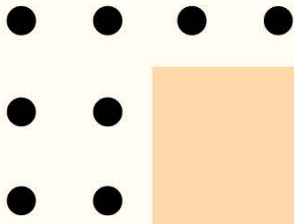
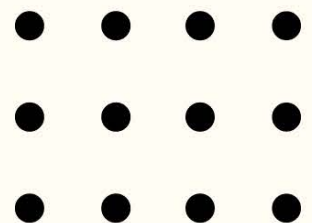


2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR



# *Kindergarten*

KICKOFF INFORMATION



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## Welcome from the Superintendent

Dear Families:

Welcome to Forest Hills Public Schools! We are glad you chose Forest Hills Public Schools as your school district for your child, and entrust us with the care of your child as they begin their educational journey. We do not take this trust lightly and rest assured, your child is in excellent hands. Our staff embraces every child as if they were their own. We know that the best learning takes place when students feel safe and loved. This and so much more, you will find here in every FHPS classroom.

Whether you are a new parent sending their first child off to kindergarten, or you have had a child start kindergarten before, this truly is an exciting time. As we embark on this educational journey together, remember that we are partners in the education process from the first day of school, to when your child crosses the stage to receive their FHPS diploma. We are preparing students for a lifetime of learning. Your educational journey in Forest Hills will take your child to amazing learning opportunities and they will truly achieve their greatest potential while in our care.

We know you probably have many questions about kindergarten, and we have created this booklet to help cover many common topics. If you still have questions after reviewing this information, we encourage you to contact your child's school. Our staff is ready to help make your child's transition to kindergarten a smooth, successful one.

The world of a kindergartner is a magical place. Their worlds bounce with excitement. Watch a five- or six-year-old go into a school building. They do not walk or saunter. They leap. They skip. They vibrate. They emanate the energy of life. They are not afraid to try new things: to explore; to imagine; to wonder; to ask questions. When I think of a new school year, I think of all the wonders that our teachers and staff bring to our students, and all the joys our students bring with them with an eagerness to learn.

As your child enters kindergarten we celebrate the cultivating of minds in our youth and the limitless possibilities that entering kindergarten brings. We look forward to welcoming your child with anticipation, enthusiasm, and love.

On behalf of Forest Hills Public Schools, welcome to kindergarten! I am confident that you and your kindergartner will have a bright and bountiful school year!

With deep respect and appreciation,

Dan S. Behm  
Superintendent



Dan Behm  
*Superintendent*

# Kindergarten Enrollment



## Step 1: Does your child meet the kindergarten age requirement?

A Michigan law amended the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1147), which changed the minimum age requirement for a child enrolling in kindergarten. Children must turn 5 years of age on or before September 1, in order to register for school. Children who turn 5 after September 1, and no later than December 1, may request entrance to kindergarten. A *waiver form may be found online at <https://www.fhps.net/documents/fhps-kindergarten-early-entrance-form.pdf> or by contacting the school office.*

## Step 2: Have you completed the pre-enrollment form?

If your child meets the kindergarten age requirement, then please complete the [online pre-enrollment form](#) for the upcoming school year, even if you do not have all of the documents and forms finished. This helps the district in its planning process.

## Step 3: Complete all of the enrollment documents and forms

The following forms must be completed in their entirety and are available online. If you are unable to access the Internet to obtain enrollment forms or need forms in a language other than English, please call the administration office, 616-493-8800.

1. [K-12 Enrollment Form](#)
2. [Health Appraisal](#) (with vision and hearing screening)
3. [FHPS Health History Form](#)
4. [FHPS Consent for Disclosure of Immunizations](#)
5. [Classroom Guidance/Prevention Education](#)
6. [Concussion Awareness](#)
7. [Request for Student Records Form \(if coming from another school's kindergarten program\)](#)
8. *In order to complete the enrollment process, the student's parent/guardian must also provide these required documents.*
  - a. Two Proofs of Residency in the Forest Hills Public School District
    - i. Lease Agreement (including the page with the landlord and tenant signatures)
    - ii. Mortgage Statement (within last month)
    - iii. City Assessor's Tax Statement (current year)
    - iv. Current utility bill or cable bill (within last month)
    - v. Notarized Affidavit of Residence if living in someone else's home/apt.
      1. This person's driver's license and two (2) proofs of their residence
      2. The parent must also provide two (2) proofs of their residence
9. For identification purposes only – A valid government-issued photo identification such as driver's license, state ID, or passport
10. Child's birth certificate



## 11. Immunization records

- a. [MDHHS – Vaccines Required for School Entry in Michigan](#)
- b. [Visit the Michigan Care Improvement Registry for information on how to obtain immunization records and additional information](#)

## 12. Vision and Hearing Screening *(required for kindergarten)*

FHPS will be hosting vision and hearing screenings in May and June by appointment only. Please visit our website [www.fhps.net](http://www.fhps.net) for dates, times, and locations.

## 13. Court documents, *if applicable (i.e. guardianship, foster care, etc.)*

## 14. Please have the following information with you as well:

- a. Emergency Contact Names/Phone Numbers
- b. Previous School Name/Address, Phone and Fax Numbers



## Step 4: Email, mail, or return the forms and documents to the school's registrar

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we are not allowing visitors in our schools. Please return the completed forms via email to the school your child will attend. If you need to call a school secretary or registrar, should you have questions, all school building phone numbers are listed on this [web page](#). The following is a list of our registrars at each elementary school.

