



**Franklin Children's School, Inc.**

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**Family Handbook**

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

On behalf of our teachers and staff, it is a pleasure to welcome you to Franklin Children's School ("FCS"). You are now a part of the FCS family and a very important part of the lives of the children and families here. FCS is a non-profit organization and a licensed preschool by the Office of Early Education and Care (EEC) in Massachusetts. We provide a nurturing environment where learning, playing and growing are encouraged. We are looking forward to a successful and fulfilling year for you and your child. We hope and anticipate it will be a year that is filled with many learning experiences and many new friends.

This handbook is yours! We put it together as a way to provide you with important and useful practices and protocols we follow here at FCS, and to provide you with answers to the most commonly asked questions we receive. Because there is a wealth of information contained in this handbook, we ask that you carefully read through it to familiarize yourself with its contents and reference it throughout the year. Please note that the last page of the handbook should be signed and returned to school as acknowledgement of the policies and procedures of Franklin Children's School. Should you have questions that are not answered here, please ask.

We look forward to working with you and your child, and view ourselves as your partners in helping your child develop physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively. You are encouraged to take an active part in your child's experience at FCS by visiting, volunteering and participating in the various committees we've established. Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to talk with your child's teacher or myself. Once again, it is a true pleasure to welcome you to our school, and we look forward to a mutually enjoyable and prosperous school year.

Sincerely,

Ms. April M. Davenport  
Executive Director

## **Mission**

Franklin Children's School, Inc. is a non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of Massachusetts and its purpose/mission shall be to offer a program of early childhood education and childcare that will be of benefit to the child, the parents/guardians, and the community. FCS is committed to providing a nurturing and caring learning environment, which helps the children develop socially, intellectually, and emotionally in a manner that is appropriate for their age and stage of development.

## **Philosophy**

The philosophy of education at FCS is the Developmental Approach. It is our belief that children learn through a direct, hands-on exploration of their entire environment. We believe each child's individual social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs are met in an open, child-directed setting where various levels of learning can occur simultaneously. By learning through personal experience, we believe a child gains self-esteem, initiative, and independence.

Because we believe in varying levels of progression in children, we create environments to meet such individual needs. Our classrooms are set up with a wide variety of centers. Each center produces many different learning experiences. It all depends upon how each individual child perceives what they are learning. We incorporate the following learning centers throughout the school year: science, social studies, math, art, dramatic play, music, literature, fine and gross motor activities.

FCS also encourages parental involvement. We want to make you an integral part of your child's first early childhood experience. We encourage your support, ideas, and time spent with us to accomplish a complete, positive experience. We hope, through our combined efforts, we will foster a happy and healthy future for your child.

## **NAEYC Accreditation**

FCS is currently accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the nation's leading organization of early childhood professionals. NAEYC created its accreditation program in 1985 to set professional standards for early childhood education, and to help families identify high-quality childcare and early education programs. To earn NAEYC accreditation, programs conduct a self-study to determine how well it meets the standards, the program is then observed by independent early childhood education professionals, and reviewed by a national panel.

## **Licensing Statement**

The Department of Early Education and Care license FCS. An official copy of the regulations is available in the office at any time. Contact EEC Worcester Office: 1-508-798-5180, 10 Austin Street, Worcester, MA 01609 for compliance history.

## **Non-Discrimination**

FCS provides services to children and their families of any race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, and/or disabilities. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

## **Background Information**

We are a non-profit organization founded in 1971. FCS exists solely to meet the pre-school educational needs of Franklin area families.

## **Our Teachers**

Our staff is comprised of highly qualified professionals in the field of early childhood education. Many of our staff members are Early Education and Care certified, and all staff members continue to take courses and workshops every year. All staff members are First Aid and CPR certified, and each teacher undergoes a Background record check (BRC/DCF) before the beginning of each school year. Our current staff has an average of 15 years of early childhood experience and an average tenure of 12 years with Franklin Children's School.

## **Board of Directors**

A Board of Directors oversees FCS. The Board of Directors is a hard working and dedicated group of individuals made up of the Executive Director of FCS, school parents/guardians and community members – all working cohesively to provide positive support and guidance to the Executive Director and the staff. The Board has a number of responsibilities including interpreting and upholding the by-laws, formulating and upholding school policies, supporting the school's curriculum and programs, reviewing and approving the annual budget, ensuring annual auditing of financial records, helping to establish various committees, and addressing parental concerns. Board members are elected to three-year terms. Each year a Parent Representative is elected to serve as a liaison between parents/guardians and the Board of Directors. The Parent Representative sits on the Board of Directors for that year. Anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the Board of the Directors should please contact the Executive Director.

## **Room Parent Coordinators**

Room Parent Coordinators aid each of the individual classrooms and teachers in special activities as needed throughout the year. For example, the room parent coordinators may help in organizing after school class outings or activities such as play dates to the park or lunch dates. Room parent coordinators may also help in organizing class donations for teachers, gift giving opportunities, and /or teacher appreciation luncheons. Room Parent Coordinators may also be asked to attend meetings with other Room Parent Coordinators throughout the school year. If you would like to be involved, please speak with the Executive Director.

## **School Calendar**

Our school year starts in September and runs until the beginning of June. A school calendar is issued in September and is available online and/or in the school office.

## **Enrollment / Admissions**

FCS has established the age of admission at 2.9 years – 5 years old. Children 2.9 years old by August 31<sup>st</sup> may apply for admission. Enrollment shall not be determined by race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, and/or disabilities. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

Enrollment is open to children in the town of Franklin and its surrounding communities. Students may enroll in two (2) or three (3) day programs. Our two-day programs are for the younger children beginning with the 3 year olds. The three-day and Pre-K programs are for the 4 and 5 year olds. We offer an AM session and a PM session. The teacher child ratio is approximately 1:5.

