

Questions Frequently Asked by Kindergarten Parents

Fox Mill Elementary School

How are kindergarten classes formed?

Class assignments are made by the principal and assistant principal, in consultation with the staff from that grade level. Fox Mill staff strives to create balanced classrooms that will provide a positive atmosphere for the children. Some of the things taken into consideration are the group's ages, genders, and special needs, if any, known at the time of class placement.

Can I request a specific teacher?

Requests for specific teachers will not be considered. However, if you feel your child would benefit from a particular teaching style, please put this information in writing and direct it to the principal no later than August 1st. Your input will be considered when placing your child.

How are twins, triplets and other multiples placed in classes?

Parents may request that the students be placed in the same classroom or in separate classrooms.

When will I find out which teacher my child has?

An open house is held just before the first day of school. Students and parents will have the opportunity to meet their teachers and see their classrooms at that time.

How many students are in a kindergarten class?

Currently as many as 29 students may be assigned to a classroom. Each kindergarten class will have a teacher and an instructional assistant assigned to the students.

What is the school routine for kindergarten students for the first week?

Kindergarteners gather in the gym in the morning. Children grades K-3 are welcome to wait in the gym as early as 15 minutes before school starts, when adult supervision is in place. We ask that parents do not wait in the gym with the children. Students are walked back to the classrooms by the teachers or instructional assistants. When students are more acclimated to the routines, they are escorted by our patrols, older students who have proven they are responsible leaders in the school community.

A name tag for your child will be available for your pick-up at the open house. This will identify your child as a kindergartener.

Depending on the arrival time of the school buses here at school, students coming in on the buses will go into the gym to wait for dismissal to the classrooms or proceed directly to their classrooms.

A piece of the registration packet is a form that includes dismissal information. The form will ask how your child will go home, i.e., parent or sibling pickup, Fairfax County school bus (including bus no.), commercial daycare bus. This will give the teachers the information they need to guide your

child safely at the end of the day. After this routine is established, if there is any temporary change to this schedule, you will need to send a hand-written note to the teacher in the morning, regarding the change.

Kindergarteners who ride school buses will be escorted to the buses by our school patrols. Bus riders will have their backpacks tagged with yellow duct tape. This identifies the students for the bus drivers. Kindergarteners must be met by a parent, daycare provider, designated adult or a sibling in 7th grade or higher. If the child is not met, they will be returned to the school.

During the first days of school, extra staff members are assigned to be on the lookout for students who may need assistance. Please encourage your child to speak up if they feel unsure about what they should be doing or where they need to go.

School Hours:

Currently, our school hours are 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Bell schedules are subject to change, however. School hours will be confirmed in our August letter to parents.

Whom do I notify if my child will be absent or late?

If a child will be absent, the parent should call the attendance line (703) 262-2727 and leave a message indicating the child's first and last name, grade, teacher(s), and reason for the absence. Parents may also register an absence by filling out an attendance form on the school homepage. Parents may also notify the teacher and the office if they know that the child will be absent or tardy on a specified date(s). While it is a courtesy to inform the teacher, it is a necessity to inform the office.

If the school is not notified about a child's absence by approximately 10 a.m., an email and a phone call to the parent will be generated by the attendance system. Please be sure to respond to those messages so your child will not be considered unexcused. Remember, even though you may have communicated with the teacher that your child will not be attending, the office must be notified as well.

If a student is going to be tardy, the parent should call the attendance line (703 262-2727) or the regular phone line (703 262-2700) or report it online on our homepage.

What do I do if my child needs to leave early?

If a child needs to leave early, the parent should send a note to the teacher. It is suggested that the parent also call the office approximately 10-15 minutes prior to the pick-up time. When the parent comes to pick up the child, the child will be called to the office, or may already be on the way to the office if the reminder phone call was made. Parents will sign children out using the check-out system.

Will my child ride the school bus to and from school?

Bus transportation is available for students who live more than 1 mile from their neighborhood school. A bus schedule will be available just before school begins.

What supplies will my child need?

A supply list will be posted on our homepage www.fcps.edu/FoxMillES (in late spring). It will also be available for pick-up in the main office. Kindergarten teachers request that students bring a backpack large enough to carry library books, school papers, a lunch box (if applicable) and a jacket.

Please note: Kindergarten supplies (pencils, glue, crayons, etc.) are collected by the teacher so that they can be used by the whole classroom community as needed. Therefore, please stick to the brands on the list and don't spend time picking out special designs and styles.

What will my child's daily schedule look like?

