



FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



ELEMENTARY PROGRAM GUIDE



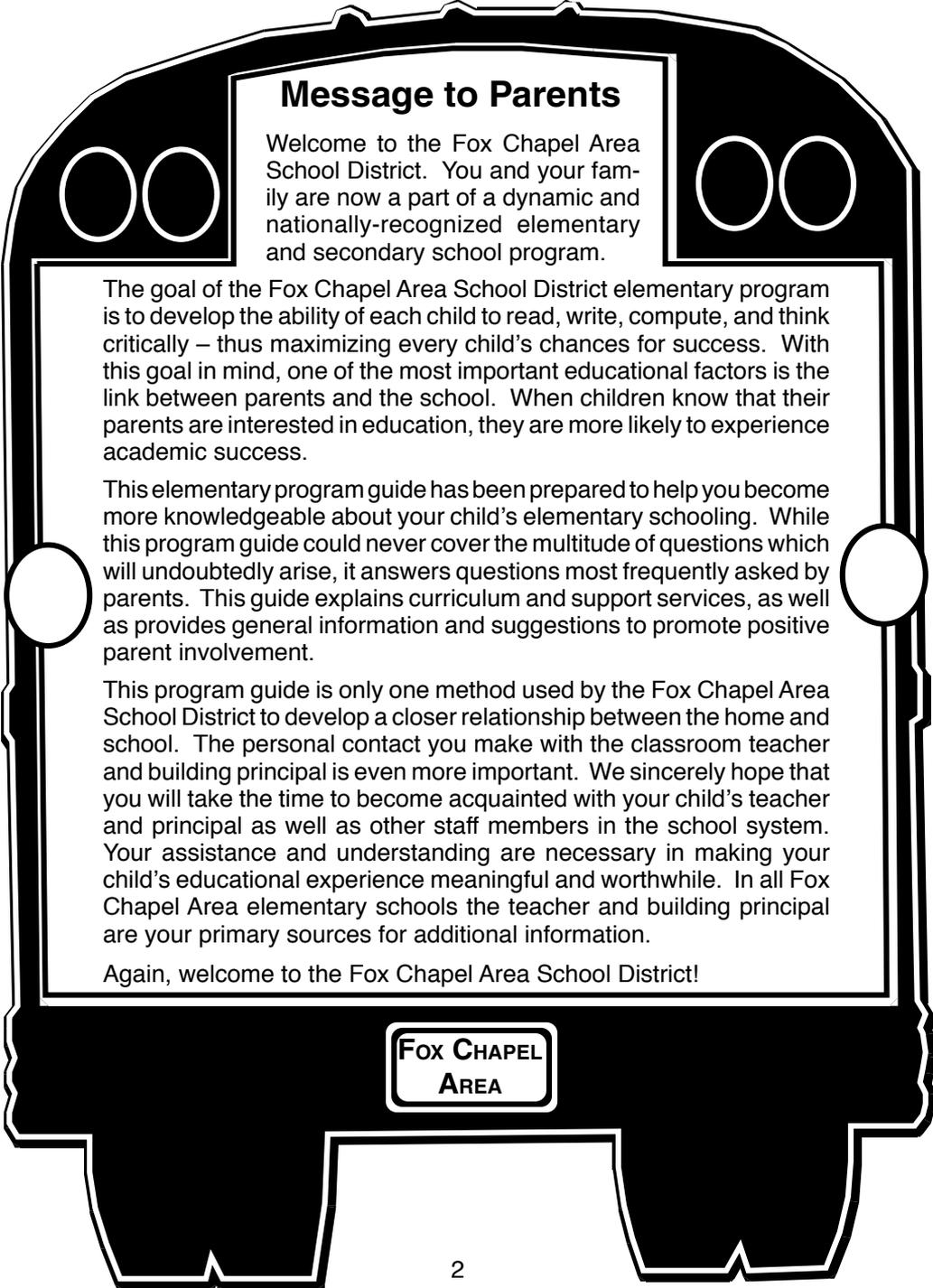
**FOX CHAPEL AREA
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*"Excellence is not an act,
but a habit." –Aristotle*

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Message to Parents

Welcome to the Fox Chapel Area School District. You and your family are now a part of a dynamic and nationally-recognized elementary and secondary school program.

The goal of the Fox Chapel Area School District elementary program is to develop the ability of each child to read, write, compute, and think critically – thus maximizing every child's chances for success. With this goal in mind, one of the most important educational factors is the link between parents and the school. When children know that their parents are interested in education, they are more likely to experience academic success.

This elementary program guide has been prepared to help you become more knowledgeable about your child's elementary schooling. While this program guide could never cover the multitude of questions which will undoubtedly arise, it answers questions most frequently asked by parents. This guide explains curriculum and support services, as well as provides general information and suggestions to promote positive parent involvement.