We typically offer at least 8 programs with developmentally appropriate curriculums designed specifically for each level. All programs are aimed at fostering the social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth and development of your child.

Registration for in-house alumni and siblings begins in January for children seeking September enrollment. New families are welcome to apply by the end of January. All slots are filled by lottery, although we reserve the right to create balanced classrooms by things such as gender and developmental needs. A non-refundable registration/application fee is charged each year. Parents and children are welcome to visit the school any time before they submit a registration. An open house is held annually in the fall for currently enrolled families. Upon request, tours are available for families interested in the school.

### **Requirements for Enrollment**

Before your child's first day of school, FCS requires the following:

- A written physician's statement, which indicates the child, has had a complete physical examination within one year prior to admission, the results of which shall remain part of the child's file and evidence of a lead screening.
- A physician's certificate indicating the child has been successfully immunized in accordance with the Department of Health's recommended schedules against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, chicken pox, mumps, rubella (German measles) and other such communicable diseases.
- Parents of children with serious health problems must meet with the Executive Director before entering school. At that time it will be decided how best to serve the child.
- Parents who object to any of the preceding due to religious beliefs or medical conditions must give written verification that it does conflict with their religious beliefs, or a statement from a physician that such a procedure is contraindicated.
- In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires Hepatitis B immunization for all students.
- Face Sheet, Developmental History/Emergency Authorization and Consent Forms, current tuition payment for the upcoming school year.

## **Tuition/ Payments**

In order to meet payroll and operating expenses, FCS depends on tuition revenues for supporting its programs. A yearly tuition is divided into ten (10) equal payments due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. The first payment is due by May 1<sup>st</sup> with the last payment on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Please note there is no reduction in payment for absences, days off, or vacations. When paying by check please put the student's name on the bottom of the check since there may be children with the same last names. Tuition payments may be mailed to the school or placed in the "Bird House" tuition box located in the lobby.

There is a \$10.00 late fee for all payments received after the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. There is a \$5.00 fee for checks with insufficient funds. If payments are not received by the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month, your child will be terminated from the program. We will notify you if payments are not kept current. Tuition payment policies are strictly enforced.

## **School Hours**

School hours are dependent on your child's program. Generally, the school is open from 8AM – 4:30 PM. Due to changes in teachers' schedules and the public school bus schedules, FCS reserves the right to make adjustments to class times. Notice will be given to families when such adjustments need to be made.

## **The Beginning of School**

The beginning of school can be a difficult adjustment for everyone involved - children, parents/guardians, and the staff. Some children are very upset when their parents/guardians leave but compose themselves soon after they have gone. Others seem to settle in happily right away, then after a couple of weeks may realize they are coming to FCS regularly and become upset when they are dropped off. Our teachers are experienced at handling separation problems and take special care to comfort these children, and to integrate them thoughtfully into activities. Over time, most children adjust quite nicely into the program. We also find it helpful to prepare your child for school by encouraging "play dates" and generally being excited and enthusiastic about school. We find it helpful that you do not prolong your good-byes. It is important to make saying "good-bye" a part of your daily routine. Please know that if your child is inconsolable or is having a difficult time transitioning, we will call you. Please feel free to speak with your child's Lead Teacher and/or the Executive Director should you have specific concerns.

## **Folders – Hanging Children's "Mailboxes"**

Each child has his/her own folder, which serves as his/her "mailbox." The hanging folders are located next to your child's classroom. We use these mailboxes as a way to communicate with you. The mailboxes hold important information from the school such as newsletters and announcements, and most importantly your child's projects. Please be sure to check your child's folder each day at pick-up.

## **Pick-Up and Drop Off**

For the safety of the children, it is important that children arrive and depart at the designated time and areas. When dropping off your child for their program, please bring him/her into the school lobby where a teacher will greet and welcome your child and family. You are welcome to join your child in the classroom to help with your child's belongings and saying your good-byes. Typically after the first half of the year in our Pre-K programs, children will be encouraged to be dropped off with the classroom teacher and not be escorted in by a parent/guardian. By letting the child enter into the class by him/herself, it begins to prepare them with the transition to kindergarten.

Depending on the weather, children will either be picked up outside at the gate or in the school lobby. Due to limited parking and dismissal times, we encourage you to be considerate and efficient when dropping off and picking up your child. In addition, please note that once you arrive at the gate or lobby, your child will be called for dismissal. If you arrive early and are not prepared to pick up your child, please refrain from coming to the gate or the lobby. Please respect our dismissal procedures, as it allows for the children to have consistency in their departure routines, as well as allow teachers to prepare for their afternoon programs.

For the safety and protection of the children, we will not release your child to another adult without your written authorization and a picture identification of the authorized adult. In unforeseen circumstances, the Executive Director may accept a phone call from a parent/guardian if there is to be an unexpected change in pick-up. If this is to occur, a staff member will ask to see picture identification from the person you authorized to pick up your child.

