



# **2023-2024 PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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**301 Pine Avenue North**  
**Oldsmar, FL 34677**

## PROCEDURES AND GENERAL INFORMATION

### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Safety is our primary concern at arrival and dismissal times. We ask that parents who are driving their children to school watch out for all students and drive carefully.

Students **SHOULD NOT ARRIVE** at school before 8:15 a.m. Students who arrive before 8:15 a.m. must be enrolled in the before school care program. For information concerning before & after school care, please call the YMCA at 727-467-9622. Students who arrive after 8:15 a.m. may go to the cafeteria if they are having breakfast or report to their designated area until the first bell rings at 8:35. The tardy bell rings at 8:45.

**Students who arrive after 8:45 a.m. should report to the office for a tardy slip before going to their classroom.**

Walkers, bike riders, car riders, and YMCA will be dismissed at 2:55. Please drop off and pick up students only in the car circle which is located at the south end of the school.

**PARENTS: PLEASE CALL THE FRONT OFFICE NO LATER THAN 2:00 P.M. IF THERE IS A CHANGE IN YOUR CHILD'S GOING HOME ARRANGEMENTS SO THAT THE OFFICE STAFF HAS ENOUGH TIME TO GET A MESSAGE TO YOUR CHILD BEFORE BUS RIDERS ARE DISMISSED.**

**\*No early dismissal (other than emergencies) after 2:30 P.M.**

### **ATTENDANCE**

Each child is expected to be punctual and maintain a good record of attendance. Acceptable reasons for absence would include illness and death in the immediate family. Other absences may be excused if arrangements are made in advance with the principal. Parents are encouraged to plan vacations and trips during school holidays and vacations.

School Board Policy states:

Student Attendance- 5500.05

- A. Students who are registered but absent on the first day of school will be marked absent.
- B. Students who have been absent five (5) days or more in a grading period may be required to bring a doctor's note for each absence.
- C. Habitual tardiness is unacceptable and unfair to other students because instruction is interrupted every time a late student arrives.
- D. Within forty-eight (48) hours of a student's absence, the parent will send in a note or call the school explaining the absence. If that contact does not occur, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. Some schools require a note.
- E. Too many absences will lead to a referral to the school's Child Study Team, referral for social work services, referral to Truancy Court, or the involvement of the Office of the State Attorney.

It is expected that the student will bring a note from his/her parent explaining the reason for the absence upon his/her return. Please call the school office if the absence is expected to be three days or longer. Teachers will be contacting parents if a child's absences are more than 5 days in the semester. Our guidance counselor and/or school social worker will contact parents of students who have excessive absences or tardies.

Our school utilizes School Messenger, an automated phone system, to notify parents daily if your child is absent. Calls will be made to you after 9:00 AM. It is therefore essential that the school have accurate up to date phone numbers to make this process effective.

Extended Absences: Please call the office if you expect your child to be out of school longer than three days. Parents are encouraged to plan vacations and trips during school holidays and vacations. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for more details regarding absence of students.

Chronic Absences/Tardies: When a student is frequently absent or tardy teachers will report attendance issues to our School Social Worker. A general guideline to refer is when a student accumulates five (5) unexcused absences within one (1) month or ten (10) unexcused absences within ninety (90) days. Once tardies reach fifteen (15), the student may be referred as well.

Truancy Intervention Program: Parents will be referred to the TIP (Truancy Intervention Program) program when unexcused absences or frequent tardies continue despite school interventions.

### **BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE**

The before and after school program at Forest Lakes Elementary is offered by the YMCA. Child care is provided on a fee basis between 6:30-8:35 a.m. and 2:55-6:00 p.m.

The program meets and exceeds licensing standards set forth by the Pinellas County License Board. For more information, please call 727-467-9622.

Other Day Car Vans – Off Campus:  
Tampa Bay Dance Academy – 813-925-9346  
Buggs Martial Arts – 813 – 749 – 0961

Traditional Tae Kwon Do - 813-475-5956  
Smart Start 813 – 855 - 7333

### **BUS PROCEDURES**

Bus riders will be dismissed at 2:55 p.m..

Bus transportation is available to elementary pupils living two miles or more from school. Only registered transported pupils may ride school buses and they may only ride the bus on which they are registered.

The rules and disciplinary action policy for bus riders can be found in the Student Code of Conduct.

When a bus rider does something other than return home by bus, he/she must have written permission from his/her parent sent in to the teacher.

### **CELEBRATIONS**

Three celebrations are allowed within a school year. However, remember there are to be **no birthday celebrations**.