This program guide is only one method used by the Fox Chapel Area School District to develop a closer relationship between the home and school. The personal contact you make with the classroom teacher and building principal is even more important. We sincerely hope that you will take the time to become acquainted with your child's teacher and principal as well as other staff members in the school system. Your assistance and understanding are necessary in making your child's educational experience meaningful and worthwhile. In all Fox Chapel Area elementary schools the teacher and building principal are your primary sources for additional information.

Again, welcome to the Fox Chapel Area School District!

FOX CHAPEL
AREA

The Elementary Program

Overview

Guided by the elementary principals, an instructional staff of highly qualified teachers provides a rigorous and thorough program of instruction for students in kindergarten through grade five. Classrooms are organized to meet the instructional needs of children and various methods and materials are used to achieve high educational standards.

The early years of school are critical to future academic success. Children in the primary grades (kindergarten through grade three) participate in an academic program designed to meet the needs of young children. They learn to read, express their thoughts through writing and critical thinking, and work with numbers and mathematical operations. Children are also engaged in inquiry-based thinking through the disciplines of science and social studies. Opportunities are available to participate in the arts, engage in physical activity, access computer technology, and make use of extensive library collections.

While children in the primary grades are learning to read, write, and compute – children in grades four and five are applying these basic skills as they read to learn, write to communicate, use numbers to solve problems, and think critically in all areas of the curriculum including technology, the arts, physical education, and the use of the library.

Admission Requirements

Admission of kindergarten children begins in the late winter/early spring of the school year preceding admission and continues through the summer.

Kindergarten registration is usually held during the month of March. Pupils entering school for the first time must present certification of birth. Presentation of birth certificate is preferred, but baptismal record or hospital notification of birth is acceptable. Additionally, **two forms** of proof of residency are also required. Children must be **five years of age** on or before September 1 to be admitted to kindergarten, and age six by September 1 for first grade.

State law requires that all children entering any school for the first time in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania be immunized against specified diseases prior to admission. Parents should refer to the “Health Program” section of this guide for further information (please see page 14).



Early Admission

Under certain circumstances, a child who will turn five after the September 1 cutoff, but before December 1 of that year, may be admitted to kindergarten. Parents desiring such early admission must submit a letter of request to the superintendent prior to August 1.

Once a child has been identified as a potential candidate for early admission, he or she will be screened by the school counselor. The counselor's findings will be reviewed by a district psychologist, who may schedule further testing. For more information regarding early admission, contact the principal or school counselor.

Children who have attended kindergarten in another elementary school and who move into the Fox Chapel Area School District will not automatically be required to repeat kindergarten, regardless of their birth dates. However, they will be subject to grade placement screening, the results of which may determine a recommendation of a repeat of kindergarten or a first grade placement.

Guidelines for Student Placement

Assignment of students to classes is a high priority in all of the elementary schools. The classroom assignment is an important decision which involves many factors. In an effort to provide a workable placement procedure for all students, the following guidelines have been developed:

- Educational factors (academic, social, emotional, and physical) will be the primary determinants in student placement decisions.
- Attention will be given to a heterogeneous balance in each classroom regarding the number of boys and girls, the total number of students, and their learning needs.
- The professional staff will recommend student placement. Final placement decisions will be approved by the principal.
- After placement decisions are made, factors such as fluctuating enrollment, changes in teacher assignment, possible teacher transfer/resignation/retirement, schedule of classes, and/or additional educational information could alter an assignment.
- Letters on tentative student assignment will be mailed to parents approximately two weeks before the first day of school.

The main goal of this process is to address the needs of all children through a fair and consistent placement procedure. We appreciate the cooperation of parents in implementing these guidelines.

The Elementary Curriculum

Language Arts (Reading, Composition, Spelling, and Handwriting)

In kindergarten through third grade, children are developing their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Since these skills are interrelated, they are developed in an integrated format. During these critical years of language development, children grow from being pretend or role-play readers in kindergarten, to reading classic literature and novels in third grade. Children develop their ability to read and comprehend printed text through a structured program incorporating phonics instruction, listening to and reading literature, discussing and writing about what they have read, and using specific strategies to expand their vocabulary and increase the fluency of their reading.



Written language develops in much the same way, with kindergarten children starting the year “writing” stories using pictures, while third graders are composing paragraphs, fictional stories, letters, and research reports. Children follow a writing process that begins with the first draft, followed by student and teacher revision and editing, and, finally, “publication” in a final, corrected format. Children learn the rules of English grammar and spelling. Additionally, formal handwriting instruction is provided to develop this critical skill.

While children in kindergarten through third grade are learning how to read and write, children in grades four and five are reading and writing to learn. Children in fourth and fifth grades are expected to be reading independently at school and at home. Formal reading instruction is provided to strengthen their ability to not only understand what they have read, but to be able to discuss what they have read orally and in writing. A wide variety of literature is introduced with the goals of broadening children’s horizons and expanding their understanding of themselves and others. Children also begin utilizing the resources of the elementary school libraries to research topics of interest, to complete class assignments, and to find books to read for enjoyment.