## **Curriculum**

We offer morning and afternoon classes for three and four years olds, and Pre-Kindergarten children. Our curriculum is developmentally appropriate and guided by the standards set forth by the Office of Early Education and Care. The goal of our curriculum is to present meaningful learning experiences whereby children learn through play. Our focus is on the process and not the product. Our center-based curriculum is also influenced by the criteria set forth in the Massachusetts Frameworks, and based upon on the ten standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

## **Late Pick-Up**

Please note that there is a five-minute grace period after your child's class ends. Please use this five-minute grace period respectfully. We will use the FCS clock as our guide. The first time you are more than five minutes late, we will give you a verbal warning. The second time and subsequent times thereafter the following fees will apply:

- 6-10 minutes after class ends incurs a \$10.00 charge.
- Each additional minute thereafter incurs a \$1.00 per minute charge.

In the rare event that you are going to be late picking up your child, please call the school to let us know. We ask that parents/guardians adhere to pick-up time schedules promptly. However, we do understand that emergencies can be unforeseen and we will make provisions accordingly.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences / Student Assessments**

We hold parent-teacher conferences for Pre-kindergarten children only. These conferences generally take place in early spring, usually at the end of March. At this time we talk about how you can help to transition your child to their next school. During these conferences there will be no school for the Pre-K programs. Parents/guardians will be provided with advance notice. While we do not have formal parent-teacher conferences for other students, all children will receive two assessments throughout the year - one in the fall and one in the spring. Please realize your child's teacher and/or the Executive Director are always available to speak or meet. If you would like to arrange a mutually convenient time to do so, please talk with your child's teacher.

## **Child Guidance/Behavior Management**

Franklin Children's School philosophy of child guidance is to teach self-respect and respect of others. Our caring teachers serve as role models and administer the classroom rules. Should behavior management become necessary, we first re-direct children. Children are offered a choice if possible. If there is not a choice available, the teacher limits behavior in a kind, firm manner. It is important that FCS maintain a pleasant, safe and orderly environment that is free from both physical harm and/or verbal abuse. To this end, FCS uses behavior management techniques such as setting reasonable expectations, redirection, offering choices, and providing children an opportunity to verbalize their feelings. In addition to informal daily communications between parent/guardians and staff, the Executive Director and/or teacher will inform you of any unusual behavior that suddenly surfaces in the classroom. Our goals for behavior management include: having the children feel good about themselves, feeling safe, expressing feelings appropriately while respecting the needs of others, developing good self-control, utilizing simple problem solving skills, and becoming more independent.

FCS Prohibits:

- Spanking or other corporal punishment;
- Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect or abusive treatment;
- Force feeding;
- Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet; or, forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing; or, forcing a child to remain on the toilet; or, using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.

### **Children with Special Needs**

Franklin Children's School is equipped with handicapped-accessible facilities including a wheelchair ramp and bathroom facility. The Director and staff will work with both parents/guardians and the child to determine the appropriate group for the child and if any changes or modifications are necessary for the child's participation in the program. In addition, teachers, to the best of their abilities will help families and children incorporate activities in a language that may be consistent to that spoken at home. FSC reserves the right to inform families if further professional services may be needed to accommodate the needs of the child.

### **Lunch Programs**

FCS offers an extended program for some programs where children may stay and eat their lunch at school. These programs are designed for children to become familiar with eating their lunch in a school-like atmosphere. In addition, it helps some children acclimate to spending a longer day at school. Children who attend this program may be asked to leave their lunch boxes in the bin located out in the school lobby or bring them into the classroom.

### **Medical/Health and Safety Policies**

Our medical/health and safety policies have been adapted from the standards for the licensure or approval of group day care centers by the Office of Early Education and Care. These policies have been developed to help keep the environment in our preschool as healthy as possible for the child and the staff by focusing on prevention of injury/illness. While bumps, bruises, and exposure to many contagious diseases are unavoidable during childhood, we trust that these policies will help ensure the well being of each child in our care.



## **Injury Prevention Plan**

1. Daily inspections of the school environment to remove or repair any hazardous materials that might cause injury.
2. All hazardous substances or objects are kept out of reach of the children.
3. A first aid kit is located in the kitchen and in each classroom.
4. Spray bottles with disinfectants are kept in the kitchen on top of the refrigerator and in each classroom.
5. Medications, such as Epipens are kept in the kitchen.
6. Cleaning supplies are kept in the supply closet.
7. Sharp scissors are kept in teacher storage closets.
8. Knives are kept in the kitchen in a drawer and foods/liquids hotter than 110°F will be kept out of reach.
9. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building.
10. Staff is certified yearly in CPR.

## **Infection Control:**

1. Personal Care: Proper hand washing using liquid soap and running water before handling food, before snack, after toileting, after contact with body fluids, after playing in the sensory table when filled with water, and after cleaning. Hands are to be dried with disposable paper towels. When possible, children are to wipe or blow their noses by themselves and throw the tissues away in the trash.
2. If a child wets their pants we will clean the child (wearing latex gloves) and change their clothes. If a child comes to school in a diaper and has a bowel movement, a teacher will change him. A teacher will clean the child to the best of their ability and the family will be notified of the child's bowel movement. Extra clean clothing is stored in the cabinet in the children's bathroom. The soiled clothing is put in two plastic bags and sent home with the child on that day.
3. For the protection of staff and children, blood spills and fecal matter will be cleaned up using latex gloves, disposable paper towels, soap and water followed by a bleach solution. Paper towels will be triple bagged in plastic and disposed of as soon as possible in the outside receptacle.
4. A disinfectant solution, which indicates on the label that it kills bacteria, viruses, and parasites, will be used for general cleaning.
5. Disposable paper towels will be used for all cleaning.
6. Tables will be cleaned before and after snack and as necessary.
7. The water table and water toys will be cleaned with disinfectant after each use. New water will be added before each new group.
8. Toys, which have been put into a child's mouth, will be cleaned and rinsed immediately.
9. Bathroom is cleaned daily.
10. Fabric toys will be washed when necessary.
11. Carpets will be vacuumed daily and cleaned every three months.

