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## IMPORTANT DATES 2018-2019

SEPTEMBER	4	Orientation Day
	5	First Day of School
	7	Back-to-School Barbecue
	13	Back-to-School Night
	20, 21	Photo Days
OCTOBER	8	Holiday-School Closed
	10	All-School Field Day
	19	Conference Day-School Closed
	31	Halloween Parade and EC & K Family Harvest Festival
NOVEMBER	5	Inservice Day-School Closed
	21	Noon Dismissal
	22, 23	Thanksgiving Holiday-School Closed
DECEMBER	19	LS Winter Program
	20-Jan 1	Winter Break-School Closed
JANUARY	2	Re-open after Winter Break
	21	MLK Day of Service-School Closed
FEBRUARY	8	Conference Day-LS, MS Closed
	15	Inservice Day-School Closed
	18	Holiday-School Closed
MARCH	21-31	Spring Break-School Closed
APRIL	1	Re-open after Spring Break
	17	STEAM Night
	26	Arbor Day
MAY	4	Ecofest & Nature Playdate
	17	Conference Day-School Closed
	27	Holiday-School Closed
	31	LS Spring Program
JUNE	7	Last Day of School, Noon Dismissal, Commencement Ceremony 5:00 p.m.

## **ABINGTON FRIENDS SCHOOL SONG**

**We stand to sing the praises of Abington Friends School  
As we're guided through the mazes by many a book and rule  
Bound together in our striving ever towards success  
With service, truth and friendship 'neath the flag of AFS!**

Abington Friends School – 575 Washington Lane, Jenkintown, PA 19046

Main #215-886-4350 –Lower School Office #215-576-3960

[www.abingtonfriends.net](http://www.abingtonfriends.net)

# AFS

Abington Friends School



Lower School  
Family Handbook  
2018-2019

Dear Lower School Families,

*Welcome to the 2018-2019 Academic School Year at Abington Friends School!* We look forward to a year filled with incredible opportunities for exploration, discovery, learning and growth.

The Lower School Family Handbook is intended to help you become acquainted (or re-acquainted) with Lower School and provide information about the School, expectations, general procedures, and practices. We will update you throughout the year in the event of policy or procedural changes. We welcome your comments and suggestions about how to make this Family Handbook more useful to you.

We are honored to have the opportunity, along with an incredibly talented and dedicated faculty and staff, to engage your children in the daily joys of learning. We value the trust you have placed in us by enrolling your child in Abington Friends School. We take great pride in our work with children and our connection to families. We are excited to begin a wonderful new school year with you!

Sincerely,

*Andrea Emmons*, Director of Lower School

*Paula Cohen*, Director of Early Childhood Admissions and Community Life



### **General Purpose of this Handbook**

Abington Friends Lower School is guided by the same general principles as the other divisions of the School. Those principles are described in detail in the School's Mission Statement and the Statement of Philosophy. We believe that there is a light in every individual and that, in educating children, we are guiding them toward an awareness and appreciation of their own uniqueness. For this reason, our curriculum is concerned with all aspects of human development: intellectual, moral, aesthetic, physical, social and emotional. The process by which students learn is as important to us as what they learn.

You are the primary educator of your child. We assume that in sending your child to Abington Friends School you are in agreement with our general philosophy and that you are seeking our help in providing your child with a strong educational foundation.

Because of our shared responsibility, it is essential that we strive to maintain clear and open communication. This handbook gives guidelines to aid that communication. However, if at any time you feel the lines of communication are not satisfactory, it is your right to contact Andrea Emmons, Director of Lower School.

### **Forms**

All enrolled families will receive emails from Communications@abingtonfriends.net giving login access to certain necessary forms for the school year. We ask that the following forms be completed prior to your child's first day of school:

- Family Questionnaire (received in August mailing)
- Emergency Contact and Student Information Form online login address is:

[www.abingtonfriends.net/enroll](http://www.abingtonfriends.net/enroll)

- Child Health Assessment Forms and Information through CareDox- is:

<https://secure.caredox.com/accounts/login>, and for any issues you are having, use their

customer service at: [info@caredox.com](mailto:info@caredox.com). You may also contact Susan Harris, our school nurse at

215-576-3978 or [sharris@abingtonfriends.net](mailto:sharris@abingtonfriends.net)

Please contact the Lower School office if you need further assistance with any of these forms.

## **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Contact Information**

Andrea Emmons  
Director, Lower School  
215-576-3959  
aemmons@abingtonfriends.net

Paula Cohen  
Director of Early Childhood Admissions and Community Life  
215-935-1274  
pcohen@abingtonfriends.net

Tricia Cassidy  
Administrative Assistant, Lower School  
215-576-3960, Fax: 215-690-7660  
tcassidy@abingtonfriends.net

Susan Harris  
School Nurse  
215-576-3978, Fax: 215-886-4796

Chris Santaniello  
Transportation Office  
215-576-3981  
csantaniello@abingtonfriends.net

Address:  
Abington Friends School  
575 Washington Lane  
Jenkintown, PA 19046  
Phone (AFS Main Number): 215- 886-4350, Fax: 215-886-9143  
School Website: [www.abingtonfriends.net](http://www.abingtonfriends.net)

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Abington Friends School admits children without regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religious creed, ancestry, or national origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities, which it provides for or makes available to its students. Further, the school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religious creed, ancestry or national origin in the administration of its educational policies, scholarship, athletic and other school-administered programs. Special consideration is given to members of the Religious Society of Friends.

## **Structure**

The Lower School division is comprised of students preschool through 4th grade. Within Lower School, we have a early childhood program. Kindergarten forms the bridge between our early childhood program and the older grades in Lower School. The other divisions of the school include the Middle School (5th through 8th grades) and the Upper School (9th through 12th grades).

## **Hours of Operation**

We are open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The school day is considered 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with the option of enrolling in the Extended Day program from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for an additional fee. The Lower School office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each school day. Please leave a voice mail message if no one is available to answer your call. Voice mail messages are picked up frequently throughout the day.

## **Calendar**

The all-school calendar is posted on the AFS website and updated when necessary throughout the year at [www.abingtonfriends.net](http://www.abingtonfriends.net). You will also receive e-mail correspondence outlining specific events.

AFS offers an eight-week summer camp program that operates from mid-June to mid-August. The summer camp brochure and registration information become available late winter/early spring.