Please refer to the PowerPoint presentation which is posted on our website

Can I get the names & phone numbers of the other children in my child's class for play dates/parties?

The school is not permitted to release this information. Room parents can also ask parents in the class to voluntarily provide email addresses and phone numbers and disseminate these to the class.

How does my child buy lunch?

Lunch can be purchased every day. Students eat in the cafeteria. The menu is sent home in the First Day Folder. It can also be viewed on the FCPS website: www.fcps.edu. The menu shows the various daily food options.

While students may use to cash to pay for lunches, this is discouraged. Rather, parents can either send in a check made payable to Fox Mill Food Services to load money onto a student's food account. Parents can also visit mylunchmoney.com to load money onto the student's account. (Note: In order to access mylunchmoney.com, a parent must have access to the student's FCPS ID number. This can be obtained by calling the school office once the student registration has been processed.)

Lunch accounts can be set up as a "lunch only account" (student can purchase a complete lunch only) or "cash account" (student can purchase lunch as well as additional a la carte items). The cash account would also be a good choice if your child will be bringing lunch but would need to purchase just a drink. It is suggested that all students have a lunch account set up to cover the possibility of a forgotten lunchbox.

Students access their lunch accounts by entering a pin number into a pin pad at the register. Cafeteria staff, teachers, instructional assistants, and parent volunteers help students do this until they are proficient.

This year, lunch prices were \$3.50 per meal. (Meal prices are subject to change each school year.) Meals include milk, an entrée, and two side dishes. Other items are available a la carte. When a child's account has only a few lunches left, a reminder sticker will be given.

Please note that lunches brought from home should not include glass bottles or containers. Students are not permitted to drink soda for lunch. There are no vending machines for students in the building.

Applications for free or reduced-price lunch are mailed to homes and are also available at the school throughout the year. All requests are confidential. The applications must be completed each year.

What about food allergies?

Allergy information is provided by parents on the Student Health Form. This information is then communicated to our cafeteria manager and teachers by the public health nurse who reviews the form. However, if a student has serious food-related allergies, parents are encouraged to share this information directly with the classroom teacher and cafeteria manager. Direct sharing helps all parties understand the necessary food restrictions and how an allergic reaction manifests itself.

The cafeteria is not nut free, but there is a table designed as "nut free" for students with nut allergies. Again, while information about allergies is communicated to teachers by the public

health nurse, it is also helpful for parents to inform teachers about allergies and whether a child needs to sit at the nut free table.

Please alert your child's teacher if your child should not eat treats (such as for birthdays) brought in by others. In such cases, parents may send in alternative snacks.

Can I occasionally eat lunch with my child?

Yes. Check with the office to determine what time your child's class arrives in the lunchroom. When you arrive at school, please remember to sign in at the front office before going to the lunchroom. If you wish to purchase lunch, you may do so, or you are welcome to bring in your own lunch.

How do I reach my child's teacher if I have questions or concerns?

The most efficient way to reach the teacher is to either send an email or send in a note with your child. Telephone calls will be directed to the teacher's voicemail. The teachers will do their best to respond promptly. However, their classroom duties will always take priority so they may not be able to return messages the same day they are received.

How does the school/teacher communicate with parents about what is happening at Fox Mill?

Every Thursday, each child will bring home a big white envelope. This "Thursday folder" contains samples of the child's work, as well as information about the school's upcoming activities, communications from Fairfax County Public Schools, monthly lunch menus, PTA flyers, and other items.* It is important that parents go through the information contained in the Thursday folder promptly and thoroughly. Parents should also sign the front of the envelope each week to show the teacher that they have reviewed the information and immediately return the envelope to school the next day in your child's backpack. Parents can use this envelope when they need to send notes to the teacher, provide checks (example, for lunches or field trips), return permission slips, and/or completed forms, etc. Also, make sure you activate your SIS Parent Account so that you can view information via Blackboard/FCPS 24-7 Learning : <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/technology/fcps-24-7-learning/parent-help>.

* Most PTA information is disseminated through our school's newsletter, "Fox Prints". You may subscribe to this weekly newsletter by visiting the PTA link on our homepage: <https://foxmilles.fcps.edu/>

How can I prepare my child for kindergarten?

You can visit our homepage in order to find many resources to help prepare your child for kindergarten.

Is there a list of child care resources?

The office keeps a list of places that provide before and after school care. Stop in and ask for a copy if you need care. The school does not research or make recommendations regarding any of these facilities. It is the parents' responsibility to decide if the childcare center is suitable for their child.