## Physical Examinations for Staff and Children

1. All children will be required to have on file at the school evidence of a physical exam (Not more than one year old) within 30 days of admission. Immunization documentation must be on file upon admission.
2. The staff will have evidence of a physical exam including a statement about any physical limitations in working with children. (Valid for 2 years)
3. The staff will have evidence of immunity to measles, mumps, and rubella.
4. The staff will have a negative Mantoux TB test.

## Specific Healthcare Policies

At FCS, as in any setting with young children, it is expected that there will be many colds and infections during the course of the school year. Please do not send your child to school if you suspect he/she may be ill. We ask that you call the school if your child is going to be absent. You can help us keep communicable diseases at bay by adhering to the following rules and keeping your child at home until free of symptoms. All families will be notified if the group/classroom has been exposed to a contagious infection. Please inform the school as soon as possible if your child has contracted to contagious infections so that we may notify other families. Thank you for your cooperation.

- Conjunctivitis (pink eye): Eye is pink or red and has obvious discharge. Child must be on medication at least 24 hours, eye clear and no discharge before returning to school.
- Chicken Pox: Keep your child home until all skin blisters have dried and crusted over which usually occurs 10 days after the first symptoms start.
- Strep Infections: See the doctor. Keep the child home for at least the first 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
- Above normal Temperature: Child should remain at home until temperature is back to “normal.” A child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes: See the doctor for treatment.
- Diarrhea: Typically three or more abnormally loose stool within a 24-hour period. A child with a stomach upset should be kept at home as long as symptoms persist.
- Head lice and nits: Keep child home if lice are found. Use an over-the-counter remedy (shampoo and comb treatment). **It is very important to notify the school.**
- Persistent Cough: In some cases, this is usually a sign of infection. A child with a persistent cough may tire easily, becoming more prone to colds and/or diseases.

## **Hand Washing**

The children and staff wash their hands with liquid soap and running water using friction and dry with individual disposable towels at least at the following times:

- Before eating or handling food, after using the rest room, and the sensory table.
- After coming in contact with bodily fluids and discharges.
- Upon arrival to school. Teachers and children will be directed to wash their hands.

## **When A Child Becomes Ill at school**

Our staff is trained to recognize signs and symptoms of illness but it can be difficult for us to make a “sick child” diagnosis. Sometimes we will call you and enlist your help in making the decision. Children who exhibit symptoms of mild illness such as runny nose or slight cough will be evaluated for exclusion or inclusion according to the following: body temperature, ability to play, ability to take in solid food or liquids, general appearance and behavior. Additionally, if your child is having a difficult time taking care of his/her chronically runny nose or experiencing excessive and uncontrolled coughing, we will request that s/he be taken home, as not to spread germs. Any equipment the child has come in contact with during the course of the day shall be washed with water, soap and disinfectant. Your child may return to school when s/he is no longer ill.

## **Injury on School Premises**

In the event a child is injured during the school day, a first aid kit is located in each room away from reach of the children. Any wounds will be cleaned with warm, soapy water. Should a serious injury occur, the parent/guardian would be contacted.

## **Administration of Medications**

Medications, whether they are prescription or non-prescription, shall be administered only with written parental/guardian authorization and written orders from a physician. A signed statement listing the dosage and the reason for its use must accompany the medicine and be given to the Executive Director for approval. Further, the medication must be brought to school in a properly labeled, original prescription bottle. Over the counter medication must be supplied in the original manufacturer’s labeled bottle. No medication will be administered from plastic bags, envelopes or any other container. The authorized consent from parents/guardians and physician is valid for one year from the date it was signed. Parents will be notified each time the medicine is administered, upon pick up of child, and a written record of this will be kept in the child’s file. Non-prescription medication will be administered only in unusual circumstances. Medication may be retrieved by the parent/guardian at any time and the medication will be destroyed if it is not picked up within one week of termination of the order or one week beyond the close of school.

## Allergies & Anaphylaxis

FCS recognizes the potentially serious consequences of children with allergies. These allergies may include a condition known as anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction brought about by exposure to certain foods or other substances, such as latex or bee stings. While FCS does not purport to be, nor can it be deemed to be free of food items and non-food items that may lead to severe allergic or anaphylactic reaction, we will make every reasonable effort to reduce the risk to children with severe allergies or anaphylaxis. We are a peanut/nut free school, which means no peanut, **or nut products are allowed at FCS at any time.** If your child suffers from food allergies or anaphylaxis and requires an EpiPen be carried with him/her, you must notify the school that your child has allergies or is anaphylactic or potentially anaphylactic. If your child requires an EpiPen for a food allergy or has a chronic health condition, we will require that you provide a healthy snack alternative for your child. All staff will be made aware of these children. It is the parent/guardian responsibility to:

- Inform the school of your child's condition and provide a recent picture of your child.
- Complete a medication consent form – which is to include a signature from both you and your child's pediatrician
- The consent form and your child's picture remains at school along with his/her EpiPen. Your child's picture will be posted in the main kitchen area, as well as in their classroom, unless otherwise discussed with the Director.