Ada Elementary: [Joyce Bjork](#)

Ada Vista Elementary: [Sarah Daddio](#)

Collins Elementary: [Karin Moglia](#)

Knapp Forest Elementary: [Antoinette Tietema](#)

Meadow Brook Elementary: [Lisa Peabody](#)

Orchard View Elementary: [Kyla Cole](#)

Pine Ridge Elementary: [Patricia Bond](#)

Thornapple Elementary: [Maggie Schipper](#)

Print and complete the required forms listed above and return the completed forms via email to the school your child will attend. If you do not have a document scanner, please do the following:

- With an [Apple device, such as an iPhone or iPad, here is how you scan a document using your Notes section.](#)
- With an [Android device, here is how you scan a document using the Google Drive app.](#)

## Special Education Enrollment

In addition to the documents listed for all kindergarten enrollments, we encourage you to contact the school principal to help enroll your child who has additional needs. It is very helpful to have your child's last Individualized Education Plan paperwork as well as reports that were written at the time of your child's last evaluation. Arrangements can be made to copy those files in order for personnel to use them in creating the best placement for your child. For additional information about special education, qualifying for services, evaluations, and more please call the FHPS Special Education Office, 493-8660.



## Child's Health Information

Forest Hills Public Schools has a health and wellness coordinator on staff, Lisa Smith, RN. The goal of the health and wellness coordinator is to be an advocate for our students with any type of disease process or medical issue that needs to be addressed while at school. The coordinator works with schools to provide a safe and healthy school environment and offers education and guidance to school staff on issues related to school health. Please refer to our [website](#) for additional information. If you have specific health questions or concerns, please contact your child's school.



### Kindergarten Vision and Hearing Screening

Due to COVID-19 safety regulations, many area preschools were unable to offer these screenings. FHPS is offering free vision and hearing screenings to incoming kindergartners prior to summer. The location is at the Forest Hills Aquatic Center located at 660 Forest Hill Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546. Please check the website for dates and times and to preregister [online](#) for an appointment.

### Health Care Needs During the School Day: Emergency Action Plans

If your child has a medical condition such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, acute allergies (food, insect bites, animals), or a physical disability, and/or requires treatments or procedures during school hours, please inform a school staff member prior to the first day of school. An Emergency Action Plan is needed for those students with potential complications such as allergies, asthma, seizure disorder, or diabetes. The EAP must be signed by both the physician and the parent/guardian. There are specific action plans for specific conditions and are found online:

- [Allergy Action Plan](#)
- [Asthma Action Plan](#)
- [Seizure Action Plan](#)

### Allergies

If your child has an allergy, please complete the [Allergy Action Plan](#) found online. Similarly, we have a number of children throughout the school with serious food allergies. Nuts seem to be the most serious and prevalent allergy. We ask for your help when we have students with food-related allergies, since for some children, exposure to nuts poses a serious health risk. In fact, for some children the allergy is so severe that simply touching an exposed surface can lead to a dangerous reaction. If your child has an allergy, especially to a food-related item, please make sure to talk with the school staff and teachers as we partner with you to keep students safe. If there is a food allergy, such as a nut allergy in a classroom, teachers will take extra care when working with families on class parties and other school functions.



## Safety

Keeping our children safe while at school is paramount. We want to assure you that we do everything we can to keep children safe while in our care. Throughout the school year, we routinely conduct tornado, lockdown, and fire safety drills. Our teachers and staff have explicit roles and responsibilities when it comes to the safety of our students. In addition to safety drills occurring at school, if your child rides a school bus, our transportation department will also educate students on bus safety and hold bus safety drills. Finally, when visiting your child's school, all visitors must press a button to be allowed entrance into the main school office. Then you will check in with the school secretary and obtain a visitor badge, which must be worn, prior to entering the main school building.



## Dispensing Medicine at School

A [medication authorization form](#) must be completed by the student's health care provider and parent/guardian before any medication is administered by school personnel, or when permitted, self-administered by the student. The only medicines that can be carried and self-administered by students in grades K-6 are metered-dose inhalers and emergency injectable medications, if authorized in writing, by both the student's health care provider and parent/guardian. Any medicines, either prescription or over-the-counter, must be in their original container and must be brought to the school by a parent/guardian, not by the student. For additional information, please see the [guidelines for administering medication to students](#).

## What Happens When My Child Is Sick?

**When your child is ill, *please do not send them to school.***

Please call the school's attendance line and report that your child will be absent due to an illness. When calling the school's attendance line, please tell us the name of the student, what grade the student is in, who the student's teacher is, and please briefly tell us the symptoms. Before returning a student to school, they must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without medication.

Here are some additional points to keep kids healthy. Please consider these guidelines when deciding if your child is healthy enough to attend school:



## Does your child have a fever?



A child with a temperature of 100.4F or greater must be kept at home. Even in the absence of other symptoms, a fever is usually indicative of an infection, which could be contagious. Please do not give your child Tylenol or Ibuprofen to reduce the fever and then send them to school. If the fever is absent for 24 hours or more without the use of fever-reducing medication and your child feels well, they may return to school.

### Does your child have a rash?



Any rash that is undiagnosed needs to be examined by your health care provider before returning to school. If the rash is not contagious, your child may come back to school immediately. If contagious, please follow your provider's instructions as to when it is okay to return to school (a doctor's note is also appreciated). Normally, if the rash in the absence of fever and is not weeping (has crusted over) and can be covered, it is okay to be in school.