The writing process used in the primary grades is also used in grades four and five. Children are asked to write specific types of stories and reports, as well as address different audiences. Again, emphasis is placed on learning the rules of English grammar, expanding written vocabulary through the spelling program, and further refining handwriting skills.



Mathematics

There is an increasing need for children to be literate in the language of mathematics. “Math literacy” includes the ability to compute accurately and efficiently, to use the tools of mathematics (calculators and computers, for example), to use logic and reasoning in solving complex problems, and to understand the mathematics concepts and principles that are the basis of this

academic discipline. The elementary mathematics program is designed to guide children in developing the ability to use arithmetic skills accurately, while gaining understanding of more complex mathematical concepts. Instruction is standards-based, addressing areas such as number sense, computation, estimation, measurement, geometry, and higher-level mathematical concepts related to algebra, trigonometry, and calculus.

Science

The elementary science program uses hands-on experimentation and text materials to teach children how to analyze and investigate problems and questions, develop their knowledge of science, and foster their curiosity about the natural world. Units of study address the areas of physical, earth, and life sciences.

Environmental Education

Environmental education is an important component of the science curriculum. Children in kindergarten investigate the environment around the school. First through fourth graders move out into the local community to study plant and animal life, habitats, and the importance of caring for natural resources. Fifth graders apply and extend what they have learned during a residential camp experience in the early fall of each school year.

Health

Good personal health habits and safety are fostered throughout all levels of the district’s comprehensive elementary health education program. The health program is integrated into the elementary science curriculum and is designed to address the developmental needs of children. Major health topics include: mental and social health, human growth and development, personal health, safety and first aid, physical fitness, drugs and alcohol, disease, and environmental and community health.

The fifth grade human growth and development unit is integrated into the total health curriculum, with the classroom teacher and school nurse assuming the responsibility for this instruction. Parents of fifth grade students receive written notice of the specific dates when this instruction will occur.

Social Studies

The elementary social studies program uses inquiry to build upon children's growing awareness and interest in the world around them. Content is organized through a "widening horizons" approach. The program begins with a study of self, friends, and family, and expands to a study of neighborhood, community, state, region, and nation. The general emphasis throughout the curriculum is on history, geography, civics and government, and economics.

Skill development in elementary social studies is multidisciplinary. There is attention to skills typically associated with social studies (reading maps, graphs, etc.), as well as those from areas not directly associated with social studies, such as reading and language arts.

Technology Instruction

Students need to become proficient in a world of ever-increasing technological growth. Through both computer and video technology, students are linked to educational resources around the world.

Formal computer instruction is incorporated throughout the elementary program. Essential elements of the instructional program include computer awareness, computer operations, word processing, and multimedia presentations.

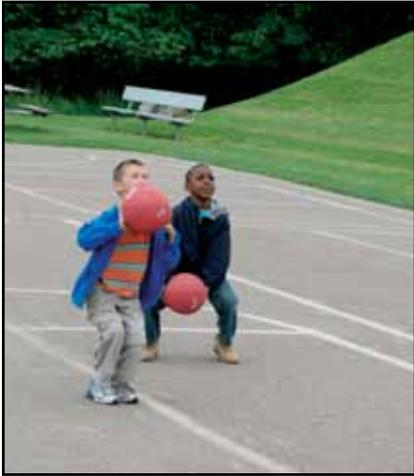


Each elementary school has a computer teacher and resource center with a sufficient number of computers to accommodate a class. In addition, each building has classroom computer stations and shared laptop carts that are used to integrate technology into daily classroom activities. As children master the basic operations of the technology, the emphasis shifts to application and use of technology.

Art

Children in kindergarten through grade five attend scheduled art classes taught by highly qualified teachers. The art concepts of form and space, color and value, texture, shape, and line provide the framework for the curriculum. This program helps children increase their skills and basic knowledge of art. It also provides children the opportunity to work creatively, to seek personal solutions to problems, and to become more aware of their surroundings. Projects and problems presented also help students, particularly in the primary grades, to develop muscle control and hand/eye coordination.

To accomplish these objectives, children gain experience with a variety of materials including: crayons, paint, paper, cloth, dye, clay, papier-mâché, wood, and metal. Such experiences, coupled with an introduction to famous works of art, are intended to serve as a source of personal enjoyment throughout life or to establish a solid foundation for later serious pursuit of art.



Physical Education

Under the supervision of physical education teachers, students in grades one through five participate in scheduled physical education classes for two periods each week and once a week for students in kindergarten.

Participation in physical activity is critical throughout the elementary school years to assist in the development of motor skills and body control. The physical education program emphasizes students' skill development, wellness concepts, sportsmanship, and overall fitness levels. Additionally, children have the opportunity to develop lifelong habits of physical activity and fitness.