## Referral Plan and Resources

The Executive Director has the responsibility to help implement a referral plan for a child where a concern may arise. This may happen when a teacher has a concern regarding a child's development or when challenging behavior is exhibited. The issue is documented and brought to the Director's attention. The teacher and the Executive Director decide upon further action and determine if and when the family should be notified of the concern/issue. If deemed necessary, the family will be contacted and a conference will be set up at a mutually agreeable time for all parties involved. At this time, the family will be advised of concern, given appropriated reading material or other resources. If needed, further referrals may be needed and the teacher/Director will accompany families to any outside evaluations or team meetings, in necessary and/or at the request of the family. At times, various diagnostic professionals may visit our school. Please note, that no child will be included in any diagnostic observations and/or research study without prior parental consent. If a child is "red flagged" by a visiting professional, it is then the Director's responsibility to notify that child's family of those observations.

### Resource and referral agencies:

Blackstone Valley Council for Children  
189 Main Street  
Milford, MA 01757  
508-473-3291

Child Development Center  
214 Lake Street  
Shrewsbury, MA 01545  
508-845-9111 ext. 230

Arbour Counseling  
38 Pond Street  
Franklin, MA 02038  
508-528-6037

ECDC  
215 Oak Street  
Franklin, MA 02038  
508-541-8166

E.E.C.  
600 Washington Street  
Boston, MA 02111  
617-988-6600

## What to Wear

Please send your child to school in comfortable play clothes that allow for active and often messy projects. Pants and t-shirts tend to be best, even for girls, since dresses may hamper climbing or other active play. Clothes tend to get a real workout, and children spend time outdoors almost every session, so please do not send children in their best attire. Sandals, crocs, flip flops, open back beach shoes are not ideal as they can easily get in the way of a child's movements and may be the cause of falls and slips.

On rainy days children should bring or wear raincoats and boots. On cold days, we recommend a snowsuit or coat, a hat and boots. Please label all of your child's belongings - especially hats, coats, mittens and boots. Please note unlabeled, unclaimed clothes are maintained in a "lost clothing" box in the school lobby. When this box is filled the items will be given away. Be sure to check it often if you are missing items.

### **Change of Clothes**

If your child has recently toilet trained, please send an extra set of clothes - including underwear, socks, shirts, pants - in your child's backpack. The school does keep spare clothing in the classrooms but a child is more comfortable in their own clothes. If your child is sent home in school clothes, please wash them and return them within one week.

### **Outside Play**

Weather permitting; children will play outside on a daily basis, unless it is raining or dangerously hot or cold. In the winter, please send in snow pants and snow boots with your child. We encourage children to wear mittens, rather than gloves as it helps to permit children's self help skills. In addition, teachers at FCS may not apply sunscreen or insect repellent. Please apply a UVB/UVA sunscreen of an SPF of 15 or higher prior to your child coming to school. We also encourage families to apply insect repellent due to the high risk of insect-borne disease. In the event of an air pollution report from the Dept of Public Health, the Director will alert the staff and take necessary precautions to protect children and adults from exposure. This may include limiting outdoor activities.

### **Toys from Home**

The school provides each classroom with toys and equipment that are age appropriate and educationally sound. At times, a child has a security item which helps them transition from home to school but generally we ask that no toys be brought from home. However, there may be days when children are requested to bring in special toys from home. These may include items found in nature, special souvenirs, family photo albums, music, and/or special books. Any kind of fighting toys or weapons are not allowed.

## **Snacks/Nutrition Guidelines**

FCS provides snack and water for each class. **We are a peanut/nut free school.** Snacks from home for birthdays and other special occasions are gratefully accepted as long as you adhere to our guidelines and check with your child's Lead Teacher. All snacks/food items that are brought into our school **MUST** be from our "Safe Snack List" otherwise we will not serve the snack/food item. The "Safe Snack List" will be handed out to each family in September, posted in the hallway, and available in the office. FCS will not offer children younger than four years of age these foods: hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, or chunks of raw carrots. **ALL** children with dietary restrictions and/or known allergies will be asked to provide their own snack this is to ensure the safety and needs of your child.

## **Snack/Nutrition Procedures**

1. Designated individual staff members are in charge of planning, purchasing, and preparing snacks.
2. Nutritious snacks are served mid morning and mid afternoon at the designated snack tables.
3. Disposable materials for serving and washed after every use.
4. Plastic silverware is heavy duty and washed after every use.
5. Fresh drinking water and cups are available in the classroom areas at all times.

## **Attendance & Absentee Call-in Procedures**

If your child will be absent, we ask that you call and notify us, preferably in the morning so we can plan our day accordingly. When you call, please let us know your child's name and his/her teacher's name. You may reach a member of our staff by calling (508) 528-9378. Please leave a message on our answering machine if staff members are unavailable to answer the phone.

## **Inclement Weather, Adverse Conditions, Emergency Dismissals**

School will be cancelled when the Franklin Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather/snow days. Please note if any Franklin Public School is closed for reasons other than weather, such as loss of heat or electricity, FCS will be open. Also note, FCS will be open if Franklin schools are delayed. **Delayed openings and morning kindergarten cancellations do not apply to us.**

The Executive Director will decide whether to release students early due to deteriorating inclement weather or due to other adverse conditions such as loss of heat, loss of electricity, or plumbing problems in which conditions within the school may not be deemed appropriate or safe. In the event that FCS must release students early families will be notified.

## **Important Contact Information**

We maintain important contact information in your child's file in the event we need to reach you. Please inform the school immediately when an address change or phone number change occurs for any of the contacts listed on the contact or emergency forms. In case of an emergency, it is critical that we maintain the most up-to-date and current information.

## **Animals and Pets**

With the exception of fish, animals and pets are not allowed at FCS.