## **II. ALL-SCHOOL STATEMENTS**

### **Mission Statement**

Abington Friends School, founded in 1697 by Abington Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), educates students by integrating:

- Friends principles, practices and testimonies;
- intellectual excellence; tied to strength of character and personal talents; and
- moral, physical, emotional, social and spiritual well-being.

### **Philosophy Statement**

Abington Friends School, a coeducational, college-preparatory day school, serves students from the early childhood years through grade twelve by providing a strong academic foundation for advanced study. Teaching is rooted in Quaker beliefs, combining reflection with action and balancing the needs of individuals with those of community. The School holds scholarship, moral integrity, simplicity, and diversity at its core.

The precepts and practices of Friends give definition to the daily life of the School and affirm the belief that there is "that of God" to respect and answer in every individual. Weekly Meeting for Worship, the central spiritual experience of the community, offers time for silent reflection and thoughtful sharing. Quaker values promote individual and collaborative work toward such ends as environmental stewardship, social justice and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

Students meet challenging academic expectations by uniting personal strengths and varied talents with vision, imagination, and well-disciplined effort. Interdisciplinary, intercultural, and aesthetic studies spark innate

curiosity and the joy of learning fundamental to long-term growth. Emphasizing social responsibility and the life of the mind, the School prepares students to become independent leaders who voice and act upon strongly held beliefs.

Abington Friends School, drawing on its three centuries of history, expects to instill in each student a life-long love of learning, personal integrity and commitment to self, family and the service of others.

### **Abington Friends School Diversity Vision Statement**

At Abington Friends School, our work is deeply rooted in Quaker tradition. Our focus on Friends faith and practice orients us toward inclusion and toward the skills of collaborative inquiry that make best use of the multiple perspectives in our midst. Our practices of Meeting for Worship and Friends decision-making encourage us to learn from each other and be changed by each other's experiences.

Diversity at AFS is one of our deepest strengths and resources and one of our most important challenges. It is work that touches all spheres of our community, from the personal to the professional. It is work that engages us intellectually, emotionally, morally and spiritually.

The Quaker idea of continuing revelation holds out the promise of growth of understanding by means of reflection and inquiry. We believe that our excellence as a school is tied to the intellectual depth and sophistication that comes from engaging diversity in all of its human and intellectual complexity. We believe that excellence for our students is rooted in their understanding of a diverse world and the dynamics of power and privilege. We believe in cultivating the skills of engaging and navigating multiple points of view within a culturally responsive curriculum and program. We are deeply committed to helping our students develop and celebrate their voices in our community and beyond.

We are driven by a sense of justice in this work as we seek to understand and counter the historic and current-day patterns of oppression. We are on the journey of developing an effective program of anti-racism and anti-bias, creating future leaders with the skills and insight to create a more just and thriving society.

The following principles inform our work:

- The curriculum, program and climate of the school must reflect the diverse backgrounds of the members of the school community, of the wider local community, and of the global community in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic, religious, gender and ability.
- Excellence in teaching and learning can only occur in a school community which honors the multiple perspectives provided by individuals and groups with a wide variety of backgrounds.
- An understanding of the role of identity and privilege in society and in school must be intentionally built into the education of students and the professional development of adults in the community.
- The curriculum and program of the school must foster thoughtful questioning and critical thinking about the historically inequitable distribution of power and privilege throughout the world and must support students in understanding the impact of these inequities and in taking action to fight injustice.
- Cultural competency is essential in developing a just and equitable learning community for all of its members; the school must commit necessary resources to provide learning experiences for all adults and students that support this.

- The work of creating a more just, equitable and inclusive school community must happen on both the personal and the institutional levels; the school must provide necessary resources to support both institutional transformation and individual self-exploration and growth around issues of difference.

*“We are increasingly clear that we are at a collective point of moving beyond assimilation toward becoming a community truly transformed by who is here.”*  
 -Rich Nourie, Head of School

### **The Essential Partnership: Families and School Working Together**

The Abington Friends School educational experience is rooted in partnership with families. Our families share our goals of educating the whole child, supporting Quaker values, and creating a learning environment that exemplifies excellence in education.

#### **Families and the School Committee**

Ultimate decision-making authority at the school rests with the School Committee and Abington Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. The Monthly Meeting must approve all members of the School Committee. The School Committee does not intervene in daily affairs of the school, such as curriculum development, hiring, evaluating faculty or on issues related to daily routines. Instead, the School Committee focuses on three areas critical to the success of the School: it selects, evaluates and supports the Head of School, to whom it delegates authority to manage the School; it develops broad institutional policies that guide the Head in running the School; and it is accountable for the financial well-being and strategic goals of the School. In the conduct of its business, the School Committee acts only as a whole; individual committee members, including the Clerk, have no authority to act unless specifically authorized to do so by the School Committee acting as a whole. Families are informed about the work of the School Committee through letters from the Head of School where issues before the School Committee are often highlighted.

Families with concerns about the School or with decisions made by the administration or faculty are encouraged to share those concerns with their Division Director, the Associate Head of School, or, as a last step, the Head of School. Families should know that the School Committee does not act as an appeals board for decisions made by the School’s administration.

#### **Relationship to the Faculty, Administration and Staff**

Families play an essential and positive role in the life of Abington Friends School. Not only are families necessary partners in educating their child, they support the School and its students through extensive volunteer activities and through educational and social events.

The relationship between families and the faculty, staff and administration is formally governed by the enrollment agreement and by family and divisional handbooks. When families choose to enroll their child at Abington Friends School, they agree to subscribe to its mission, follow its rules and abide by its decisions. First and foremost however, families and all school personnel must be guided by an ethic of mutual respect.

Families are encouraged to work productively with teachers, staff and administrators by communicating concerns openly and constructively. Families should stay informed about their child’s progress and about important events in the life of the School. The School welcomes thoughtful questions and suggestions. While families may not agree with every decision made by the School, in most cases, families and the School

find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship. In the extreme case, however, a disagreement may emerge that is so severe that the family cannot remain a constructive part of the Abington Friends School community. In such cases, the School and the family should consider whether another environment would be more suitable for the family. In the very rare and extreme cases where parent/guardian behavior undermines mutual trust and respect, including verbal abuse, the use of threats, bullying and other similar behavior, the School reserves the right, at any time in the school year or at any point in a student's career at the School, to immediately terminate the student's and family's relationship with Abington Friends School.