Adaptive physical education services are provided for students who cannot participate within a regular class or when a diagnostic approach is needed to achieve optimum progress for a child. This option may be in place of, or in addition to, the regular class.

An extension of the physical education program is offered after school for both boys and girls in grades four and five who are interested in intramural sports.

Music

Elementary music specialists work with children to develop an appreciation of and interest in music. The program provides a variety of experiences including singing, movement, music appreciation, music reading, composition, and improvisation.

Vocal/general music is scheduled twice a week for all students in grades one through five and once a week for students in kindergarten. Students are introduced to the recorder in third grade and continue their recorder instruction through fifth grade.

At the third grade level students may elect to begin playing an instrument from the string family, taught by a string specialist. All string instrumentalists participate in an elementary orchestra. Students may choose to begin studying wind, brass, or percussion instruments at the fourth grade level and continue through the next year under the direction of instrumental specialists. All of these students participate in elementary bands.

The classroom music groups, elementary orchestra, and elementary bands perform publicly throughout the school year.

Elementary Libraries

Each of the elementary buildings has a separate, well-equipped library. Certified librarians staff and direct a program of planned instruction offering opportunities for independent reading, research, and study. Every class is scheduled for a 40-minute period in the library each week. That time includes instruction in library usage, as well as storytelling and book and author discussions. Additionally, there are other times when the library may be used by students and teachers for work related to other areas of the curriculum.



Children may sign out books from the school library for a week at a time. If a book is lost or damaged, the student who signed it out must pay the full replacement value of the book.

The libraries also serve as media centers for the schools. Audio visual hardware and software, computer courseware, reference materials, and magazines are available for use both in and out of school. The Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) system enables any child or teacher to search all district libraries for resources. Links to other sources outside the district, such as university libraries, make the school libraries true centers for information.

Testing and Reporting Progress

Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times each year in grades one through five, and three times each year in kindergarten. In addition, scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held twice each year for the purpose of communicating with parents about student progress. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers at any time during the school year when they have questions or concerns about their child's progress.

Interim progress reports are issued midway through each report period. These reports are issued to students who are experiencing difficulties and also may be issued to students who are demonstrating significant growth or progress.

Standardized Testing Program

In addition to the typical classroom assessments used by teachers to determine student learning, several standardized measures are used to gauge overall academic achievement. The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), a test mandated by the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is administered to elementary students at certain grade levels. The Terra Nova and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) are also administered at the elementary level. A testing schedule and lists of various tests administered are sent to parents each year.

Special Services

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII)

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) is a process that fosters systematic research-based instruction and interventions for all learners. Instruction and interventions are matched to student needs, and the monitoring of progress is continuous. Teachers regularly collect and analyze student assessment data to measure whole group and individual student progress related to grade-level benchmarks and to plan and implement classroom and support interventions. At any time, parents may be invited to discuss their individual child's growth. This approach to monitoring student progress promotes student success.

Information gathered as a part of the RtII process may lead to a decision to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. A multidisciplinary evaluation is a comprehensive evaluation that contains information on a student's educational needs and strengths, the interpretation of assessment results, observations from classrooms and other settings, and information from parents. The multidisciplinary evaluation is used in making recommendations regarding eligibility for educational support services and other educational programming. A multidisciplinary evaluation can only be completed with parental permission.

Special Education

Special education services are provided to those children who meet criteria determined by state and/or federal legislation. A multidisciplinary evaluation must be completed to determine whether the child meets the criteria. This process (described above) results in a written Evaluation Report. To be eligible for services a student must have a disability that could affect his/her progress in the regular education curriculum and the student must need specially designed instruction. If the multidisciplinary evaluation determines that a student is eligible for services an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed that describes the type of support services needed by the student. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Learning Support – support for academic learning;
- Life Skills Support – support with activities of daily living;
- Emotional Support – support for emotional and behavioral needs;
- Sensory Support – support for vision and hearing needs; and/or
- Speech and Language Support – support for communication needs.

An IEP team, consisting of the child's parents, regular and special education teachers, a school administrator, and other individuals at the discretion of the parents or district, meet to develop an IEP based on assessment information from the evaluation. The IEP will include:

- a description of the student's learning and behavioral needs;
- a description of how the identified disability affects the student's progress in the regular education curriculum;
- specific goals and objectives to address learning and behavioral needs;
- specially designed instruction needed to assist the student in meeting the goals;
- related services needed for the student to benefit from the education program;
- where services will be provided and the amount of time with nondisabled peers; and
- for students 14 years and older, a plan for transition from school to adult life.

The educational services developed by the IEP team may be provided to a child in different settings: within the regular education classroom, within a special education classroom in the school, or outside of the regular school, when appropriate.



