportation for our students. It is the responsibility of each student's parent/guardian to provide transportation to and from school. In some instances, the student's local school district may provide transportation.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Each student has a daily Log Book which is used for communication between parent/guardian and teacher. Parents are encouraged to review the Log Book on a daily basis.

All teachers can be contacted by e-mail at school. The Head of School may be contacted at any time via e-mail or phone (856-786-1123 – School Number) if there is a concern or question.

Thursday Folders are sent home every Thursday for parent review. These folders contain important items including announcements, permission slips, etc.

HOMEWORK POLICY

At Orchard Friends School homework is an effective way to reinforce learning that has taken place in the classroom. Homework is assigned in amounts that are appropriate to the level of ability of each student. If you find that homework is taking too much time or that frustration is evident in your child, please STOP the homework activity and write a note to the teacher that there was difficulty. Please contact your child's teacher or Head of School to discuss and issues or concerns with homework assignments. Remember that communication is the key to success with collaborating for the best interest of our students.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

All students are permitted to participate in after-school activities sponsored by Orchard Friends School. Permission slips are required in order for the student to participate. If no permission slip is received for an activity, the student will be sent home as usual. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the bus company or transportation if the student will not be on the bus that day, either going or leaving OFS.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES and OTHER ITEMS

Students are not permitted to have any of the following items in school without permission of the Head of School: MP3 Players, Nintendo Game Boy or DS, Cell Phones, iPods, stuffed animals, toys or any other item/device not part of classroom materials or any items that would disrupt the learning process.

These items may be used on the ride to and from school but must be left in the students' lockers at school or turned in at the main office (to be returned at end of day).

APPENDIX

Orchard Friends School
Faculty/Staff
2011-2012

Boyle, Alicia-Speech Pathologist
(aboyle@orchardfriends.org)

Caione, Rachel-Classroom Instructor
(rcaione@orchardfriends.org)

Clark, Alyssa-Speech Pathologist, ASL Instructor
(aclark@orchardfreinds.org)

Dougherty, Pam-Classroom Instructor
(pdougherty@orchardfriends.org)

Hart, Tara-Classroom Instructor
(thart@orchardfreinds.org)

Keeley, John-Head of School
(jkeeley@orchardfriends.org)

Pentkowski, Chet-Technology Supervisor, Classroom Assistance
(cpentkowski@orchardfriends.org)

Pentkowski, Karen-Business manager
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Santaspirt, John "Bart"-Classroom Instructor
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Tesler, Donna-Administrative Assistant
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