### **III. SCHOOL CULTURE**

#### **Diversity and Inclusion**

At AFS, we recognize the importance of building a sense of community in which children find their place in the world around them and recognize their responsibility to it. Our program helps children gain an appreciation and respect for the differences and the similarities among us. Each child in our community has unique experiences and an individual perspective on the world. We strive to support the home culture of our students.

We are very fortunate to have a diverse community of families at AFS, which allows all children to experience a range of different cultures, appearances, languages and ways of life in a positive, affirming environment. We are dedicated to the belief that early experiences with diverse communities and friends will ultimately lead to the development of cohesive, non-violent and accepting communities in our future.

We incorporate non-sexist, multi-cultural and anti-bias learning experiences in our classroom life and in our curriculum. We continually strive to provide materials, activities and an environment that reflect a respect for, and celebration of diversity, race, physical appearance, ability, family composition, gender, sexual orientation and lifestyle. Our goal is for every child and family to feel welcomed, reflected and supported in our program. Throughout the curriculum at AFS, we engage the children in the active exploration of themselves, their families, and their communities.

We are fortunate to have Mikael Yisrael as Director of Diversity and Inclusion at AFS. Mikael serves as a wonderful resource to both families and teachers.

#### **Language**

Teachers support the development and maintenance of children's home language whenever possible. We will help children to understand spoken language (particularly when children are learning a new language) by using pictures, familiar objects, body language and physical cues and by establishing daily routines that the child can participate in even if they do not speak English. Teachers will use a variety of vocabulary and engage children in sustained conversations about their experiences.

If your child is learning English, it is very important to continue to develop the child's first language at home. Not only will this strengthen the parent-child relationship and prevent the loss of the home language, but it will also make it easier for your child to learn English in the long run.

#### **Policy on Honesty**

Abington Friends School is committed to the independent development of each individual within a context of mutual respect, trust, and concern. To this end, honesty in all academic and social relationships is of the highest importance.

Social relationships should be based on open, honest communication, which excludes lying in word or deed,

invasion of privacy, exploitation of others, theft, acts of violence, disrespect of personal or school property, sexual or racial harassment and drug or alcohol abuse. Any concerns teachers have about a child will be communicated directly to the parent/guardian and the Director of the Lower School.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Drawing on Quaker commitment to nonviolence, the Abington Friends Lower School faculty utilizes conflict resolution strategies to actively help children learn non-violent means for resolving conflict. Our conflict resolution techniques are grounded in solving conflicts peacefully.

Conflict resolution is integrated into the culture of the school. Teachers make time to help students listen to each other, identify feelings, and work to come up with a plan to resolve the issue.

### **Positive Guidance/Discipline**

We believe that meaningful discipline comes from developing an understanding of how one's actions impact the community. We expect different behaviors from children at different ages. We believe that children learn to respect others when they themselves are treated in a respectful manner. Our teachers engage students in discussion as to how conflicts might be handled and model appropriate behaviors and interactions. We believe that with patience, firmness, humor and warmth, teachers can guide children through many rough spots. Open communication between families and teachers is key. Families should keep teachers informed about concerns or changes in their child's behavior, and teachers will keep families informed.

It may sometimes become necessary, to remove a child from his/her peers for a short period of time if disruptive, aggressive or unsafe behavior persists. Children are asked to take a break until they are ready to rejoin the group and remember classroom agreements. The teacher will usually talk with the student about better ways to solve conflict or handle frustration prior to their return to the classroom activities.

In the case of a persistent or repeated problem, we will inform and consult with a child's family, and work together on a collaborative plan for helping the child. Our school consulting psychologist and/or counselor may be contacted for suggestions and to help develop a strategy for supporting the child and family. Teachers and families then monitor the plan to judge its effectiveness. The goal is to help the child engage successfully throughout the school day. Parental cooperation is very necessary in this joint effort. Without this parental cooperation, the child may be in jeopardy of not being able to return to the School.

We respect the right of every parent to discipline their own child except where issues of child abuse or neglect are concerned. However, while on the premises of Abington Friends School, we expect families to refrain from hitting or shouting at any child. Such actions, in the presence of others, are upsetting and embarrassing. The faculty and staff have the responsibility to address any inappropriate actions.

### **Spiritual and Moral Development**

As a Quaker school, AFS is deeply committed to each child's spiritual and moral development. In all of our work with children, we try to instill an understanding of Quaker values such as peaceful conflict resolution, mutual respect, the importance of caring for community and caring for the world around us. Children are valued for their unique strengths and gifts, and they are taught to value one another.

Community partnerships and experiential learning are introduced in the early childhood classes and continues through the older grades. Throughout the year, classrooms undertake explorations of various social issues through developmentally appropriate service, stewardship, and partnership projects.

### **Moment of Silence and Meeting for Worship**

Quaker Meeting for Worship is silent and no one individual leads the group in ceremony. Quakers believe each person has an Inner Light. They worship in silence to allow themselves to be open to hearing the voice of God that they believe comes from within. In a gathering of silence, children learn to listen to their own thoughts. Although children are not generally still, nor completely silent, we feel there is great value in providing them with the opportunity to learn from silence, and reflect on their inner selves. Families are welcome to join us for Meeting on Wednesday mornings.

All children in the Lower School join in Meeting for Worship at the Abington Friends Meetinghouse located across campus. Please note that our early childhood and kindergarten students will first experience Meeting for Worship in their own classrooms and the music room to help them become accustomed to longer periods of quiet. The youngest children move into the larger group experience over time.

Once seated on wooden pews in the centuries old building, the children settle into silence, and there is a quiet that is broken only when a student or teacher feels compelled to share a thought, an idea or an experience. This weekly experience of shared reflection provides a calm center to our busy week and instills in children the habit of listening to themselves and others with respect and acceptance.

On the first Wednesday of every month, older children and younger children meet together in small gatherings as Meeting Partners in the classroom. Over time, most children become better able to hear someone who speaks, to ponder what has been shared, and to relate it to their own experience. It is hoped that our children will come to see shared silence as an opportunity to be with others in a special way.

### **Community**

At AFS, we have numerous community building opportunities. In addition to our partnership with families, community is fostered through relationships with others on campus. Meeting partners, partnerships with students in other divisions, visits to other classrooms or parts of the school, as well as all-school traditions such as Winterfest and Arbor Day help students build a broader understanding of AFS as a collective community.