An IEP will be developed within 30 calendar days after the Evaluation Report is sent to parents. Following the completion of the IEP, parents will be given a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) in order to obtain parental agreement with the IEP. The services in the IEP will begin no later than 10 days after it is completed, if parents agree with the program and the placement described in the IEP. Disagreements between parents and the district can be resolved through one of these methods: a pre-hearing conference, mediation, or a due process hearing. Detailed written information on rights and safeguards of students with disabilities is provided to parents who have a child that is identified as needing special education or one who is thought to be eligible for special education.

Gifted Education

Gifted education is provided to children who meet criteria described in Pennsylvania school law and district policy. The process of determining eligibility begins with collection of screening information from a variety of sources, such as scores of cognitive abilities and achievement tests, grades, and teacher ratings. When multiple criteria indicate that the student may need instruction beyond the regular education curricula, an individual test of intelligence is administered and information from parents is requested. Parental permission is obtained prior to collecting the initial data and before the district school psychologist administers the individual intelligence test. Parents may submit the results of the intelligence testing administered by a certified school psychologist who is not employed by the school district for the gifted multidisciplinary team to consider. When a student meets the criteria, a Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP) is developed and Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) is presented for parental approval of the program and placement.

The gifted program options are:

- The pull-out experience includes 90-minutes per week of instruction and activities with a gifted education teacher and other identified gifted students.
- Acceleration in depth includes application, extension, and enrichment activities that replace and/or supplement work in grade-level courses.
- Acceleration in pacing is instruction at an advanced level. A student must demonstrate the skills and understanding necessary for placement at an advanced level in reading and/or math.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

The primary goal of the English as a Second Language (ESL) program is to increase the English language proficiency (social and academic language skills) of children whose native or dominant language is not English and/or whose English language development may have been affected by other languages spoken in the home. English as a Second Language is also designed to help children understand and cope with a new cultural setting and to provide a source of support as they strive for increasing independence in a new culture. English Language Learners (children who receive ESL services) are assigned to the program based on responses to a Home Language Survey and recommendations resulting from English language proficiency screenings/evaluations as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The amount of one-to-one and small group instruction by a specialist varies depending on the needs of the individual student. Instruction of English language skills occurs at the children's appropriate developmental and proficiency levels primarily or solely using the English language as a basis for delivery. Instruction is correlated with the Pennsylvania Department of Education English Language Proficiency Standards and the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, and Speaking. Exiting from the program occurs based on established evaluation criteria. Follow-up monitoring occurs for a two-year period to ensure that the child's English language skills enable successful performance within the general curriculum.

Elementary School Counseling and Psychological Services

Through individual and group contacts, elementary school counselors attempt to facilitate students' social, emotional, and academic adjustments and growth in the general school and classroom environments. Elementary school counseling programs are designed to provide supportive assistance for children, as a preventative service, and as a service for those experiencing difficulties. Academically, the school counselors are responsible for screenings to address issues such as kindergarten readiness, grade placement, or difficulty in school. School counselors also coordinate and implement developmental classroom activities based on mental health and social awareness concepts. Upon parental request and approval, individual counseling is available to children and parents. There is a school counselor in each elementary school whom parents may contact by calling the school office.

The Fox Chapel Area School District has a team of full-time and part-time school psychologists that service all schools in the district. Some of the services that are provided by the school psychologists include: serving on multidisciplinary team evaluations for special education and gifted education; consulting with the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) facilitator; consulting and collaborating with the school counseling department, administrators, teachers, and parents; participating on Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams; and collaborating with early intervention services (for example, DART programs).

Reading Support Programs

Reading support classes are available in each building to provide support for students who are not reading at expected levels. Reading specialists screen students and analyze each student's reading performance to determine a need for intervention.

Children receive small-group instruction in addition to regular classroom reading instruction. Interventions used in the reading support program are research-based and designed to accelerate learning so that eventually children are successful in the classroom without this support.

Reading Recovery[®] is a program for first grade students provided during a daily half-hour lesson with a Reading Recovery teacher. Each session consists of reading and rereading several small books, writing a brief story, practicing letter formation and sounds, and taking books home nightly for additional practice with parents. The goal of Reading Recovery is to provide intensive instruction to accelerate learning until students can read at the average level of the class.



Children in reading support and Reading Recovery are more successful when parents reinforce formal instruction by reading to children at home each day. Parents receive notification of student progress and should plan to meet with the reading support teachers on elementary conference days.

Reading support activities are financed, in part, by federal funds made available through Title I. Special Title I-sponsored meetings are held during the year to discuss issues of interest to parents.