The Department of Education guidelines on nutrition have put an end to the birthday cupcake/cookie celebrations, whether in the classroom or cafeteria. Grade levels will determine the three approved events for the year where “foods of minimal nutritional value” may be served and the teachers will let parents know the dates of those events.

### **CLINIC**

Children who become ill at school are sent to the school clinic until they can be picked up by the parent as policy limits what can be done for that child. CDC Guidelines will be followed. The clinic is run by a full-time certified nurse and supported by the office staff. It is very important that we have a phone number and an emergency phone number so a parent can be reached in a timely fashion.

### **CONFERENCES FOR INDIVIDUALS**

Conferences between teachers and parents are arranged by the request of either and at the convenience of both. They are held outside of class time, before school or following dismissal in the afternoon. These conferences may be scheduled by contacting the teacher or as requested on the report card.

We believe that parent-teacher conferences are most important for the welfare of each child and for the promotion of good understanding between the home and school. An appointment provides time for the teacher to prepare and for the privacy desirable for a satisfactory conference. If you wish to visit your child’s classroom as an observer, please make an appointment with the teacher 24 hours in advance.

PTO meetings and Open House are not intended as private conference times for discussion of your child.

### **CUSTODY**

In the case of divorce or separation, both parents shall have full rights to participate in the child (ren)’s school activities. Parents or guardians of students who have court orders that limit or prevent access to school records or the child(ren) shall provide a **certified copy** of the order to school officials.

As per new Pinellas County Board Policy:

In the event that the school receives conflicting direction from divorced or separated parents concerning a student, the school may rely on the direction of the parent identified by the following criteria, which are listed in order of priority:

First, the parent who is designated in a parenting plan or other Florida court order as having either educational decision-making authority or sole parental responsibility over the student; or

Second, if both parents are designated as educational decision-makers with shared parental responsibility, the parent who resides at the address specified in the parenting plan or other Florida court order as the address to be used for school assignment purposes; or

Third, if no such parenting plan or order exists or no such address is specified, the parent who resides at the address used by the District for student assignment purposes; or if this address cannot be ascertained, the parent who enrolled the student.

Unless otherwise prohibited, school records, newsletters and report cards will be shared with both parents.

### **DISCIPLINE**

At the beginning of the school year, each parent has access to a virtual copy of the “Code for Student Conduct,” which has been adopted by the Pinellas County School Board and can be found at online by visiting <https://www.pcsb.org/code>. Discipline at Forest Lakes will be administered according to this code. We need your cooperation in maintaining good discipline in the school.

### **Dolphin Fun Run**

The PTO sponsors this “walk-a-thon” to raise money to support school and classroom activities. Students will walk to collect pledges and then walk during the day. Parents are encouraged to participate. Prizes will be awarded for this event that not only raises money for the school but also encourages fitness. We appreciate your support for this once-a-year fundraiser.

### **DRESS CODE FOR STUDENTS**

The student “Code of Student Conduct” adopted by the Pinellas County School Board, states the dress code for all students in Pinellas County Schools. Just a reminder that no clothing shall be worn which displays alcohol, tobacco, drugs or advertising for such products. **Hats/bandanas are not allowed except during PE.** We strongly encourage students to wear tennis shoes/sneakers. Please refer to the dress code should you have any questions regarding student dress.

### **EMERGENCY PLAN**

Forest Lakes has a comprehensive plan for students and staff in the event of a disaster such as tornado or fire. Safe areas have been identified for students to go in the event of a tornado warning and severe weather drills are practiced with students twice a year. Fire drills are held monthly. Bus drills are conducted twice yearly. Active threat drills are conducted quarterly. In the event of an emergency, our school’s reunification location is at the SPC Tarpon Springs campus.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an important part of the child’s school year. They are an extension of the school curriculum and can be very worthwhile learning experiences.

Permission forms will be sent home prior to the trip. These must be signed and returned by the **Due Date** in order for the child to participate in the trip.

School buses are used for most local field trips. Students are assessed a fee to cover the cost of transportation. Although we will make every effort to do so, **it is not always possible to guarantee refunds for students unable to attend field trips.** In the rare event that we need to use parent vehicles for field trips, drivers for field trips must fill out an insurance form. This form will be kept on file with the classroom teacher for one year.

All volunteers who attend field trips **must** be registered volunteers with Pinellas County. This **must** be done in the front office **three weeks** prior to the field trip.

### **FLOWERS/BALLOONS**

In order to maintain an academic focus, we request that flowers and balloons not be sent to students at school. They will not be delivered to classrooms, rather they will be held in the front office until dismissal.