There are many events that take place within the Lower School and the AFS community to which families are warmly invited. It is our hope that the information below will provide details about school events available for families to enjoy. This is not an all-inclusive list. Please refer to the school calendar, school newsletter, and Lower School Blog to learn more. Changes will be noted in the school calendar as they come to our attention.

<b>Event Description</b>	<b>Season/Month</b>	<b>For Whom?</b>
<b>Meeting for Worship:</b> Families and guardians should consider attending Meeting for Worship on any Wednesday from 8:20 a.m. – 8:50 a.m. Scheduled first thing in the morning; it is a great way to begin your day.	Wednesdays The first Wednesday of the month takes place in classrooms.	All family members
<b>Field Day:</b> This is a school-wide event celebrating teamwork, athletic endeavors, and student partnerships. All students through 12th grade participate in blue and white team games. All families are invited to this spirited AFS tradition.	September Friday 10/5/18	All family members



<b>Halloween Parade:</b> Each year, students in the Lower School are joined by Middle and Upper School students to parade in costume around the school's circle in front of the Upper School. Families come and enjoy coffee and donuts (generously provided by our Home and School) and enjoy this whimsical and creative experience.	October Wednesday 10/31/18	All family members
<b>Early Childhood &amp; Kindergarten October Harvest Festival:</b> This event marks the celebration of fall for our youngest students. In lieu of the Halloween Parade, all families are invited to participate in a festive celebration on our Nature Explore Playground.	October Wednesday 10/31 18	All family members of EC and K students
<b>Winter Program and Spring Programs:</b> Every child in the Lower School participates in the Lower School Winter and Spring Programs. The lively programs include singing, playing instruments, dancing, poetry and/or prose and amazing artwork. Planning the program is a collaborative effort between the Lower School's Music and Art faculty and the entire Lower School community.	December Friday 12/19/18 2 performances times tbd June, Friday 5/31/19 2 performances-times tbd	All family members
<b>All-School STEAM:</b> This is an evening when every student in Lower School, Middle School and Upper School displays science projects and engages visitors. In Lower School, student projects are on display in classrooms. In addition, there are other science-inspired events for families to enjoy on this evening.	April Thursday, 4/17/19	All family members
<b>Arbor Day:</b> The Senior Class symbolically turns over the continuing life of the School to the Junior Class as new trees are planted on campus by the first class, the 1st Graders, and the last class, the Seniors. Lower School children also participate as observers and/or contribute to music or dance.	April Friday 4/26/19	All family members
<b>EcoFest and Nature Playdate:</b> Celebrate and learn more about sustainability in partnership with area environmental organizations. Build forts and fairy houses, water color, create nature journals and much more! Organized by AFS in partnership with Briar Bush Nature Center. Free and open to the public.	April Saturday 5/4/19	All family members
<b>Class or Grade Events:</b> Your child's homeroom teachers will make you aware of special events that you will want on your calendar at Back to School Night in September. Please get these dates on your calendar as quickly possible so you can note if a conflict exists with another school event. Teachers make every effort to avoid conflicts, but they sometimes occur. Early notice to a teacher can help resolve such issues!	Throughout the year	All family members
<b>Parent/Guardian Coffees:</b> Sponsored by Home and School, periodically throughout the year.	Dates to be announced	Parents and Guardians

All families are a vital part of our community and we welcome their involvement in our school activities. We are fortunate to have an engaged and talented parent body and they are frequent visitors to our classrooms.

## **Holidays**

The words “holiday” and “celebration” mean different things to different people. For purposes of defining holiday practices in our classrooms, we define “holiday activities” in the following way: *Holiday activities in our Lower School classrooms can be as simple as a group discussion about a holiday after reading a book, more elaborate as in inviting a parent to come in and share the family’s cultural celebration, or all of our classrooms attending our all-school Winterfest celebration.*

We believe that holiday activities at school can serve the following goals and functions:

- To validate student and families’ holiday experiences and traditions at home.
- To expose student to different ways of celebrating the same holiday.
- To expose student to celebrations, traditions and religions different from their own.
- To foster respect for celebrations, traditions and religions different from their own.
- To build a sense of community, family and togetherness.
- To provide accurate information about holidays in a developmentally appropriate manner.

We take a simple approach to the celebration of holidays. Holidays are not a major focus of our curriculum. However, students and families are invited to share their connection to special days throughout the year. For various holidays, we focus on the values at the core of the holiday such as community, peace and togetherness.

We leave the celebration of Mother’s Day and Father’s Day to each individual household as we have children from diverse family structures.

## **Birthdays**

Birthday celebrations are significant events in the lives of many children. You are welcome to celebrate your child’s birthday with the class. We ask that you adhere to the Quaker principle of simplicity and avoid elaborate celebrations with balloons or party favors. We suggest bringing in cupcakes, muffins or another easy-to-manage favorite snack. Please talk with your child’s teacher to find the best time for a classroom birthday celebration.

If you are having a birthday party for your child, invitations can be distributed at school ONLY if the entire class is invited. If only a few students are invited, please help your child learn how to respect the feelings of others by not talking about the party at school. Please make sure you have not inadvertently invited all children except one or two. If you have any questions about the class lists or birthday parties in general, please contact your child’s teacher before sending out invitations.

## **Competition and Recognition**

AFS affirms the positive side of competition by encouraging our students to stretch beyond their perceived limits, by fostering tenacity and self-discipline, and by helping all to cope with personal and group failures by turning these into positive experiences. We discourage competition that makes too few feel like winners and too many like losers, that elevates some by putting others down, and that applauds natural talent at the expense of personal or team effort. Competition, as we view it, must always support the work of every person in the group.

In the Lower School, we try to strike a balance between competition and cooperation. In the classroom we want all students to achieve their best, and our teachers use a variety of individual and group activities to help students discover and develop their strengths.

The same principles for competition apply to recognition. We want first to show appreciation for all who have committed their talent and effort to a school activity or event. When giving individual recognition, we want our praise to reflect personal achievement and to inspire others.