Health Program*

Immunizations

Every student attending school in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania must be immunized against the following diseases prior to being admitted to school:

4 Doses	Diphtheria and Tetanus Vaccine (including one dose given after the child's fourth birthday).
3 Doses	Polio (OPV or IPV) Vaccine.
2 Doses	Measles and Mumps Vaccine (on or after the child's first birthday)
1 Dose	Rubella Vaccine (on or after the child's first birthday)
3 Doses	Hepatitis B Vaccine
2 Doses	Varicella (chicken pox) Vaccine, or history of disease (written statement from physician indicating year and month of disease, or laboratory testing)

State law requires that proof of immunization, serology results, or doctor's verification be provided before any child can be admitted to school. Families are encouraged to obtain the needed immunizations from their physicians. However, the Allegheny County Health Department does offer the required vaccines free-of-charge. To obtain information about clinic location and times, interested persons should contact the Allegheny County Health Department Infectious Disease Program at 412/578-8060.

Exclusion from School

The Pennsylvania and Allegheny County health departments require exclusion of all students who are suspected of or have been diagnosed as having the following communicable diseases:

Illness	A student may return to school
Strep Throat and Scarlet Fever	24 hours after beginning appropriate treatment.
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	When judged not infective by a physician or school nurse.

Illness

A student may return to school

Chicken Pox

When all vesicles (sores) are crusted; approximately five days from eruption of first crop of vesicles.

Pediculosis (Head Lice)

After appropriate treatment has been instituted and child is "nit free" (as judged by the school nurse).

Scabies

After completion of appropriate treatment and judged not infective by a physician or school nurse.

Ringworm

After the first treatment, if body lesions are covered. Neither scalp nor body lesions that are dried need to be covered.

Impetigo

24 hours after beginning appropriate treatment.

The school nurse should be consulted if there are any questions or concerns regarding readmission to school.

Sickness and Injuries

Students should **not** be sent to school if they have:

- a fever of 100 degrees or more;
- vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours;
- a suspicious rash;
- a stomachache or fatigue, accompanied by a fever and/or vomiting;
- a headache lasting one-two days, or recurring;
- red, irritated eyes with pus-like or excessive watery drainage; and/or
- persistent, uncontrollable coughing and sneezing.

Students who become ill or injured at school should report immediately to the teacher. When children become ill at school, it is the parent's responsibility to provide transportation from school to home. Emergency care cards are completed by parents annually. The cards enable the school nurse to see that children receive the best possible aid in case of an emergency.



State-Mandated Health Screening

- **Physical examinations** are required upon entering school (kindergarten or first grade) and in sixth and 11th grades.
- **Dental examinations** are required upon entering school (kindergarten or first grade) and in third and seventh grades.

Although it is recommended that these state and county mandated examinations/tests be conducted by the student's regular family physician or pediatrician, they are also provided by the school district with written parental permission and given by an approved physician and/or dentist and the school nurse. Those wishing to have these state and county mandated examinations/tests performed by their regular family physician or pediatrician must obtain the required forms provided by the school nurse. These forms must then be returned to the school nurse upon completion.

Exams must be performed no earlier than four months before the beginning of the school year.

The following examinations are administered by the school nurse:

- **Vision screening tests** are given each year beginning with kindergarten.
- **Audio screening tests** are given in kindergarten, first, second, third, seventh, and 11th grades.
- **Height and weight** are measured and recorded annually from kindergarten through 12th grade. This assists in the evaluation of each child's growth.

Parents will be notified if further evaluation is indicated as a result of these screenings.

Administering Medication at School

A copy of the school medication policy is sent to parents at the beginning of each school year. Parents are advised to retain the policy and accompanying form for possible use throughout the school year. The form, to be completed by a parent and physician, should be taken along to any doctor's appointment when medication is anticipated. The policy and form are also available on the district's Web site at www.fcasd.edu.

Absolutely **no** medication (prescription or over-the-counter, including cough drops) will be administered at school unless all requirements of the medication policy are met.

**The preceding health program information is current as of the publication date. Parents will be notified separately of any changes to these health regulations and guidelines.*

General Information

Attendance

Children must attend school regularly from the time they enter “which shall not be later than at the age of eight (8) years, until the age of seventeen (17) years,” according to the Pennsylvania School Code, Section 1326.

The state of Pennsylvania requires school districts to follow strict compulsory attendance laws. As a result, school district attendance policies reflect these requirements. The state broadly defines absences as excused when a student is prevented from attendance for mental, physical, or other urgent reasons. The items below outline the key components of the attendance policy. Statements in italics are intended to help clarify the state’s wording.

- All absences should be treated as unlawful until the school district (school) receives a written excuse explaining the reason(s) for an absence. Parents/ guardians and students should submit the written explanation within three calendar days of the absence and should be informed that if they fail to provide a written excuse within three days of the absence, the absence would be permanently counted as unlawful. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) recommends that schools immediately inform parents in writing upon each incident of unlawful absence.

This means that a written excuse is required when a child returns to school after an absence. If the school does not receive a written excuse within three days of the absence, it remains an unlawful (unexcused) absence.

Written notification will be sent home upon each incident of unlawful (unexcused) absence.

