

Friendship Montessori School

What to Know Before the First Day (updated 8/21)

Changes due to COVID-19 are printed in red.

PRIMARY AND PRE-PRIMARY

MASKS. Until we feel safe (based on guidelines provided by the CDC, MSDE and Kent County Health Dept.) to stop the wearing of masks inside the building, we will continue their use. The children will wear them when not eating or resting. They will not be worn for our outside times. On average, this means approximately 3.25 cumulative hours of mask wearing for Pre-Primary and 3.75 for Primary.

Each child needs two clean masks at the start of the day, preferably ones that they like. I know it is pricey, but if you want to arrive with five masks on Monday, we can send them home as they are used, then you won't have to replenish until the next week. These would be your Plus 1 as your child will arrive wearing a mask. Or you can pack a clean one in a plastic bag or container each day. Soiled masks will be sent home daily for washing.

PRIMARY CHILDREN ONLY need a zippered pouch (such as one for pencils) hooked onto the outside of their backpacks. This will be to hold their clean masks, allowing them to get a fresh one if needed during the day.

Families will commit to following the protocols in the COVID Contract (currently being updated due to Covid uptick in Kent and Queen Anne's Counties) regarding testing after possible exposure especially after travel, quarantine, and social distancing.

WE NEED LOTS OF FORMS: (new Students) Health Inventory, Emergency Card, and Immunization record. Your doctor can complete the Lead Level Blood Test results in the health inventory OR on the separate form. Despite what the form says, ALL students, regardless of where they live (some zip codes for "hot spots" are indicated) are now required to have the blood test done. A baseline is usually done at the two-year old well-child visit, and then again, a few years later. Asthma, Seizure and Severe Allergy Medical forms are available to those who need them; if they do not apply to your child, we do not need the papers. It is a good idea to print out a copy of the Authorization to Administer Medication form to have in your child's file at the doctor's office in case they need prescribed medicine to be administered at school at some point during the year. Please be sure you have signed each form where indicated. Parent Handbooks, finalized school calendars, snack calendars and suggestion list, and permission slips for: field trips (if allowed this year), use of photos, and application of sunscreen and insect repellent will also be in your child's cubby at the Open House.

Please complete and bring in your part of the Health Inventory and ask the Doctor's office staff to complete their part based upon your child's last well-child appointment. You can then have them update it at the next appointment. We also need a copy of the Immunization Record (see below.) I know some doctors' offices make you wait for these, so I would suggest you drop them off and pick them up again. FMS does not have a FAX (nor do we want one.) Filling out health forms for school is a normal request to make of a pediatrician's office; don't be afraid to ask.

FMS requires all students to be fully vaccinated (of course, not referring to COVID 19 here) to attend School. This was a decision that was discussed and thought out carefully. It is not our desire to exclude families, but the common good outweighs all else. School will need a current copy of the immunization form prior to the first day of attending. During the course of the year, if your child receives more immunizations at well-child visits, please ask the doctor's office for a fresh copy of the form so we can update the file. Parents may not pencil in the information as was once allowed by the State. If your child is behind on any immunizations due to being born pre-maturely or because of allergies or medical issues, the School requires a written explanation from the doctor as to why the shots were delayed and when they will take place.

(Returning students) The State is now requiring health inventories (and immunization records, as seen above) be updated yearly. Emergency cards can be rewritten, or simply reviewed and updated on Visit Day.

We like to have a **questionnaire** completed for each new student and those returning after a year's break during 2020-21 COVID. Have fun with your answers!

On our website, you will find a calendar and the most updated forms required by the State. You will receive a monthly snack calendar by cubby mail. Newsletters will be emailed to you as the year progresses. For the first one, I will ask that parents tell me that they received it, so I will know I have the correct email addresses.

You will be asked, during the first week of school, to check your listing once more for the Class Directory. A hard copy will be shared afterward.

Please complete a field trip permission slip (you will be notified of each trip in advance) **no trips will be taken until it is safe to do so**, and a photo permission slip.