### **Connecting to Community**

Learning to work with others and to play an active role in the wider community is a critical piece of an AFS education and one that begins early. In addition to the academic focus of our curriculum, it is important to us to foster our students' identities as members of their larger community. Through action and reflection, students achieve real objectives for the community and develop an understanding of how classroom skills can be used in the outside world. AFS partners with a wide range of community organizations as part of students' learning experiences. We hope that our community partnership and service opportunities prove rewarding for our children as they continue to define themselves within their surrounding world. Our hope is that through meaningful, shared experiences with members of the larger community, our children will develop a deeper understanding of themselves and others and seek ways of expanding upon those connections as they grow.

### **Field Trips**

Transportation for field trips will normally be provided by AFS vans or yellow rental buses. The vans are equipped with seat belts; the rental buses are not. The school is required to receive written permission before your child may go on a field trip. A permission slip covering all trips for the year was included in your enrollment forms, and it can also be accessed on the AFS website. The teacher will provide you with an announcement of all trips as they arise and the pertinent details.

### **Student Assessment - Overview**

Assessment is naturally integrated into the course of every day formally and informally to better support group and individual progress. Assessments help us to gather information about each child's development and learning, including cognitive skills, language development, social-emotional development and approaches to learning. Assessment information impacts curriculum development, planning, the learning environment and the development of individualized learning plans. It also enables us to communicate with families about students' academic and social/emotional growth.

Teachers use assessment tools, along with information compiled from students' self-assessments and Student Support Team conversations, as a basis for discussion during scheduled family conference days. Families also receive a fall/winter interim report and a lengthier individual student narrative that is distributed in May. In older grades, electronic portfolios, which compile samples of student work, reflect students' thoughts about their learning, and provides a window into students' growth over the course of the year.

### **Specialized Learning Support Statement**

For students in need of support or enrichment beyond what is regularly provided in the classroom environment, an advisory system called the Student Support Team (SST) is in place. The SST process takes a multi-disciplinary approach engaging teachers, families, our psychological consultant and other learning specialists in discussion as to how the student might best be supported or given additional academic challenge that enables them to maximize their learning potential.

The School is able to provide some modifications for students who have learning difficulties documented by a psycho-educational or neuropsychological evaluation. Upon receiving such an evaluation, a meeting of the SST

and the family is held to review results and recommendations. Using input from teachers, the family and the learning and/or psychological consultant, the group decides which recommendations are feasible at school and at home. A Formal Education Plan (FEP) is developed and then shared and implemented with teachers and families. Accommodations may include: keyboard use; large print/grid; quiet workspace; preferential seating; behavior plan; audio books; extended test time. The FEP will be updated each year and is agreed upon by all who participate in the SST process.

Adjustments and accommodations to the academic program at Abington Friends School are limited to those remedies contained within the School's existing resources, policies, and facilities. These modifications are not meant to constitute a separate or individual program for these students. If the level of support a student needs to succeed in our program is greater than our resources, the family may need to pursue external supports for him or her. Costs vary greatly for these resources. Therefore, the School will work with the family to determine the level and type of outside support that is necessary and offer appropriate names of outside professionals.

It is our hope that every child admitted to Abington Friends School will graduate from the School. However, there are times when a student may continue to exhibit either a lack of academic progress or a pattern of inappropriate behavior of such frequency, duration or intensity that it disrupts that student's own learning or the learning of others. If the School determines that Abington Friends School is not an appropriate placement for the child, the School will work with the child's family to explore alternate appropriate placements whenever reasonably possible.

#### **The Early Childhood Assessment Information**

Teachers are always assessing and evaluating the children in their classrooms. They are constantly observing and documenting each child's play, behaviors and interactions to assess their progress. Informal methods of assessment include observations, checklists and collections of children work. Activities and achievements are often documented with photos. Self-assessments (when age appropriate) and Student Support Team conversations are also part of assessment process.

The early childhood classes *do not* conduct any norm-referenced or standardized assessments of children for comparison purposes. We use the assessments described above, together with our professional judgment, rather than a standardized screening to determine whether to recommend that further professional screening should be initiated.

#### **Kindergarten Through Fourth Grade Assessment Information**

Teachers assess children on a daily basis in Lower School classrooms. They are constantly observing and documenting each child's learning style. Informal methods of assessment include observations, conversations and collections of children work as well as formal assessments that utilize a rubric or a checklist of skills.

Beginning in the fourth grade, we conduct a standardized assessment known as the ERB. This Educational Records Bureau (ERB) assessment is designed to provide a snapshot of information about student performance in key areas of the school curriculum: reading, vocabulary, writing, and mathematics. The ERB provides an additional layer of assessment of students' skills and allows us to view our academic program through a different lens. Practically, it also offers AFS students experience in taking standardized tests. Testing is completed in late winter, and families receive testing results in the spring.

As a school, we are confident and thorough in providing multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their academic knowledge. We value their verbal expression, social engagement and creativity as they delve

into their classroom experiences each day.

### **Referrals and Outside Evaluations of Children**

The teacher, in conjunction with the Student Support Team may discuss with families the need for additional information about a child's development and progress. Permission may be requested for the School's consulting psychologist and/or the School's educational consultant to observe the child in his or her classroom to give us additional expertise and perspective. It may also be suggested that an outside evaluation is warranted to gain additional information about a child's development. Families have the option of obtaining a private professional to conduct an evaluation (paid for by the family) or to contact the Montgomery or Philadelphia County Intermediate Unit (at no cost to the family.) The Director will provide contact information for the Intermediate Unit and/or private professionals that the school has worked with before. Families should also consult their insurance company to find out what coverage may be provided. The results of any outside evaluations are completely private and confidential and are only given to the school with the consent of the family.

If it is deemed that a child may be aided by ongoing support (i.e. speech / language therapy, occupational therapy, etc.), we will set up a Student Support Team meeting that will include the child's family, teachers, the Director, the support professionals, and possibly the school's consulting psychologist and/or educational consultant. The Student Support Team will work together to develop strategies and determine goals. This team will meet regularly throughout the school year to keep one another abreast of the child's developmental progress from each team member's perspective. If a child receives an outside evaluation (either privately or through the Intermediate Unit), we ask families to share with us the results of the evaluation. The information that is gathered is most often very helpful in informing classroom practice and in best supporting the child during his or her school experience. Our goal is to work very closely with families of children who may need additional support services and to help every child reach his or her fullest potential.

## **IV. AFS OUTSIDE**

AFS Outside is a school-wide outdoor program designed to connect students in sustained and meaningful ways with the living world while fully realizing the enormous potential of our beautiful campus.