### Has your child been vomiting or having diarrhea?



Your child must stay at home until symptoms have resolved for 24 hours and they are tolerating a normal diet. Please remember to encourage good hand washing techniques to prevent the spreading of infection to other people.

### Does your child have a persistent cough or breathing difficulties?



These symptoms are best managed at home with close supervision by a parent and/or guidance from your health care provider.

### Does your child feel well enough to learn?



Sick children cannot function at their best, which can hinder their school performance. If sick, your child should stay home and become well-rested, so they can return to school as healthy and as soon as possible. Sending sick kids to school can delay their healing process, resulting in more school days with decreased academic performance. If your child says they do not feel well, please use your best judgment in determining if school is the best place for them on that given day. You know your child better than we do! Common colds with coughs and runny/stuffy noses can linger for a week or two, so typically children with these symptoms should be in school if no fever is present.

### What about the Coronavirus or COVID-19?



The district has protocols in place for the health and safety for students/staff to return to school in the fall.

### Does your child have lice?



Treatment and careful combing must be completed at home. Students may return once school personnel have determined there are no live lice and no nits within ¼ inch of the scalp are found.

### Other illnesses

If your child requires antibiotics to treat an illness, the child must be on the medication for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school (this includes skin infections, strep throat, and pink eye). If your child has been hospitalized, your doctor will inform you when they are ready to return to school. A doctor's note is required if any restrictions are needed. If you have questions or concerns about a specific situation, please contact the nursing office so we can assist you in making the best decision for your child!





## **What Happens If My Child Becomes Sick While at School?**

If your child comes to school sick or becomes ill at school, we will call you and ask that you pick up your child immediately. If we cannot reach you, we will call your emergency contact person to pick up your child. PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION IS ALWAYS UP TO DATE. If there is an extreme emergency regarding your child, 911 will be called.

## **Student Insurance Available**

Forest Hills Public Schools provides student medical insurance coverage for any student injured at school or during a school-related activity, including athletics. This coverage is secondary to any student or family medical insurance. In effect, the district's medical insurance will cover medical costs for school-related injuries that are not covered by the family's medical insurance as long as the injury falls within the range of coverage.

If a family wishes to improve upon the district's plan, additional options are available for individual purchase. All necessary information will be made available to students at the beginning of school. Any family wishing to subscribe should complete the form and return it to their school. To obtain the insurance form, please call your child's school.

# Transportation

## Riding a School Bus

The Forest Hills Public Schools' fleet of 80 buses is ready to serve our families and transport students safely to and from school every day. Families WILL receive communication before the start of school detailing bus route information, including bus stop location, bus number and arrival times. Please remember that during the first few weeks of school, arrival times may vary slightly as everyone is acclimated to their new schedules. We encourage you to make sure your child arrives to their bus stop at least five minutes prior to their designated bus time. Due to security reasons, we do not post bus stop locations and times on the district website or publish them for general use.



In our continuous effort as a school district to allocate financial resources to support quality instruction and to standardize transportation services across the district, we continue to adjust our routes. These small changes help our district allocate more money that goes directly back into your child's classroom. There are some neighborhoods where buses may make several stops within the neighborhood in the morning, but may have only one stop outside of the neighborhood in the afternoon.

Kindergartners are excited to ride a bus to and from school! We like their excitement, but we want to remind them that safety comes first. **Here are a few helpful bus hints:**

- Introduce yourself and your child to your bus driver.
- Make sure that your child recognizes his/her bus driver and bus number.
- Practice what to do if your child is unsure of which bus to take or if there is a substitute driver or substitute bus.
- Always make sure that your kindergartner has on his/her bus lanyard and/or backpack tag with bus identification. This is given to parents in August usually during our Kindergarten Ready-Set-Go! event.
- Children are permitted to ride their assigned bus only! Permission to ride an alternate bus for play dates is not allowed.
- We recommend that you establish school routines from day one. **Please consider sending your child to school on the school bus the very first day!**

## Versatrans e-Link

FHPS communicates bus stop information using the e-Link system. This secure link allows parents and guardians to view essential school bus route information. Our goal is to have bus information available at least one week prior to the start of school. E-Link provides parents and guardians with all the necessary information about their child's bus schedule. For additional information, including how to create an account and access your child's bus schedule, please visit our website at [www.fhps.net/departments/transportation](http://www.fhps.net/departments/transportation).

## Versatrans MyStop App

Versatrans MyStop App provides mobile access to bus information. With MyStop, parents and guardians know exactly where their child's bus is on the route and an estimated time of arrival (ETA) at their stop. The location of the bus is automatically updated to accommodate any delays. Update frequency is dependent on a user's data plan. The app is available for both iPhone and Android devices. When using the app, parents and guardians can choose to receive push

notifications alerting them to changes in their child's bus schedule. Links to the apps are available on our website at [www.fhps.net/departments/transportation](http://www.fhps.net/departments/transportation).

## Transportation Questions

If you do have questions or concerns about the bus, please use the following guidelines:

1. Contact your bus driver to share your concern or question.
2. If you need further assistance regarding a transportation-related issue or routing concern, please contact the Transportation Department.
3. If you are concerned that your child needs additional support with bus routines, let your bus driver know, and ask your child's teacher to assign a classmate to board the bus with him/her when departing from school.
4. Contact your school office with additional questions.



Finally, please remember that the safety of children is not only our priority, but we partner with you, as parents and guardians to ensure that your child is safely on their way to, and home from, their bus stop. We care for your child when they are on the bus, and it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to safely get their child to and from the bus stop each day.