## **Change in Staff**

Should there be a change in staff, besides normal teacher sick day/substitutes during the course of the school year, we will notify parents/guardians of these changes in writing.

## **Newsletters and Communications**

A class letter is sent home weekly. Newsletters can be found

## **Chain of Authority/Grievance**

To make the most of your child's preschool experience, it is important to address any questions or concerns with your child's Lead Teacher as soon as they arise. This can be done by writing a note to the Lead Teacher or by calling the school and leaving a message for the Lead Teacher. If concerns remain after discussing them with the Lead Teacher, then the Executive Director can be contacted. The Lead Teacher and Director will document all conversations with a parent regarding a concern and place the written record of these conversations in the child's folder. In addition, any grievances regarding school administration or programming may be directed to the Executive Director, which will then be brought to the FCS Board of Directors. Complaint forms are available in the school lobby.

In addition, we value and welcome your input and suggestions at any time. If you have ideas or suggestions, please bring them to the Executive Director. We work hard to provide a socially, physically, and educationally rich environment and realize there is always room for improvement as we strive to be the best possible.

## **Use of Photographs, Videotapes, Personal Emails and Addresses**

From time to time, your child may have his/her picture taken or end up on video. This may include photos for our website and/or promotional materials. **If you do not want your child's picture taken or displayed, or email/home address information provided to other families, please notify the school in writing and address it to the Executive Director.** If we do not have a written letter on file from you, it will be assumed that photographing or videotaping your child is acceptable.

## **Party Celebrations and Invitations**

Please **DO NOT** send in birthday invitations, birthday goodie bags, and/or holiday treats/goodie bags to hand out and/or share. Birthdays will be acknowledged with a birthday crown, “birthday book” and if families choose, a snack may be provided from our “Safe Snack List.”

## **Special Traditions**

Here at FCS, we encourage diversity. We welcome all families to share with us special family traditions. If you are interested in sharing a special family tradition, please see your child’s Lead Teacher. At FCS, holidays are minimized and kept developmentally appropriate and culturally respectful. For example, in October classrooms may make black and orange collages, in November, we focus on families, in December we investigate the five senses through symbols/traditions of the season. In February, only our Pre-K children will exchange cards as we feel this is more developmentally appropriate.

## **Communication by Families or Room Parent Coordinators**

All written and email correspondence from a parent, (such as a Room Parent Coordinator) to other program members in the FCS programs must first be approved by the Executive Director. This practice helps us to ensure uniformity and clear communications among the classrooms, as well as accuracy of the content of such communications.

## **Withdrawal of a Child/Termination Policy**

A parent/guardian wishing to withdraw a child from the program must give written notification to the Executive Director one month in advance. Failure to do so will result in a continuation of the scheduled payment. If your child is moving or being withdrawn from school, tuition will be reimbursed for the days that your child would not be in school. There will be no refunds after April 1<sup>st</sup>. In rare cases, it may be necessary to find an alternate preschool situation for a child. The following are a few reasons why a child may be terminated from the program: The health and safety of the child, other children, and other staff members at the school cannot be assured, the child’s developmental needs are not being met at the school, the lack of meeting financial commitments, documented challenging behavior that creates a disorderly/disruptive environment, and/or disrespectful/physical behavior or verbal abuse. In such cases, a conference with the family will be requested. The family will be informed verbally and provided with a written description of the reasons for termination. A copy of the letter will be kept in the child’s records. The Lead Teacher and Director will prepare the child for termination in a manner consistent with the child’s ability to understand.

## **Snow Day/Emergency Make-Up Sessions**

In the rare event of a school emergency that forces FCS to close for more than one week, make-up days may be scheduled at the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

## Parent Volunteers

We encourage the involvement of parents/guardians and welcome you as volunteers to our classrooms. In the past, our program has been successful due to the generous time that parents/guardians have donated throughout the year. If you are interested in volunteering, all volunteers must do so by first, informing the Lead Teacher and then signing up on the calendars located in the school lobby. We ask that you volunteer a maximum of two times during the year, as this allows the opportunity for families to participate. We also suggest that you volunteer for an hour and half, as this allows ample time for the daily routine of the class to be maintained. Siblings are not allowed in the classroom while parents are volunteering due to insurance liabilities. Prior to volunteering, you will also need to read a copy of the Parent Volunteer Information pamphlet. You will also need to complete a BRC/DCF background check prior to your first time volunteering.

## Emergency, Evacuation and Lockdowns

Throughout the year, students and staff will conduct monthly announced and unannounced emergency evacuation/lockdown drills. The staff will direct the children to designated areas within and outside the school for their safety. Each classroom has a posted routine to be followed. The date, time, and effectiveness of each drill will be recorded in the Evacuation Drill section of the logbook.

## School Evacuation Procedures

1. The teachers lead all children out front door (classroom A) and side door (classroom B); Hallway door (classroom C) unless blocked by fire.
2. If blocked by fire, exit out the hallway common area door and into parking lot.
3. Teachers take attendance book.
4. Assistant teachers follow; being sure all children have exited.
5. Proceed to far end of playground (away from the building) teachers take attendance.
6. Lead Teacher calls fire department #911 then, if safe closes doors and windows. Take second attendance in playground; verifying that all children are accounted for.

The following is a list of people that should be provided with information about Franklin Children's School and our emergency plan.