- A maximum of ten days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification may be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten cumulative days should require an excuse from a physician.

Cumulative days are defined as the total number. They may be consecutive or accumulated throughout the school year.

Research indicates that good school attendance habits are important to academic success. The benefits of regular classroom instruction are difficult to replicate and, once lost, are often not regained. Please help us support the academic success of your child by complying with the state attendance law and Fox Chapel Area School District policy.



Tardiness

A child who arrives after the scheduled beginning time of the school day is required to present a note of explanation from his or her parent or guardian.

Non-School-Sponsored Educational Tours and Trips

Parents are urged to restrict travel which would result in children missing school. Lack of continuity disrupts instruction for the child and the class. Parents planning travel which will result in a student's absence from school must complete an educational tour and trip request form. This form states district policy in regard to educational tours and trips. Unless some emergency arises, such requests are to be made at least **two weeks prior** to the date of the tour or trip. Trips are not to be longer than 10 school days in length.

Early Dismissal



No child will be excused at any time other than regular dismissal times without permission from the parent or guardian. When a home emergency arises and a request for a child to leave school is made, the person making the request must be personally identified as the parent or as one bearing the written request of the parent and the child must be met in the school office. Presentation of identification will be required.

If it is necessary for a child to leave school for health reasons, the nurse or school office personnel will make arrangements with a parent or person designated on the emergency care card.

Students may **never** leave the building without permission.

Every child must go directly home from school unless accompanied by an adult, or unless a written request signed by a parent or guardian is made to the school for a departure from the child's regular route home. Children may not ride or walk home with a friend, for example, without written permission. Telephone requests **cannot** be honored.

Breakfast and Lunch Programs

School breakfast programs and lunch programs are offered at all district elementary schools at a reasonable cost to each family. Children who eat a healthy breakfast are more alert, less fatigued, and have a better chance to do well in school. Hot lunch is served at all of the elementary schools. The purpose of the school lunch program is to provide a well-balanced, nutritious midday meal. Through the lunchtime experience, children can also learn how to handle money and participate appropriately in a social setting. School lunch menus are posted online.

Milk is provided at all the elementary schools at an additional cost for children who do not participate in the hot lunch program or who desire a second serving of milk.

Forms are available in each school office as well as on the district's Web site (www.fcasd.edu) for families who may qualify for free or reduced price breakfasts and lunches. Participation is based on annual family income.

Recess

Outdoor play time is scheduled daily, weather permitting, and is supervised by a staff of monitors. Children are to be appropriately dressed for the weather. During inclement weather, the students will have indoor recess.

Transportation

Transportation to and from school is a **service** provided by the school district for students in kindergarten through grade 12. Therefore, all children are expected to follow the rules and guidelines established by the school district or this service may be denied. Bus drivers are responsible for the discipline and safety of the children while they are on the buses. Transportation privileges may be taken away by the school principal when misconduct is reported and founded.

Bus schedules are mailed to each family prior to the beginning of each school year. All children assigned to buses are expected to ride them to and from school. Students may not ride a bus to which they are not assigned.



Building Security

All visitors to the school, including parents, **must** report to the office whenever entering the building and sign in with the building secretary.

Morning Arrival

Parents who are bringing children to school are requested to bring their children no earlier than 15 minutes before the start of the school day.

School Supplies

Books, paper, and necessary materials are supplied by the school at no cost to the pupil. There will be a charge for items that are damaged or lost. The amount will not exceed the cost of the replacement. Any supplies that may be requested by the teacher are done so recognizing that children may or may not be able to secure these supplies. No child will be excluded from any educational activity because of a lack of material.

Accident Insurance

A limited student insurance policy is offered for each child. This insurance coverage (which would help to pay doctor, hospital, and dental bills resulting from accidental injury) basically covers the hours and days when school is in session and also covers the child while he or she attends school-sponsored and supervised activities during the school year, on the school premises, travel to and from school, and class trips. Additionally, 24-hour insurance coverage is offered. Both types of insurance are available at the parent's expense.

Emergencies

Emergencies affecting any or all of the Fox Chapel Area schools will be made known over local radio and television stations. Please listen to the following radio and television stations for information regarding delays, cancellations, or early dismissals:

Radio Stations

KDKA (1020 AM)

KQV (1410 AM)

Television Stations

KDKA-TV (Channel 2)

WPXI-TV (Channel 11)

WTAE-TV (Channel 4)

When there is a school delay, cancellation, or early dismissal, parents/guardians will receive a phone call from the district via a school messaging service. In addition, an announcement will be placed on the district's information line at 412/967-2500 and on the district's web site at www.fcasd.edu. Please note that during a power outage at the school it may not be possible to place these announcements. In those cases, the radio and/or television stations may serve as the best source of information.