### **GRADING SCALE**

The grading scale for Third through Fifth grade students is:

A = 90 - 100

D = 60 - 69

B = 80 - 89

F = 0 - 59

C = 70 - 79

### **HEALTH/NUTRITION**

According to the Health Department, students are **NOT** allowed to bring home-baked goods to school to share with their class. Only commercially prepared food is allowed and then only for the three approved events each year. The Department of Education guidelines on nutrition have put an end to the birthday cupcake/cookie celebrations, whether in the classroom or cafeteria. Grade levels will determine the three approved events for the year where “foods of minimal nutritional value” may be served and the teachers will let parents know the dates of those events.

### **HEAD LICE**

When a child is determined to have head lice, the child is removed from the classroom, the parent is called to pick up the child, a notice goes home to all of the members of the class asking parents to do a check and the plant operators clean the classroom. If your child is found to have head lice, the child may not return to school until he/she is **nit-free**. Please accompany your child when he/she returns to school as he/she will be checked in the office. If nits are still present, the child will be sent home and will not be allowed to return until they are nit-free.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework is given at the discretion of the teacher. The homework will be at an appropriate level for each child. If you wish to pick up homework for a child who is absent, please notify the office at the beginning of the day and pick it up in the office at the end of the day.

### **ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL**

Students are not to bring candy, radios, electronic devices or toys to school. **Pocket knives, toy guns or any other items that could cause injury are not allowed and can be subject to school suspension. (see code of conduct)** Administration/teachers may take these items and hold them for parents to pick up. Please review the Pinellas County Schools code of conduct for additional information. If you think it ought not to come to school, you're probably right in keeping it at home.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

All items found should be turned in at the school office. Check with the office promptly for any lost articles. Unclaimed items are donated to social service agencies at the end of each semester. **Please mark your child's name on coats, sweaters and lunch boxes to help identify them.**

### **LUNCH AND BREAKFAST**

During the 2023-2024 school-year, there will be free breakfast and lunch for all students. However, if students would like to purchase a la carte items, money can be applied to <https://www.myschoolapps.com/>. Students are welcome to bring their lunch or select a lunch from the cafeteria.

### **MEDICATION**

**We are not permitted to administer any internal medication without completion of Administration of Medication card (blue or orange form). All medication must be kept in the school clinic. No medicines such as aspirin, Tylenol, cough drops, throat lozenges, etc. should be put in the child's lunch box.**

The principal or a school staff member designated by the principal may administer medication to children during the school day only when:

(1) The medication is brought to school **by the parent** in a prescription container and the parent has filled out the appropriate blue Administration of Medication card which may be obtained from the school office. The following information must be on the prescription label:

- a. Child's name
- b. Physician's name
- c. Time medication is to be administered
- d. Name and amount of medication to be administered
- e. All information is legible

(2) Over the counter medication, including cough drops, may be administered only if the orange Administration of Medication form has been completed, **signed by the physician** and is on file in the school office. The school nurse will be going to classrooms for medication administration. The office is not allowed to give students their medication at school if they have forgotten to take it at home, unless they have a signed permission slip on file. Our school nurse will periodically review forms and contact parents regarding the child.

### **PARENT CONCERNS/QUESTIONS**

If parents have questions regarding classroom procedures, discipline, or academic progress, the classroom teacher should be contacted through a conference, note or phone message. Specialists (art, music, PE) are also available to assist parents with their concerns.

### **PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

The PTO's mission is to promote the education and welfare of all Forest Lakes Elementary students.

We hope everyone will join this group in an effort to improve the educational opportunities for our children. Membership dues are \$5.00. PTO is active in providing supplementary materials and supplies to the teachers for use with the FLE students. PTO also assists with special recognition of students, parents, teachers and volunteers.

### **2023-2024 PTO OFFICERS**

President	Beth Cline
Vice President of Fundraising	Kristina Baillie
Vice President of Programming	Brittany Tarver
Treasurer	Adelle Tucker
Secretary	Kelly Graber
Teacher Liaison	Stacey Rutledge

### **P.I.E. (Partners In Education)**

Parents and/or businesses have the opportunity to adopt a classroom and/or program at FLE. The donation is used by teachers to supplement their classroom needs. Please see the brochure in the first day packet or contact Mrs. Graber, the Family and Community Liaison, at 813-891-0785 if you are interested in this program. Funds not spent by the end of the year will be transferred to a general PIE fund to benefit the entire school.

### **POLICY MANUAL**

The Pinellas County Schools are governed by a Policies and Procedures Manual. You are welcome to review this manual at any time in our library information center. It will inform you of the rules and regulations of our school system.