**Should you have questions pertaining to bus travel and route information, please contact the Transportation Department, (616) 493-8785, or email: [transportation@fhps.net](mailto:transportation@fhps.net).**

## Car Line Drop-Off and Pick-Up

**Families are encouraged to use school buses as the main form of transportation to and from school beginning with the first day of school.** According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration:

- School buses are designed to be safer than passenger vehicles in avoiding crashes and preventing injury.
- School buses are the safest mode of transportation for getting children back and forth to school.
- School buses keep an annual estimated 17.3 million cars off roads surrounding schools each morning.

If you do decide to transport your child to and from school, please remember that the pick-up and drop-off areas can be very congested with traffic. Please make every effort to be on time to ensure a good start or end to the school day for your child. Alternate plans for transportation should be communicated in writing to your child's teacher with as much advance notice as possible. Permission in writing is required if someone other than a parent or legal guardian is picking up a student.



**When picking up or dropping off, children must enter and exit vehicles on the curbside only!** Children are not permitted to walk in front of, or behind vehicles. Please have the curbside seat of your car ready for your child to enter or exit to help keep this process safe.

Should you have specific questions pertaining to traffic flow and child safety during drop-off and pick-up, please contact the school office.

## Food Service

The Forest Hills Food Service Department is dedicated to serving nutritious and healthy food every day to nearly 10,000 customers. Approximately 56 percent of the products we purchase are locally grown and/or produced. In addition to the traditional way of paying for your student's lunch with cash or check, Forest Hills Public Schools offers another alternative where you can create an online student account and manage your child's lunch account from any web browser.

### First Few Weeks of School Lunch Tips

Lunch time for kindergartners can be fun and exciting! A child-friendly variety of items is available to all students daily beginning on the first day of school. Your child's teacher, along with the cafeteria staff, will help your child navigate his or her choices to ensure they have a positive lunch experience. Of course, you are always welcome to make a lunch of familiar items from home, but you may find that your child is excited to explore new food items from school. Whether your child eats hot or cold lunch, eating lunch and the social aspects of lunch are important parts of their day. Families can work with the child's teacher and cafeteria staff to help their child become acclimated to a hot lunch routine by learning how to go through the lunch line, use their meal card, purchase milk, and much more.



### Easy-to-Access School Menus

Forest Hills Public Schools, in partnership with Chartwells K12, uses Nutrislice to publish school menus to an interactive website. Families can view menu item descriptions and photographs, filter common food allergens, translate the menus into another language, view carbohydrate counts and calories, and much more.

It is easy to check out daily, weekly, and monthly lunch menus. The fastest way to access lunch menus is [online](#):

- Go to our website: [www.fhps.net](http://www.fhps.net).
- Click on the words "Food Service" at the top of the homepage.
- Then on the web page, download the "Interactive School Menu" app.

When viewing online menus, you can also print the month's menu by clicking on the printer icon located in the upper right-hand side of the menu. With the interactive school lunch menus, you are able to choose your child's school, and see what is available on the menu every day. You may also download a free app for a smartphone or mobile device to view menus when you are on the go. Links to these apps also are on our [food service web page](#).



### Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids

Each student that attends school all day is offered a school lunch. The elementary menu provides three choices each day. At least one choice per day will be vegetarian. Your student can expect to see a healthy variety of foods, meeting all USDA meal requirements. These include:

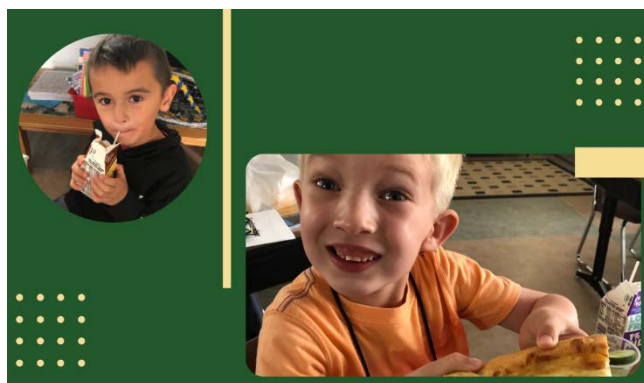
**Colorful fruits and vegetables** – We offer a large variety of nutrient-dense vegetables, including dark green, orange, and/or

starchy vegetables, as well as legumes. Colorful fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals important for growth and development during childhood. Each student is encouraged to take at least ½ cup of fruits and/or vegetables with his/her meal every day (per USDA meal requirements).

**Grains and proteins** – We offer a variety of whole grains on menus with items like whole grain pizza crust, rolls, muffins, pancakes, waffles, and cereal. Portions are age-appropriate, ensuring nutritionally-balanced meals that provide the right amount of energy from healthful food sources.

**Reduced fats** – We only use food products and ingredients that are trans-fat-free, reducing our students' risk of heart disease, high cholesterol, and other chronic diseases.

**Age-appropriate portions** – Meals are carefully planned to meet calorie and nutrient requirements for each age group.



We hope you will encourage your student to try new foods, including new fruits and vegetables! You are always welcome to join us at meal times to see our lunches for yourself!

## **School Food Allergies**

With the easy-to-access online lunch menu, you can view ingredients and filter menu selections by food allergies and sensitivities. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact the Food Service Department, 616-493-8774.