### **Outdoor Experiences and Community Partnerships**

AFS Outside expands upon our strong history of an outdoor learning and environmental education curriculum.

Our outdoor spaces provide countless resources for exploration and study for our students at all ages and stages of development.

Students are introduced to environmental education through unstructured and structured time outdoors spent exploring and making discoveries about the natural world. Our outdoor education programs include creek walks, stream water quality studies, tree and animal track identification, bird adaptations, wildlife habitat gardening and environmental art projects. Students are also exposed to a wide variety of outdoor experiential learning opportunities that incorporate language arts, mathematics and social studies.

Our outdoor program reinforces our commitment to stewardship, simplicity and community, three important tenets of Quakerism. AFS Outside is also a wonderful resource for collaboration with community partners, which include the Briar Bush Nature Center, Tookany Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, Meadowbrook Farm and Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

### **The Redbud Nature Playground and Headwaters Discovery Playground and Outdoor Classrooms**

The Redbud Nature Playground transformed a traditional playground into an inviting outdoor space that encourages learning, discovery and play in a natural setting. It was the first nature playground in a school in Pennsylvania to be accredited by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Following the success of the Redbud Nature Playground, we recently completed the Headwaters Discovery Playground which is an outdoor classroom as well as an amazing play space for older students.

The Redbud Nature Playground and Headwaters Discovery Playground create vital spaces for outdoor activities in all weather and offer varied experiences of exploration and imaginative play that are critical for the development of early childhood and lower school students.

## **V. GENERAL LOWER SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

### **Arrival - Early Childhood and Kindergarten**

Families of children in the early childhood classes should park in the parking lot on the left hand side of the Lower School building and come through the Nature Playground and Outdoor Classroom to the designated entrance doors. Kindergarten families may also park and enter via the side doors, or they may drop off their children at the front entrance to the Lower School. Students in the early childhood classes and kindergarten who arrive between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. should go to the designated early care classrooms. After 8:00 a.m., all children should go directly to their own classrooms.

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. All children will experience an array of important activities at that time. **We ask that all children be in their classrooms by 8:00 a.m.** so that they can participate fully in the day's activities. We encourage you to allow extra time in your schedule to help your child make the transition from home to school until your child is comfortable with the separation process. Our teachers are experienced in helping children through this time and will be happy to offer suggestions for morning drop-off routines.

As you help your child to get settled in the classroom in the morning, make certain that a teacher acknowledges your child's presence. **Please be sure to sign your child in on the sign-in sheet. It is critical that we have an accurate attendance in the event of an emergency evacuation.**

### **Arrival – Kindergarten Through Fourth Grade**

Please, always let your child out onto the front driveway sidewalk so that he/she will not have to cross in the pathway of other cars. **DO NOT PARK IN THE CIRCLE IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL AT ANY TIME.** This causes a major safety risk for all children. If you need to park, please use one of the designated spaces in the large parking lot in front of the Lower School. Please exercise extreme caution when driving in the circle.

We want children to develop independence and self-reliance, and morning arrival is an excellent opportunity to foster this. We encourage you to help your children become increasingly responsible for their own morning routines in school as soon as they can.

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. **Children are expected to be in their classrooms at 8:00 a.m.** Those who arrive before 8:00 a.m. should go to their designated early care space. Supervision is provided in that area beginning at 7:30 a.m. At 8:00 a.m., students will be guided to their respective classrooms. All classrooms open at 8:00 a.m. and the school day begins.

### **Late Arrival /Absences – All Students**

In the event of lateness or absence, we ask that families call and inform the Lower School Administrative Assistant, at 215-576-3960 by 8:30 a.m., as it is important to have accurate attendance records as early in the day as possible.

Children arriving after 8:00 a.m. **MUST** report to the office and sign in **BEFORE** proceeding to their classrooms. Accurate attendance is important, so please be certain to follow this procedure. We ask that you make every effort to establish morning routines that ensure your child's timely arrival in school. It is equally important that children attend class all day. As much as possible, please try to schedule doctor, dentist and other appointments after 3:00 p.m. so that your child's school day will not be disturbed.

### **Departure/ Dismissal Procedure - Early Childhood Students**

Children in the early childhood classes who are scheduled for half-day are picked up at 12 p.m. Children scheduled for the full-day must be picked-up at 3:00 p.m. either directly from the classroom or from the Nature Playground and Outdoor Classroom adjacent to their classrooms. Families should park in the parking lot on the left side of the building. Families need to come to the playground (or to the classrooms in inclement weather) to pick up and sign-out their child. The Sign-in/Sign-out Sheet is our checks and balances system of accounting for all children at all times. We need full parent cooperation to assure this system is effective. Be sure to read posted notices and check cubbies for projects, soiled clothing, lunch boxes, notices from school, etc.

If there is an individual, other than the parent or caregiver who regularly picks up your child, list that person's name on the Emergency Contact form (on-line) and the Dismissal Instructions Form (see summer packet). **If someone new is coming to pick up your child, we will ask him/her for identification and you will be required to authorize the person ahead of time by using the Note to School form or contacting the Lower School Office.** Any changes made to the daily dismissal form need to be addressed to the Administrative Assistant in the Lower School Office (215-576-3960). No child will be released to anyone other than the adults specifically authorized by the parent or guardian. If you will be delayed in picking up your child, please notify the office so that the teachers can inform your child.

Please bring your child with you while you gather his/her belongings and supervise him/her closely on the playground if you stay for a few minutes of playing. Teachers are not responsible for the supervision of your child, or his or her siblings that may accompany you at pick-up time.

### **Dismissal Procedure – Kindergarten Through Fourth Grade**

Between 2:45 and 3:15 p.m., the driveway near Tyson House should only be used by Middle and Upper School families for entering and exiting the campus. The driveway near Lower School should only be used by Lower School families. **Cars should never be parked along the driveways or on the Lower School circle due to safety concerns.** For Lower School carline pick-up, two lanes of cars from the driveway will be directed into one lane in the Lower School circle during dismissal. For students riding the bus, teachers will supervise the dismissal process. Buses pick-up Upper and Middle School students first followed by students in Lower School. Families who have children in Lower School and Middle or Upper School are asked to pick up older children at 3:10 by entering the campus at the Tyson driveway and then proceeding via the bus route past the Upper and Middle Schools to the Lower School for younger children.