Town Administrator:		Jeffrey Nutting	#508-520-4949
Fire Department:	Captain	Stephen Parchesky	#508-528-2323
	Deputy Chief	Paul Sharpe	#508-528-2323
Police Department:	Chief	Lawrence Benedetto	#508-528-1212
	Lt.	Ralph DeLucia	#508-528-1212
Water/Sewer:		Tony Mucciaron	#508-520-4915
Board of Health:		Bruce Hunchard	#508-520-4905
Highway Dept.:	Philip Brunelli		#508-520-4911

## OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Massachusetts Electric Company:	#1-800-456-1212
Verizon Telephone (repairs):	#1-508-555-1515
Northern Propane:	#1-800-225-2052
Accurate Heat-Air Services:	#1-508-520-7248
Plumber:	#508-528-6998
J. Hockman Septic Services	#508-384-1400

The information that we provide them with should include:

- **Name:** Franklin Children’s School, Inc.
- **Location:** 900 Chestnut Street, Franklin, MA
- **Building size:** approximately 4,752 square feet
- **Building type:** block and steel construction
- **Occupancy** (approximately): 85
- **Locations of exits:** Front of Building, side facing parking lot, side facing playground, rear of building, and 2 loading docks located on the rear of the building and side facing the parking lot
- **Fire Alarm System:** Central Station Alarm \*\*\*Pull Stations located by all exits
- **Power Source:** Electricity: Massachusetts Electric Heat: Northern Propane
- **Sewer and Water:** Town water
- **A copy of Emergency Plan**, including our mission statement
- **Contacts at Franklin Children’s School, Inc.:**
  - April Davenport – Executive Director
  - Ellen McGann – Assistant Director
  - Anne Umbarger – Assistant Director

## SPECIFIC EMERGENCIES

### 1. Fire

- Evacuate the building (see evacuation procedure)
- Executive Director calls 911 (refer to rules for calling 911)
- Stay calm in order for the children to stay calm
- Lead Teacher gives final scan of the classrooms
- Lead Teacher takes the attendance book
- Guide children to far end of the playground
- Lead Teacher takes attendance
- Stay in the playground until Fire Department officials determine if it is safe to enter the building

\*\*\*If it is safe to enter the building:

- Guide the children back inside in an orderly manner
- Meet on a rug and discuss what happened appropriate to the age of the children
- Talk about “how we did” and the importance of having a plan

### 2. Medical Emergency

- The first Teacher on the scene renders the appropriate aid (i.e. First Aid or CPR)
- Stay Calm, the teacher administering aid summons another Staff Member to call 911
- The remaining teacher (s) involves the other children in a song, story, etc. and reassures them that the injured/ill child is being helped (Remember to give the other children in the

program adequate attention/supervision. Many times, when an injury occurs staff focus on the injured child, which can lead to a second injury.

**3. Loss of Power**

- A. Executive Director notifies Massachusetts Electric Company
- B. If early dismissal is necessary Executive Director activates the Phone Chain

**4. Loss of Water/Sewer Backup**

- A. Executive Director notifies Town of Franklin Water Department
- B. Evacuate the building (see evacuation procedure)
- C. If early dismissal is necessary Executive Director activates the Phone Chain

\*\*\*In the case of a sewer backup the Town's Health Agent must be notified

**5. Loss of Heat**

- A. Executive Director notifies Victory Heating & Air Conditioning
- B. If early dismissal is necessary Executive Director activates the Phone Chain

**6. Natural Disaster**

- A. Remaining calm, teachers contain the children in the safest area of the building
- B. Executive Director activates the Emergency Relocation Plan
- C. Executive Director activates the Phone Chain

**7. Weather Related Issues (Hurricane, Blizzard)**

- A. If the weather becomes inclement the Executive Director reserves the right to release children early and cancel any subsequent sessions that day.
- B. The Executive Director activates the Phone Chain.

**8. Crime**

- A. The Lead Teachers and Teachers calmly guide the children to safety and secure the building (i.e. lock themselves and the children inside if at all possible).
- B. A 911-phone call will be made by a staff member.

**9. A Child is Lost**

- A. Teachers gather children in a safe area to provide supervision and reassurance
- B. Lead Teacher calls 911 and provides a description of the child.
- C. Executive Director notifies Parents/Guardians

**10. Structural Damage to the Building**

- A. Executive Director deems if it is necessary to evacuate  
(See Evacuation Procedure)
- B. Executive Director activates the Emergency Relocation Plan if necessary
- C. Executive Director activates the Phone Chain.
- D. Executive Director notifies The Executive Committee

## **11. Relocation Procedure**

- A. Evacuate the Building (see evacuation procedure)
- B. Executive Director Calls 911 and Civil Defense Officer Walter Manning #508-520-6590)
- C. Stay calm in order for the children to stay calm
- D. Plans for Transportation are provided:
  1. Staff Members transporting children in seatbelts
  2. Plans will include:
    - A. Staff driving vehicles in an orderly manner up to the gate at the playground and buckling in children into their vehicles.
    - B. Attendance Books to accompany Staff.
    - C. Executive Director is the last to depart making sure all children and adults are accounted for.
    - D. Calls made to Executive Committee if time permits
    - E. Calls made to Phone Chain if time permits.

\*\*\*All adults and children will be transported and relocated.

### **Child Abuse/Neglect**

According to Massachusetts's law, a teacher is a Mandated Reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect. Based on legal requirements, guidelines, procedures and information, memoranda have been prepared to provide direction for our staff in identifying and reporting suspected child abuse/neglect cases.

- Abuse means the infliction, by other than accidental means, of physical harm upon the body of a child.
- Neglect means the failure to provide necessary food, care, clothing, shelter or medical attention for a child. Signs of abuse may include: bruises or welts, burns, cuts, tears, scrapes, and head injuries.