In the event of a severe storm forecast or other emergency, when children are already at school, an early dismissal may occur. Parents who work or are not at home should plan with their children where to go should such a situation arise. Each school will request this information from parents in the early fall of the school year.





Withdrawing a Student

When a child is transferring from the Fox Chapel Area School District, the parent or guardian should notify the school principal of the new residence, the name of the new school district, and the date of transfer and complete an official withdrawal form.

Before- and After-School Childcare

The Fox Chapel Area School District, in cooperation with a third party, may offer before- and after-school childcare from 7-8:30 a.m., and 3:30-6 p.m., Monday through Friday, for school-age students in kindergarten through grade five. These programs are dependent upon student enrollment and the programs are only run if there are a sufficient number of students enrolled. In addition, care may be available when school is not in session during the summer, over holiday breaks, and on teacher in-service days.

The fee structure is set by the third-party provider. A sliding-scale system is available for families with limited income, and discounts are offered to families with two or more children.

The program is designed to provide daily activities to meet the developmental needs of school-age children. The program is structured to give children time for creative play, physical activity, social time, and an after-school snack.

Parent Organizations

The education of a child is a cooperative endeavor of the home and the school. Each Fox Chapel Area elementary school has a parent organization (PTA or PTO), and all parents are urged to become active members.

Home and School

Working Together

The education of children occurs in the home, classroom, and in the larger community. Education is a community activity and responsibility. While schools bear the responsibility for a significant portion of a child's education, the school cannot be successful unless children know that education is always a top priority. Parents can demonstrate the importance of education in a number of ways, including taking an interest in the child's schooling, reading to their child, seeing that home learning is done, and joining the school's parent group.

Home Learning

Research shows that when the home and school cooperate, education is enhanced. Home learning is one way for children to practice and apply things they have learned in school. It also provides a way to extend thinking and engage students in reading and writing. Here are some ways to help your child.

- ✓ Provide a quiet place for your child to study, work, and read. Be sure this area has adequate workspace, lighting, and supplies.
- ✓ Be a facilitator in the learning process by guiding, not taking over, and by encouraging your child to realistically evaluate his or her own work.
- ✓ Help your child learn to schedule time by including him or her in the decisions about establishing a study time each night.
- ✓ Ask about your child's assignments each day. Discussion reinforces learning, and the knowledge that parents are interested fosters success in children.
- ✓ Ask your child "What did you LEARN today?" when he or she comes home.
- ✓ Establish a consistent, quiet family study time so that studying and reading become a routine each evening.
- ✓ Talk with your child. Young children need to engage in conversation to develop and enhance language skills that impact every other area of learning.
- ✓ Set an example by continuing to read, study, and learn yourself. Read the newspaper or complete your "home learning" along with your child.
- ✓ If you and your child have trouble completing an assignment, let the teacher know by attaching a note and returning it to school the next day.

Suggestions to Parents

Children spend about 13 percent of their time in school. Starting school in a positive frame of mind often means the difference between success and failure for the day. Your child should:

- ✓ have adequate rest;
- ✓ have a good breakfast;
- ✓ dress appropriately for weather conditions so that comfort will be assured at the bus stop and at recess;
- ✓ talk over problems and interests with you;
- ✓ be provided with reading opportunities daily;
- ✓ be provided various educational trips;
- ✓ develop a vocabulary through talking, reading, and using libraries; and
- ✓ be responsible for certain tasks in the home.



Where to Turn for Help

Your sources for information, first and foremost, are the classroom teacher and the building principal. The list below provides contact information for each school.

Fairview Elementary School

738 Dorseyville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
Phone: 412/963-9315
Fax: 412/967-2408

Kerr Elementary School

341 Kittanning Pike
Pittsburgh, PA 15215
Phone: 412/781-4105
Fax: 412/967-2497

Hartwood Elementary School

3730 Saxonburg Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
Phone: 412/767-5396
Fax: 412/967-2487

O'Hara Elementary School

115 Cabin Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
Phone: 412/963-0333
Fax: 412/967-2510

Fox Chapel Area School District Administration Offices

611 Field Club Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
Phone: 412/963-9600
Voice Mail Number: 412/967-2400
24-Hour Information Line: 412/967-2500
Fax: 412/967-0697
Web Site: www.fcasd.edu

The Fox Chapel Area School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, nationality, ethnic origin, age, or disability in the administration of its policies, hiring practices, employment practices, and admission to its programs, services, or activities, in access to them, in treatment of individuals with disabilities, or in any aspect of its operations.

Additional information pertaining to civil rights, school district policies, and grievance procedures can be obtained by contacting the compliance officers listed below between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. This notice is available from the compliance officers in large print, on audiotape, and in Braille.

*Title IX: Assistant Superintendent (412/967-2456)
Section 504 & ADA: Coordinator of Special Education and Pupil Services (412/967-2435)
Address: Fox Chapel Area School District, 611 Field Club Road, Pgh., PA 15238*