Please wait for your child outside the school building at dismissal time. All children picked up by car or on foot will go to the front of the Lower School building at 3:00 p.m. They will be supervised by teachers until a family

member comes to pick them up. When picking up your child in the carline, please display the nametag distributed on Orientation Day. For carline dismissal, drive up to the circle and a teacher on duty will call for your child. **Please do not get out of your car.** A teacher will help your child get into the car. If you are not driving up in the circle, you must park in a designated parking area. Once you have picked up your child, please supervise his/her activity. Teachers will be supervising only children who have not been picked up. If your child has not been picked up by 3:20 p.m., he/she will be escorted to the Extended Day Program, which meets daily in the Lower School. If your child is placed in the Extended Day Program, you may be charged the daily drop in rate. Please see the Extended Day brochure for further details.

Each family will have filled out the Dismissal Instructions Form in the summer mailing. These dismissal instructions, as well as any updates will be shared with classroom teachers daily from the office.

### **Reporting Changes in Dismissal**

All families have been given a notepad, which we ask that you use when communicating a change in your normal dismissal routine for your child/children. Any change in your child's normal dismissal routine should be noted and submitted on the Note to School form. This note should be given to the teacher upon arrival. This will assist us in having an accurate dismissal procedure. If there is an unforeseen emergency, which causes you to have to make an additional change, please call the Administrative Assistant in the office at 215-576-3960. Please note that the phone call option should only be used in the case of an emergency. We cannot accept messages delivered orally by children.

For safety reasons, the School must know each day how each child is to depart; therefore, a child may not be given alternative instructions, i.e., "If I don't come, take the bus." In addition, children are not permitted to go to other areas on campus to meet family members, carpools or buses.

As advocates for our children's well being, it is our responsibility to ensure that competent adults who are capable of safely transporting children home pick up children. In the event that a parent, guardian or his/her designee arrives at the School to pick up a child and the teachers are uncomfortable with the condition of the adult, the person will be detained while another authorized adult or school security is notified.

### **Bus Service (for children in grades 1-4)**

Prior to dismissal, our teachers and children follow routines that should ensure every child's meeting his/her bus in a timely and comfortable manner. This requires the cooperation of both teacher and child. We ask that families of bus children help them understand their responsibility. This includes adherence to proper behavior while waiting for the bus.

From time to time, a Suburban Township or Philadelphia bus is late in reaching Lower School. In an emergency, we are usually informed and will call you so that other arrangements can be made. A bus driver's task is safe driving and management of the bus at all times. A child who rides a bus must know that regard for safety rules and acceptable behavior toward all aboard is expected of him/her. It is wise for a family member to be aware of his/her own child's deportment as well as of any circumstance on the bus which he/she truly cannot handle and to take corrective action early. Unhappiness or uneasiness about bus experiences can make school days unproductive. Buses may withdraw services from a child who cannot meet acceptable standards of behavior on the bus.

*\*\*\*Seat belts will be used at all times in Abington Friends School vans.*

### **Extended Day Program**

The Extended Day Program offers care after regular school hours from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for all Lower School students. For the early childhood and kindergarten students, the Extended Day Program takes place in



designated classrooms. In 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grades, the Extended Day Program takes place primarily on the lower level of the Lower School building. Both younger and older children have opportunities to play inside and outside. For the older children, there is time and space allotted for the completion of homework, as well as space for reading, quiet games, rest and relaxation. The program also offers several enrichment opportunities and art classes. For an additional cost, care is also available during parts of school vacations, on teacher in-service days, and on conference days. The program is closed on federal holidays.

Arrangements for your child to attend the Extended Day Program must be made in advance. A brochure detailing the Extended Day Program is included in your summer mailing. Families who need occasional extended day care may arrange this up to the day before, space permitting, by contacting the Lead Coordinators for Extended Day.

### **Carpools**

AFS publishes a directory of all school families early in the new school year. We hope it will be of use to you in making carpool arrangements.

### **Late Pick-up/Charges**

If an emergency occurs and you are unable to pick up your child by your contracted time, please notify us as soon as possible by calling the office at 215-576-3960 until 4pm and Extended Day Coordinators between 4pm and 6pm. It is a good idea to have a back-up plan for alternate pick-up if you are unavoidably detained.

Please note that the number of children registered for the Extended Day Program determines our staffing after 3 p.m. If families are scheduled to pick-up their child by 3 p.m. and arrive late, the potential for staffing difficulties may arise. The late fee is designed to deter late pick-up, and we ask that you regularly arrive on time to pick-up your child.

### **Custodial Disputes**

Custodial disputes in a family can be challenging for family members as well as for faculty and staff. Where custody of a child is in dispute, AFS follows all legal guidelines outlined by the PA Family Court system. ALL parents/guardians must have unlimited and on-demand access to their child while in our program unless that access is restricted by law. The law states that we may not deny any parent access to his or her child unless there are specific custody orders in a child's file. When a court order restricting access exists, we are bound by its restrictions. We require a copy of any such court orders for our files.

### **Dress and Appearance**

Simplicity, neatness, comfort and respect are the criteria for clothing worn by children at AFS.

Clothing reminders:

- Students engage in a variety of activities, and some of them are messy!
- Young children should wear clothing that is easy to manage in the bathroom. Belts, buckles, suspenders and zippers are challenging; elastic waists are easier to manage.
- Dressing in layers is recommended so that a child can add or remove a layer for comfort.
- Camouflage and other military-inspired items should not be worn or brought to school.
- Flip-flops are not a safe choice for footwear due to wood chips and rocks on our playgrounds as well as the running and climbing activities in which students engage. We ask that they not be worn to school.
- Hats, caps, and sunglasses may not be worn inside the school building.
- Shorts, skirts and shirts should cover a student's body appropriately.

### **Labeling**

**Please label everything your child brings to school**, especially all outerwear, book bags, backpacks and lunch boxes. As a reminder, the School will not be responsible for damages to or loss of personal property.