Cases of reported abuse or neglect are to remain confidential. Discussion of these situations is limited to appropriate meetings with staff members who have a need to know or authorized personnel from the Department of Public Welfare or the Children's Protective Services.

Any staff member who suspects that a child has been abused shall report this as soon as possible to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will notify the Department of Social Services by telephone and within two (2) days submit a written report (Form 51A) to:

Department of Social Services  
185 Church Street  
Whitinsville, MA 01588  
(508) 234-6213

## **Parents Information, Rights and Responsibilities**

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of promulgating and enforcing rules and regulations governing the operation of child care centers (including nursery schools), and school age child care programs.

These regulations, 102 CMR 7.00, establish minimum standards for operation of group childcare and school age child care programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (child care program owner) in regard to their work with parents. A summary of the required parent information, rights, and responsibilities follows.

Parental Input. The licensee must appropriately involve parents of children in care in visiting the program, meeting with the staff and receiving reports of their children's progress. The program must have a procedure for allowing you to give input and make suggestions, but it is up to the program to decide whether or not they will be implemented.

Meeting with parents. In-group child care programs, the licensee shall assure that the administrator or his designee meets with the parent(s) prior to admitting a child to the program. The parents shall have an opportunity to visit the program's classrooms at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of the child. In school age programs, the licensee shall provide an opportunity for the parent(s) and child to visit the program and meet the staff before the child's enrollment.

Parent Information. The licensee must provide to the parents upon admission of their child the program's written statement of purpose, including the program philosophy, goals and objectives, and the characteristics of children served; information on the administrative organization of the program, including lines of authority and supervision; the program's behavior management policy; the program's plan for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, education and medical services for children; the termination and suspension policy; a list of nutritious foods to be sent for snacks or meals; the program's policy and procedures for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect; the procedures for emergency health care and the illness exclusion policy; the program's transportation plan; the procedure for administration of medication, and, upon request, a copy of the complete health care policy; a copy of the fee schedule, and in school age child care, the procedures for on-going parent communication. All of this information may be contained in a "Parent Handbook".

Parent Conferences. The licensee must make staff available for individual conferences with parents at your request.

Progress Reports. At least every six (6) months the licensee should meet with you to discuss your child's activities and participation in the program. The licensee will prepare a written progress report for your child, will provide a copy to you, and will maintain a copy of the report in your child's file. If your child is an infant or a child with disabilities, you should receive a written progress report at least every three (3) months. Program staff must bring special problems or significant developments, particularly if they regard infants, to your attention as soon as they arise.

Parent Visits. You have the right to visit the center and your child's room at any time while your child is present.

Children's Records. Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. Program staff may not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without your written consent. You must be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

Access to your child's record. You are entitled to have access to your child's record at reasonable times on request. You must have access to the record within two (2) business days of your request unless you consent to a longer time period. You must be allowed to view your child's entire record, even if it is maintained in more than one location. The center must have procedures governing access to, duplication of, and dissemination of children's record, and must maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record which identifies anyone who has had access to the record or who has received any information from the record. This log is available only to you and the people responsible for maintaining the center's records.

Amending your child's record. You have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to the child's record. You also have the right request deletion or amendment of any information contained in your child's record. If you believe that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, you have the right to a conference with the licensee to make your objections known. If you have a conference with the licensee, the licensee must inform you in writing within one week of his decision regarding your objections. If the licensee decides in your favor, he must immediately take the steps necessary to put the decision into effect.

Transfer of Records. When your child is no longer in care, the licensee can give your child's record to you, or any other person you identify, upon your written request.

Charge for Copies. The licensee shall not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in your child's record.

## **PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Providing Information to the Department

The program must make available any information requested by the Department to determine compliance with any Department regulations governing the program, by providing access to its facilities, records, staff and references.

### Reporting abuse or neglect

All center staff are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to either the Department of Social Services or to the licensee's program administrator. The licensee must have written policies and procedures for reporting and must provide the written policy to you upon enrollment.

### Notification of injury

The licensee must notify you immediately of any injury, which requires emergency care. The licensee must also notify you, in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child.

### Availability of EEC Regulations

The program must maintain a copy of the regulations, *102 CMR 7.00: Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs*, on the premises of the center and must make them available to any person upon request. If you have a question about any of the regulations, ask the center to show them to you.

### **Franklin Children' School Lending Library**

Franklin Children's School, Inc. has an extensive list of parenting books that you are welcome to borrow. They are located in the school lobby.

### **Toilet Training and Toileting Procedures are as follows:**

1. No child shall be punished, verbally abused, or humiliated for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.
2. Children shall wash their hands with soap and running water after toileting, before snacks and/or handling food. Staff members shall also wash their hands with soap and running water after assisting children with toileting or toileting themselves. Disposable towels shall be used to dry hands.
3. Clothing soiled by feces, urine, vomit, or blood shall be "double-bagged" in sealed plastic bags and stored apart from other items.
4. A change of clothes shall be available for each child. Extra, center owned clothing should be available for changing purposes in addition to clothing brought from home by each child. Center-owned clothing must be laundered after being worn by a child.
5. Children must be toilet trained in accordance with the requests of their parents and in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities.
6. Children shall be supervised during toileting.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FRANKLIN CHILDREN'S SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge that I have read the material enclosed in the Franklin Children's School, Inc Family Handbook. I understand the information enclosed. I understand the Health Care policies and Emergency Plan procedures of Franklin Children's School, Inc.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Program: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like your email address to be included on the class list please provide FCS with your email address below:

\_\_\_\_\_