## **School Lunch Accounts and SchoolPay**

Forest Hills Public Schools uses an online program for families to keep track of a student's prepaid lunch account. Families can deposit funds into a student's account, monitor purchases made on the account and view account balances. Funds deposited are available for the student to use within a matter of minutes. This feature eliminates the need to send a check to school or worry about lost or forgotten lunch money.

The electronic payment system is called SchoolPay. SchoolPay handles all payments from one easy-to-use, fully self-service interface. You can access SchoolPay through the Parent Portal of PowerSchool. For additional information, including how to create an account, please visit our website [www.fhps.net/departments/food-service](http://www.fhps.net/departments/food-service).

If you are new to the online computer system, you will need your child's Student ID number. A child's student ID will be given to families once school starts. If you cannot access the online deposit website, you may always send a check to school with your student (please write "lunch money" and the student's name in the notes section of the check) in a sealed envelope, or make a deposit at the FHPS food service office, located at 160 Alta Dale Drive SE, Ada, MI 49301.



## **Meals Are Always Available**

We will always offer a meal to all students regardless of their lunch account balance. If a child's lunch account balance is zero or below, we will offer a child a meal; however, they will not be allowed to purchase any à la carte items.

## **Free or Reduced Priced Lunch Program**

If there is a need for financial assistance with the lunch program, please call the Food Service Department at (616) 493-8774 for CONFIDENTIAL help in applying for the free or reduced priced



lunch program or download the application that applies to your child's needs. You may download the application by visiting the district's [website](#) and clicking on "Food Service" at the top of the home page.

If your financial status has recently changed due to COVID-19, you may temporarily qualify for free or reduced-price meals for the first 30 days of the new school year. Visit [www.lunchapp.com](http://www.lunchapp.com) to fill out a confidential application. This will also qualify you to receive Pandemic Electronic Benefits for every child in your home ages 5-18. For more information, please visit the web page on [Michigan.gov](http://Michigan.gov).

You may also visit [www.lunchapp.com](http://www.lunchapp.com). Free or reduced priced lunch applications also are available in the school's office. All submitted applications must be approved by using state guidelines by FHPS food service staff. Please be aware that any benefits will begin only after your application is reviewed and approved. Please note that an application form must be completed every year for approval. Families will be responsible for any charges incurred before application approval.

### **Food Service Questions and Assistance**

Our ongoing goal is to provide fresh, nutritious food for our students. We focus on nurturing our students' well-being by preparing delicious and healthy meals they enjoy. Should you have questions or need assistance, please contact Sarah Hawkins, food service director, at (616) 493-8774 or email: [shawkins@fhps.net](mailto:shawkins@fhps.net).

### **Check our Website for Updated Information**

Please note that additional information about our food service program for the 2021-2022 school year will be communicated to families throughout the summer on our website and will be communicated in the fall in all of our information for back-to-school.

## Volunteering

To adhere to health and safety regulations during the 2020-2021 school year, no visitors were allowed in FHPS schools. This may be the same for the 2021-2022 school year. While we know parents want to be involved at schools, the health and safety of our students and staff remain the utmost importance.

We recognize that volunteers are an important part of our school community. We have a proud tradition of providing a wide variety of high-quality activities for students and families. Since many of our activities would not be possible without the involvement of family volunteers, we encourage family members to learn about the many opportunities to get involved in their schools. There are still ways to get involved and volunteer even while COVID-19 restrictions and precautions are in place. Please contact your child's school for additional information.



When we do have volunteers in our schools, we require volunteer parents and community members to apply for criminal background checks provided by the Michigan State Police through their Internet Criminal History Access Tool, or ICHAT. All individuals volunteering in our schools must complete a form to have a background check and any response will be kept confidential. You must complete a new volunteer consent form each year. This form may be obtained in the school office or found online.

Some of the ways you can volunteer are: help or assist in your child's classroom, be a guest reader, volunteer to help the teacher with centers or classroom preparation, sign up to be a room-parent to help coordinate classroom parties, become active in the school's Parent Teacher Organization and much more. Do not be afraid to say, "Yes" if someone asks for help! There are many hands-on activities and "behind-the-scenes" opportunities to help in numerous ways. Many hands make light work. Please check with your child's teacher as to ways you can volunteer and become involved in your child's school.

## Signing In/Out



We welcome and encourage family members to visit their children's school once COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted. Please check with your child's teacher for the best time to visit. When you arrive, you will have to press the "buzzer" in the school vestibule with a security camera to gain entrance. Then, be sure to sign in with the school secretary and secure a visitor's pass from the school office. For security reasons, we do not permit unauthorized visitors.

## School Counselors and Supporting Mental Health and Well-Being

Forest Hills Public Schools believes in helping the “whole” child succeed. Sometimes, a child may need some additional assistance and may require additional help. We are proud that we have a full team of individuals to help teachers and partner with families when additional help is needed. In FHPS, we have counselors, mental health liaisons, special education teachers, school psychologists, school social workers, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, teacher consultants, other related service providers and support staff. While most of these services require an



Individualized Education Plan or 504 Special Education Plan, one service that is available to *all* students is counseling.

We believe that the elementary school years set the tone for developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for our children to become healthy, productive teens. With a comprehensive developmental counseling program, counselors work as a team with the school, parents, and community to create a caring atmosphere whereby children’s needs are met through prevention and intervention.