YOUR CHILD SHOULD HAVE A LUNCH BOX WITH NAME CLEARLY PRINTED ON THE OUTSIDE: PLEASE avoid lunchboxes that have pictures of fighting and weapons. Pack whatever your child enjoys, keeping an eye on healthy choices. Food to be heated should be in microwave-safe containers (label these as well.) The school will provide low-fat milk at lunch, or you may send a beverage (no soda, avoid 10% fruit drinks with added sugar and color—they tend to make children jittery.) If you include a dessert, please limit it to one; do not send candy, marshmallows, fruit roll-ups, Jell-O, or gummy anythings. Although the children can hardly believe it, at school cereal bars, protein bars, granola bars and most trail mixes and yogurt (especially the colorful kind that comes in tubes) are considered dessert. Teachers will check that the children have eaten enough of their "healthy, help-you-grow foods" before okaying dessert. No need for silverware or cold packs; we have it covered. Peanut butter and nuts are allowed in your child's lunch and will be unless we have a severe allergy issue in the classroom.

Some children enjoy having a photograph of their parents or the whole family in their lunchboxes. If you send one, laminate it or put it in a little plastic bag so it can be wiped clean. Lunch box notes, such as: "I love you!" and "Have a super day!" are also popular.

Pre-Primary children can request water anytime during the day, and a teacher will provide it. This helps keep the water dispenser clean while also reinforcing social graces. Primary children usually help themselves to water, but that is not allowed right now. Please send your PRIMARY child with a reusable, insulated water bottle, clearly labelled. The bottles will be kept in the children's cubbies. Teachers will fill them as needed throughout the day. Please choose one that is manageable for your child, and not too likely to spill. We will offer freer access to the water cooler ASAP.

CHILDREN DO NOT TRAVEL LIGHT; THEREFORE, A BACKPACK OR TOTE BAG IS A GOOD IDEA. A comfortable and reasonably sized backpack encourages independence and responsibility. Backpacks with wheels do not fit into the cubbies. **Children in both classrooms should have a backpack for their lunchbox and whatever else. Remember, at least for the start of the year, parents will not be going in and out of the building.**

WE GO OUTSIDE A LOT; THEREFORE, SUNSCREEN and INSECT REPELLANT is good to keep on hand. We recommend you apply sunscreen before school begins. If you would like it re-applied during the day, you need to sign a consent form and provide us with the sunscreen, labeled. Be sure it has not expired. Lotion type sunscreen that is rubbed on is preferred to spray kind which may trigger asthma attacks. You may also opt for teachers to apply the school-provided sunscreen and insect repellent.

REGARDING SCHOOL CLOTHING: Children should wear clothes that are comfortable and not family heirlooms. Avoid belts, suspenders, leotards, onesies, and any accessory that discourages the child's independent use of the toilet. Elasticized waistbands are the easiest for young friends who wait until the last second to get to the bathroom. As your child becomes more comfortable with self-care, more intricate closures can be introduced.

Avoid long dresses and skirts; they are a trip hazard!

FMS encourages the children to treat each other gently and kindly. It is one reason we do not allow war-play. Please keep this in mind when selecting clothes for school. Tee shirts with Super heroes and all their weaponry, pirates with cutlasses, skulls and crossbones, Turtles who fight, Star War beings and Spiderman images do not help maintain an atmosphere of peace and are therefore not to be worn to school. Please respect this rule and have issues resolved before arriving at school.

Rubber-soled shoes should be sturdy and safe for active play. No clogs, flip flops, Crocs, or shoes with high heels. Sandals must have an ankle strap. The most common accident on the playground occurs when children trip out of slip-on shoes that are too big. Cowboy/girl boots make for sweaty feet and really hurt if your child accidentally steps on someone's fingers, therefore they are not appropriate for school wear. Socks help keep many shoes from painfully rubbing and should be worn. All Primary children should be able to put on their own shoes; we will assist with tying.

Children are welcome to keep a pair of slippers, soft shoes, or Crocs in their cubbies to be worn inside the building. Sturdier footwear is needed for outside play.

All children need to keep a pair of rain boots at school to wear on muddy days. If it is not raining hard, we will go out. Put a name on the boots, please!

Some children like to keep a sweater in their cubbies in case the air conditioner gives them a chill.

PUT YOUR CHILD NAME ON EVERYTHING OR YOU MAY NEVER SEE IT AGAIN. When school starts, the Pre-Primary friends don't really know the difference between: "your cubby" and "a cubby", so things make the rounds. In Primary, the cubby area is a place for hurried movements (we don't know why) and things float, slide and plop onto the floor. Labeling helps everything go home with the right person.