### **PROMOTION - RETENTION POLICY**

Parents are notified, by the end of February, if a child is being considered for retention. A conference should be scheduled at that time to discuss the child's educational plan for the remainder of the year.

A committee (Principal, Assistant Principal, Guidance Counselor and Classroom Teacher) will meet at the end of the year to make retention decisions. The following factors will be considered:

- (1) Standardized test scores.
- (2) Daily performance in class.
- (3) Retentions in previous years.
- (4) Involvement in special programs.

Parents will be contacted after the Retention Committee meets.

### **PLANNERS**

All students will be utilizing student planners this year. Parents are encouraged to review these planners daily with their child.

### **RAINY DAYS**

Please be sure that your children know what to do at dismissal times on rainy days. If dismissal will be delayed or altered due to weather, a school messenger will be sent.



## **RECORDS**

Parents and guardians of students attending any state or local educational agency, program or institution, preschool through higher education, have the right to “inspect and review” all records and data directly related to their children under the age of eighteen. This may be done by contacting the school principal and setting a date and time for an appointment.

PUBLIC LAW 93-380-PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD-6GX52-8.06.

## **REPORT CARDS    ELEMENTARY (Grades K-5) STUDENTS**

Report cards for students grades K-5 will be issued four times annually at approximate nine week intervals. This report will show your child’s progress in relation to his ability and in relation to other children.

Students in grades 3-5 who receive no grade lower than a “B” in the academic subjects shall have their names entered on the ***Honor Roll***, and students who receive all “A’s” in the academic subjects shall have their names entered on the ***Principal’s List***. These students must also achieve all “E’s, V’s or S’s” in grades for conduct, work habits and effort, physical education, art and music.

The dates on which report cards will be sent home are:

1<sup>st</sup> Marking Period - Report Cards October 26, 2023

2<sup>nd</sup> Marking Period - Report Cards January 18, 2024

3<sup>rd</sup> Marking Period - Report Cards March 28, 2024

4<sup>th</sup> Marking Period - Report Cards May 29, 2024

Parents will be given access to PCS Portal to monitor their child’s academic progress throughout each grading period.

## **SAFETY PATROL**

Fifth grade students assist students and teachers in following safety rules around the school. Students are expected to follow the safety rules emphasized by the patrols.

## **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The School Advisory Council is a resource to the school and serves as an advisory to the principal. The function of SAC is to provide parents, citizens and teachers an opportunity to actively participate in the development of educational priorities, assessment of the school’s needs and identification of local resources.

SAC is composed of parents, teachers and community members. Parent members of SAC are elected in the spring. Teacher representatives are elected by the faculty. For further information about vacancies, please contact the SAC Chairperson. All interested parents are welcome to attend the SAC meetings. Dates will be posted on the school website.

### **SCHOOL COUNSELOR**

The counselor at Forest Lakes works with students individually and in small groups to assist them with difficulties that are interfering with their learning. Classroom guidance lessons, consultation with parents and staff, and referring children with specific needs to other resources within the community are also the responsibility of the guidance counselor.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are the property of the state and are on loan to children. Children are expected to use them and care for them properly. Textbooks are one form of a variety of materials used by the teachers at Forest Lakes Elementary to meet the educational needs of our students. Trade books, kits, models, library books, reference materials, newspapers, magazines, computer on line services, globes, AV materials, audio recordings, laser disks, software, maps, globes, teacher and county developed units and workbooks are examples of other instructional materials used to successfully meet the needs of our students. Any lost or damaged textbooks must be paid for in the school office.

### **T-SHIRT DAY**

Each Friday is school spirit day when students and faculty are encouraged to wear Forest Lakes Elementary T-Shirts

### **VISITORS/SECURITY**

All visitors are required to **sign-in and out at the front office** when visiting the school. Please make sure you come to the office with a valid Florida Driver's License. We utilize the Badge Pass Technology Security System and print your visitor's badge after screening. If you wish to visit your child's classroom, please call at least 24 hours in advance to make arrangements. Preschool children are not permitted to visit classrooms during regular school sessions.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

We **must** require that all volunteers complete a registration form **each** year prior to any volunteering in the school. This requirement is for the safety of our students.

Many parents and other members of our community provide a valuable service to the school by volunteering as tutors, classroom aides, clinic aides, etc. If you feel that you could help, please register as a volunteer with Kelly Graber. Kelly Graber can be reached at [graberk@pcsb.org](mailto:graberk@pcsb.org). **Please note that School Board policy does not permit volunteers to be accompanied by preschoolers during school hours.** An exception is made for social events and orientations. For questions about volunteering, please contact your child's teacher, or our Front Office at 813-891-0785.