### **Our elementary counselors:**

- Help all children.
- Help create a positive atmosphere at school.
- Welcome and support new students.
- Teach students how to be friends.
- Train all children to expect respect.
- Teach guidance lessons to entire classrooms.
- Will sometimes work with small groups of children with similar needs.
- Help children individually.
- Are resources for parents, teachers, and staff.

Some of the things kindergartners are taught during the school year are bully prevention, how to be a good friend, friendship skills, understanding feelings, personal safety, and much more.

We encourage you to reach out to your student’s teacher and/or school counselor if there is a particular matter of concern, and/or if you have any questions on how a school counselor can help.

Additionally, if you feel your student needs additional support or resources during the COVID-19 pandemic, the district has developed a web page to offer support and important links: [www.fhps.net/mental-health-and-well-being-support-and-social-emotional-resources/](http://www.fhps.net/mental-health-and-well-being-support-and-social-emotional-resources/).

# Communication

## Teacher/Family Communication

We firmly believe that you know your child best, which is why we feel your involvement in the kindergarten program is essential. Therefore, it is extremely important for us to develop an open and honest relationship with each of you from the start so that together we may support your child as best we can and help your child get the most out of their school experience. As many of you know, having conversations at drop-off, or pick-up can be quite difficult. This is a dilemma we have attempted to resolve by establishing a variety of ways we will communicate throughout the year.



Teachers work best by email. Please remember, however, that we are teaching during the day, so an email reply may not be immediate. Teachers may only check emails a few times during the school day. Another way to communicate an important message is by calling the school office, and the teacher will respond as soon as they can. Face-to-face communication also is important, but please arrange an appointment with the teacher ahead of time so that classroom instruction is not interrupted.

We encourage you to call or email at any time if you have any questions or have information to share. Again, you may call the school office and someone will take a message for the teacher. The teacher will return your call when it is a convenient time to do so during the school day.

Additionally, we know that kindergartners' minds are constantly going. They may not be the best avenue to use to communicate an important message. Most teachers will email classroom notes and newsletters, important classroom reminders, and share pictures of fun school events and learning activities that have occurred. Some teachers have created their own websites, with secured usernames and passwords, where they share information with parents and guardians in a secure manner. Teachers are also using Canvas, a learning management system to keep families informed. Additionally, always check your child's backpack for fliers or notes home from the teacher and/or school. Your child's teacher will tell you more about their preferred ways of communication.

We hope the use of these numerous communication modes will meet your family's needs and help us establish an ongoing, open dialogue. We are looking forward to having a relationship with you and are excited to share in this special time in your child's life.



## Principal/Family Communication

Just like teachers, our school principals understand the importance of communication and want to partner with you to make sure your student is growing in a nurturing educational environment and their school experience is a positive one. Principals are concerned about every child in the school's care and are here to help families in every way possible. They too can be contacted via email and by phone, and appointments may be made for a face-to-face meeting. Some principals have weekly newsletters, and some also use social media as a way to

communicate to families, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

## What You Should Do if You Have School Questions, Concerns

We know there may be times you have questions or concerns about a situation at your child's school. The most important thing is communication, and we offer the following guide to help.

1. Discuss your question or concern with your child's teacher.
2. If you feel you have not received a satisfactory answer or solution, contact the school principal.
3. If the school principal does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction, please call the Administration Office to discuss the matter with an assistant superintendent or schedule a meeting. The next step, if necessary, is to request a meeting with the school superintendent. Finally, you can request an appearance before the Forest Hills Public Schools board of education. If you wish to address the board, you must notify the superintendent in writing at least five days before the board is scheduled to meet. Your letter must also describe the problem or concern you wish to discuss.



By following this procedure, your questions and concerns about school-related issues will be resolved.

## District Website and Online School Information

The district website: [www.fhps.net](http://www.fhps.net) contains a wealth of information. The best way to use the site, if you are looking for something in particular, is to use the search mechanism in the upper right-hand corner of the homepage. The creation of the district website and school pages is encouraged as a means of communication with students, parents/guardians, staff, families, community members and the public at-large. There are two goals of the Forest Hills Public School District's website. One, it is an opportunity for the school and its staff to showcase learning, events, activities and accomplishments of staff and students to the world through the Internet. Two, it also is a direct vital informational link to parents and community members.



Please bookmark [www.fhps.net](http://www.fhps.net) on your mobile and electronic devices. The website is a portal to all school pages where you will find important upcoming activities and events, reminders, announcements and school news.

### Sign Up to Receive Emailed News

FHPS typically creates a weekly emailed news update from around the district. In order to receive this update, families must subscribe. These news updates are usually emailed once a week and contain information from around the district, such as

upcoming events, school/student/staff accolades, achievements, accomplishments and more. To subscribe, please complete the [online form](#) found on the FHPS website

## SchoolMessenger

SchoolMessenger is used to communicate a variety of information. This push notification system is an automated messaging service. The district uses this system to inform families of school delays or closures, when there is an emergency at a school, and information from the Superintendent. SchoolMessenger is also used by each of our schools to communicate, primarily through email, non-emergency information, school reminders, and activity updates. Most schools email a weekly SchoolMessenger to their families about news and happenings in the school. SchoolMessenger



allows families to set preferences on how messages are received, such as an email, text and/or phone call. You can manage your preferences through the Parent Portal of PowerSchool. To “opt in” to text messages you must text “YES” to 67587 from your mobile device.

There is also a SchoolMessenger app available to download. The app provides families with a powerful way to stay engaged with their school and the district. The app is available for both Android and iOS devices. ***Please note that this communication tool is the primary method for schools to communicate information to families.***

Parents/guardians should always contact their child’s school to update their phone number and email contact information if or when a change occurs.