HOW WE ADDRESS TRANSITION OBJECTS: We are aware of the importance of transition objects for some children. We want your child to feel comfortable here, but we also emphasize that the way we do things at school may be different from home routines. Transition items are

to be left in the cubby rather than travel the classroom with your child. S/he may visit the cubby as needed throughout the day to touch and be comforted by the object. If it is a nap-appropriate object such as a blanket or stuffed animal, it can be cuddled during quiet time. (One creative Mom cut a section of a treasured blanket into hand-sized hearts. If this child got tearful during the day, he would ask for a heart from home.) Please be sure take the transition object with you at dismissal. Of course, we have, and always will, meet you at school after-hours to enable you to retrieve a momentarily forgotten but now *really needed* transition object. Still, you know you don't want to make that call.

Pacifiers are okay for nap time in Pre-Primary. Please have your designated pacifier in a labeled plastic bag or container. We do not use bottles at any time.

SHOW AND TELL: Your child can bring a toy (no war toys), book, nature object, etc. on their assigned snack day. Please encourage your child to share something simple and that they are comfortable having other children handle. Lego creations are a teacher's worst nightmare for Show and Tell; the structures are almost guaranteed to fall apart and need rebuilding each time they change hands. Show and Tell should not last 45 minutes! We know it is hard but try to talk your children out of bringing remote control vehicles, fragile Lego creations, and electronics.

******PRIMARY CLASS******

YOUR CHILD NEEDS A COMPLETE CHANGE OF CLOTHES, LABELED: underpants, socks (not tights, please) shirt, skirt/pants that fit and are seasonally appropriate. Some children keep an extra pair of sneakers as well. Everything must be labeled with your child's name. If your child is wearing different clothes at dismissal than he was at arrival, you can figure you will need to replenish the clothes box the next day. School will provide a bin for your child's extra clothes. If your child is a shirt sucker, please try to move past it. Send in several spares because no one can be exposed to a spitty shirt (oh, the language of Early Childhood Education!)

QUIET TIME: A few children in Primary object to "nap" because they are "too old" hence, Quiet Time. Each child will be assigned a cot for the year. Send a twin size flat sheet (we will fold to fit), and, if desired, a **travel-size pillow (not a bed pillow)** a **small blanket (not a sleeping bag)**, and a **quiet**, soft, stuffed animal or baby doll (no purses, squeakers, puppets, talking, batteries, leashes, changes of outfits, light up capabilities, etc.) bedding will be folded each day and placed inside a school provided storage bag to keep it from touching other bedding when cots are stacked. Please label all bedding. It will be sent home monthly or more often if needed.

PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD SELECT A POCKET FOLDER to take home important work papers, drawings, letters, etc. Please go through it regularly and respectfully. Ask questions!

KINDERGARTNERS: K's need a **wide ruled notebook**, spiral or composition style, which lies flat when opened for their journal entries. Pages that tear out easily with frantic erasing can make a frustrating writing experience worse. Students should have two different-looking pocket folders, one labeled "Daily Work" and the other "Kindergarten - Leave at School." We will explain why in the fall.

******PRE-PRIMARY CLASS ******

THESE STUDENTS WILL NEED AT LEAST TWO COMPLETE CHANGES OF CLOTHES, LABELED: more for children starting to use the potty. Don't forget the extra shoes. Please bring a Rubbermaid type box just large enough to hold the extra clothes. Label the box and everything in it. These extra clothes will stay at school. We will remind you to replenish them

Gum	Tablets, Kindles, Cell phones
Money	Loose, temporary tattoos
Sippy cups/bottles	Outside toys (unless being donated to FMS)

Slap bracelets (I know, you just have to trust us)

Hand sanitizer unless donated to class

No Sunglasses, please, unless medically required. We have seen children's sunglasses break and cut skin in playground accidents. We much prefer sun/baseball hats which will help keep the sun off their faces too.

If you find some interesting, new objects in your child's pockets or backpack after school, please check with a teacher to see if they belong to a work. Our materials are attractive and sometimes hard to resist. We will not be upset that your child has "borrowed" something; we will be very happy to get it back.

Please cull through your child's backpack in the morning to be sure priceless artifacts are not being spirited out of your home, and in the evening when your child may have exciting work and creations to share.

It seems like a lot, and it is! But we will follow up with helpful reminders!

Questions?? Feel free to ask!