## PowerSchool

Parents and guardians can access PowerSchool, our student information system, through the Parent Portal. For our kindergarten through sixth-grade families, you are able to view contact information, important school information, and student attendance. For our seventh- through 12th-grade families, you may also view student’s grade history, teacher comments, and more. Parent Portal is also used to update your SchoolMessenger preferences as mentioned above, or you can install the SchoolMessenger app. *Please be sure to update your student’s school with any changes to your contact information. This includes telephone numbers as well as email addresses.*

## Canvas

The district uses a learning management system called Canvas. Canvas integrates all learning and assignments into one online place. It allows teachers to post grades, assignments, and information online and allows parents/guardians of students to also see assignments and progress. Each student will be given a Canvas account. Once students receive their accounts, then the parent/guardian may also set up an account to see the student’s account. A wealth of information is available on the [FHPS website](#). Information about Canvas and Canvas accounts will come directly from the student’s teacher.

## Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Vimeo

The district uses social media to also communicate information. Make sure you follow the district’s accounts. Likewise, many principals and schools also have their own social media accounts. Please check with your child’s principal or the school office to see if the school or PTO has social media channels to follow.

- [facebook.com/fhps.net](https://facebook.com/fhps.net)
- [twitter.com/FHPSnews](https://twitter.com/FHPSnews)
- <https://vimeo.com/fhps>



## Elementary School PTOs

Parent Teacher Organizations are thriving in our elementary schools, and many programs, field trips, specials and learning opportunities could not be possible without our dedicated parent volunteers who serve on committees, organize fundraisers, organize Box Tops for Education, book fairs, teacher/staff luncheons, and so much more. Please volunteer and get involved.

# A Day in the Life of a Kindergartner

## A Typical Day's Schedule

- Arrival/Opening/Pledge
- Reading Workshop
- Writing Workshop
- Snack (twice a day)
- Recess (twice a day)
- Calendar and Weather
- Lunch
- Phonics Workshop
- Specials (Art, Music, Physical Education, Foreign Language/Culture)
- Purposeful Play
- Interactive Read-Alouds
- Shared Reading/Writing
- Science/Social Studies
- Math Workshop



## Workshops

Kindergarten is a time for fun and exploration and lots of learning. A kindergartner's schedule for the day includes a good portion of the morning devoted to a workshop model of learning, such as reading workshop, writing workshop, and more. The workshop model allows us to address several goals simultaneously and meet the individual needs of all learners. Each of these goals relates directly to processes of learning that we believe are important to foster in kindergarten. As such, they are primary to our intended curriculum, broad goals and

objectives for children in our learning community. These include collaborative learning, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, resourcefulness, autonomy and perspective taking. In addition, we feel it is equally important to provide children with opportunities to build strong foundations in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies and the arts to ensure a successful transition into their first-grade environments.

## Time for Routines

We establish routines from the first day in kindergarten. From how we enter school, hang up our coats and backpacks and prepare for the day, a kindergartner's day will be fun, busy and exciting. In addition to many curriculum-driven opportunities, the children will also have read-alouds, calendar time, a time for sharing, songs and singing, and purposeful play and exploration, recess and even some quiet or down time. Students will interact in reading, writing, and phonics workshops to develop emerging literacy skills.



## Snack Time

Children do best on a full tummy. We know there is a lot of time between breakfast and lunchtime. Each day we will have snack time, and students are encouraged to bring their own healthy snack from home. When packing a daily snack for your child, please remember any food allergies that other students may have in your child's classroom.

## Recess

Kindergartners need to run, swing, climb, and play outside.

**Make sure your child is dressed appropriately to play outside every day.** Kindergartners will have at least two recesses a

day—one in the morning and one after lunch in the afternoon.

Kindergartners will play outside in the winter, so make sure your child has appropriate winter weather apparel including a winter coat, hat, mittens or gloves, snow pants and boots. When it's raining outside, students will have indoor recess where kindergartners will enjoy games, toys, arts and crafts, and other fun activities.



## Specials

Kindergartners also enjoy several “specials” throughout the week. “Special” classes include physical education, world language, art, and music. Students also will have the opportunity to go to the media center (or library) once a week to check out a book, and participate in technology and/or computer time.

## Toys from Home

We believe our classrooms have a wide variety of rich materials and experiences to offer the children throughout their days. If there is a special area of interest in the classroom, we can provide additional materials to meet the needs of the children. Therefore, our guideline in the kindergarten classroom is that toys from home stay at home.

Please know that things such as music or books are always welcome. In addition, if you have other materials that will assist us in an investigation that we are working on, we would love you to share your supplies and knowledge. This way we can bring home and school together through a common interest or topic. If you have any questions or need clarification please talk with us. Your cooperation and support with this is greatly appreciated.

## Developmental Profiles and Assessments

During our days in kindergarten, teachers observe and work with children both individually and in large and small groups. We collect information about each child and their developmental capabilities through various means of documentation including anecdotal observations, child portfolios, photographs, formative assessments, and journal work. Our goal for assessing children is to share each child's experiences in our classroom. We share this information with families in numerous ways. We like to take pictures of things happening in our classroom; we frequently use email to distribute news; we have student growth conferences twice a year; and we are always available if you have questions or concerns.

## Student Growth Conferences

We will schedule two student growth conferences during the year, one in the fall and another one in the spring. However, we invite you to request a conference whenever you feel it necessary. We will also do the same. These conferences will be devoted to all of us sharing information regarding your child's growth, development, and overall experience in kindergarten, as well as establishing goals for your child.

## Before- and After-School Care

When parents work or have to be somewhere before school starts, they want a place they can take their child that is safe and fun and that helps start the day on a positive note. Likewise, parents want the security and peace of mind knowing their child is safe after school. When school schedules and parent schedules just do not match, FHPS offers a fee-based, before- and after-school childcare program.

Our before- and after-school care programs are housed in all of the district's elementary school buildings, including Ada Vista Elementary School. We also offer a before- and after-school care program for our 5th and 6th grade students at Northern Trails 5/6 school and **before care only** at Central Woodlands 5/6 school. All before- and after-school care programs run from 7:00 a.m. to the time that the school starts, and from the time school ends until 5:30 p.m.



### Cost

Before-school care is \$11 per day and breakfast is included. After-school care also is \$11 per day and a snack is included. Before- and after-school care combined cost for one child per day is \$19.80 reflecting a built in 10 percent discount.

### Care on days there is no school

This is not available at this time.

### Additional information and registration process

Please read the following updates as it pertains to the school year 2021-2022 registration process.

- Before care hours will be 7 a.m. till the start of school and after care hours will end at 5:30 pm.
- Care will only be offered on the days your child(ren) are in person. Care will **not** be offered on virtual school days.
- Families will be required to sign up for 5 days per week/per program (when school is in person full time).
- Arrival time will be 7 a.m.-7:30 a.m. and departure time will be 5 p.m.-5:30 pm. If you need to drop off or pick up at another time please plan with the staff in advance to make accommodations.
- Parents/guardians will remain in vehicles and staff will take the child(ren) into the site. Staff will also escort the child(ren) to the vehicles at the end of the day.
- Staff and students will be required to wear masks while attending the before- and after-school care program.
- The enrollment will be limited in size to keep with the current guidelines.
- Ada Vista students will no longer be able to attend home schools for childcare. They must register to attend Ada Vista childcare.

To enroll your child, you may [use the online application process](#) or contact the Child Care Office at (616) 493-8787.



## Kindergarten Ready-Set-Go!

At the present time, we do not know what our back-to-school kickoff events, or Kindergarten Ready-Set-Go! Events will look like. It may be held virtually and/or modified to keep students and staff safe. Kindergarten Ready-Set-Go is an event that is geared toward kindergartners and happens in the summer prior to the first day of school. In previous years, it is a time when kindergartners can meet their teacher, visit their classroom, drop off school supplies, find their “cubbies” or lockers, and even take a ride on a school bus!



Kindergarten Ready-Set-Go! helps acquaint children with the school environment and helps alleviate any fears they may have coming to a new school. Families will receive a letter in August from the child’s school about this important event, and the dates and times of the event will be posted online on the school’s website pages. The letter will include not only the date and time of the event, but will also share information about the child’s teacher and much more. Adult family members will also be given additional information from the school while students explore their new classroom.



Don’t forget to check your mailbox a few weeks before school starts for this important communication. Whether the event is held in-person or virtually, this is something families should not miss! We cannot wait to see you in August, in-person or virtually, and meet your child at Kindergarten Ready-Set-Go! and share in the excitement that your child exudes starting school!

This school year will be amazing and we are thrilled to share this educational journey with you.



## Kindergarten Enrollment Checklist



Here is a quick reference tool to help ensure you have submitted all of the enrollment documents. All of these forms and informational material may be found online [www.fhps.net](http://www.fhps.net). Please call the elementary office if you have any enrollment questions.

- ☐ Pre-Enrollment Form
- ☐ K-12 Enrollment Form
- ☐ Health Appraisal (with vision and hearing screening)
- ☐ FHPS Health History Form
- ☐ FHPS Consent for Disclosure of Immunizations
- ☐ Kindergarten Parent Questionnaire
- ☐ FHPS Kindergarten Preschool Questionnaire (if applicable from the previous preschool)
- ☐ Classroom Guidance/Prevention Education
- ☐ Concussion Awareness
- ☐ Two Proofs of Residency in the Forest Hills Public School District
- ☐ A valid government-issued photo identification such as driver's license, state ID, or passport
- ☐ Child's birth certificate
- ☐ Immunization records
- ☐ Vision and hearing screening (check the FHPS website for dates/times)
- ☐ Court documents (if applicable)
- ☐ Please have the following as well: emergency contact name(s) and phone numbers and previous school name/address/phone/fax numbers
- ☐ Other forms as deemed appropriate for your student; complete only if needed
  - Medical Authorization Form (required only if student requires medicine during the school day)
  - Allergy Action Plan
  - Asthma Action Plan
  - Seizure Action Plan
- ☐ Keep your student's school phone numbers and emails of principals and building secretaries handy and/or enter them into your contacts on an electronic device
- ☐ Follow the district on the following social media sites:
  - [facebook.com/fhps.net](https://facebook.com/fhps.net)
  - [twitter.com/FHPSnews](https://twitter.com/FHPSnews)

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** Forest Hills Public Schools is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, height, weight, marital status, genetic information, or any legally protected characteristic in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities. Any questions concerning compliance issues with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, including athletic issues, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, or inquiries related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap, should be directed to: Christine Annese, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Forest Hills Public Schools, 6590 Cascade Road SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546, (616) 493-8800.