### **Lost Articles**

Despite the best efforts of everyone, a constant stream of lost articles is turned in to the office. If you suspect you are a "missing owner," please look through the box labeled "Lost and Found," which is placed near the main entrance of the building. We will keep the found items for a reasonable length of time after which unclaimed items will be donated to a local organization that cares for families in need.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

Lower School students may use cell phones before or after school, but not during the school day. If you need to reach your student during the school day for an urgent matter, please call the Lower School office at 215-576-3960. Please help us keep the LS campus and Outdoor Classroom a place of limited cell phone use. We ask that you limit cell phone use on school property. Also be mindful of turning off cell phones prior to any school events.

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

State law mandates that all individuals working with young children be required to report any suspected instances of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The decision to report any suspected instance of abuse or neglect is taken very seriously and involves close consultation with our consulting school psychologist. The Director will follow the direction of the child protective service agency regarding completion of written reports. If the parent or legal guardian of the child is suspected of abuse, the Director will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian.

## **VI. EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM INFORMATION**

### **Overview**

We believe that our most important work with young children is to value and to preserve childhood. Our classrooms build upon the excitement and curiosity that children bring to their earliest experiences in school. Designed to strengthen a young child's developing independence and social skills, our classrooms combine a focus on the individual with an ever-widening sense of community. Our philosophy is based upon knowledge of the ages and stages of child development and on the understanding that each child's development is unique. Thus, we believe that each child's experience should match his or her developmental abilities. Our emphasis is on the whole child: the social, emotional, intellectual, physical, creative and spiritual aspects of each person. Our curriculum reflects the Quaker values of cooperation, equity and non-violence. Great value is placed on building strong classroom communities. Children learn to work and play together and learn about the diversity in their own community and in our larger society. Peaceful conflict resolution skills are modeled by our skilled teachers.

### **Multi-Age Classrooms**

The classrooms of our youngest children are "multi-age" and are generally composed of children ages 3-5 years. We believe that children thrive in multi-age groupings. The younger children often follow the lead of the older children-using new language, practicing new routines and trying new skills. The older children develop leadership skills and engage in help giving, explaining, teaching and sharing behaviors. These are excellent life skills! Multi-age classrooms also more closely resemble family units, where older and younger children learn from one another in natural ways. The children become a "family of learners" who support and

care for each other.

### **What to Bring to School**

Certain articles of clothing and equipment are needed by the children at school. They should be brought to school on the FIRST DAY and remain at school throughout the year. (PLEASE CHECK THE FOLLOWING LIST CAREFULLY AND BE SURE YOU HAVE INCLUDED AND LABELED EACH ITEM.)

- Two complete sets of clothing, including underwear and socks. Check often to see that these are season-appropriate and that they still fit your growing child. Replace clothes that are sent home to be laundered.
- Pair of waterproof rubber boots to keep at school for rainy and snowy days and for creek walks.
- Soft toy or stuffed animal for rest time if this provides comfort to your child.
- Lunch for children in the full day program.

### **Toys from Home**

We ask that families help us adhere to our toy policy: **one small soft toy for rest time only!**

Occasionally, children may want to bring a special book, a photo, or a great find from nature or some “treasure.” We honor this enthusiasm in children, and it is fine if your child brings a book or a natural object. Please remember that the classroom is a busy place, with lots of children. Please do not bring in anything very delicate or a family heirloom of any kind.

**Children should not bring candy, chewing gum or money to the school.** These items may be swallowed or choked on by our younger children.

We understand that when mornings are hectic, these may not be easy rules to follow. It does take firm and consistent limit setting to help us maintain these rules and to help children understand that these policies apply to everyone. We greatly appreciate your cooperation.

### **Snacks and Lunch**

Snacks are provided mid-morning and mid-afternoon for students in the early childhood and kindergarten classrooms. Typical snacks include crackers, cereal, fruit or vegetables, and water or milk. A favorite personal or family food donated by families for the entire class offers a welcome change and a chance for children to share a special snack with friends, especially to celebrate a special occasion. Consult with your child’s teachers about this. **Please let us know if your child has any dietary restrictions or food allergies.**

Creative food experiences are an important part of our curriculum. Children often prepare their own snacks and are given opportunities to try new foods. Nutritionists tell us that while a child may initially reject a new food item, re-introducing it (and in a peer group setting where others are enthusiastically enjoying the food!) often helps broaden a child’s range of taste.

Children in early childhood will bring lunch to school and eat in their classrooms. We make a concerted effort to introduce and enforce healthy eating habits with the children. When packing a lunch, we ask that families send a simple, nutritionally well-balanced lunch for growing bodies.

Children’s lunches are stored in their cubbies. **Please do not send any food that needs to be warmed or reheated in a microwave.** It is the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics that microwaves not be used in school settings to heat food due to high incidences of uneven heating and children subsequently being burned. Please bring all cooked foods that you wish to stay warm in a thermos or a heat-insulated container. For food items that need to be kept cool, we ask that families place a cold pack in lunchboxes.

**We may not serve children under the age of four, hot dogs (whole or sliced), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, hard pretzels or raw carrots.** These all present choking hazards and we ask that if your child is under the age of four, you not send in any of these foods.

### **Rest Time**

All full-day children are expected to participate in a time of quiet rest after lunch. The length of the rest time is determined by the ages and needs of the children. Children are never forced to sleep. Nap mats are provided by the school and should be taken home each Friday for laundering.

### **Toileting**

#### *Toilet Learning-*

Our expectation is that all children will have started the toilet learning process prior to starting in our program. All children develop a readiness to learn to use the toilet at their own pace. Toilet learning is a process as such, our toilet learning practices are based on the following philosophy:

- This should be a non-stressful experience that is appropriate to each child's individual development and involves the child as well as a partnership between the families and classroom teachers.
- Toilet learning should be consistent between home and school. Communication between the families and the teachers is critical to ensure that your child is comfortable and confident about using the toilet.
- We respect the child's readiness to begin to use the toilet.
- We will never force a child to sit on the toilet.
- We will never bribe a child to use the toilet.
- Accidents are part of the learning process. We will never punish or shame children in any way for accidents or require them to clean up after themselves.
- Children will not be allowed to remain in wet or soiled clothing following accidents. Please ensure that there is an adequate supply of clothes during the process.

### **Curriculum**

Our early childhood program builds upon the sense of joy and curiosity that children bring to their first school experience. Young children are natural learners – their curiosity and pleasure in discovery set the scene for exploration of all kinds. Small group, large group, and individual learning experiences take place in a creative learning environment where the individual pace of a child is honored and respected.

We believe in not only providing opportunities, but in stretching children to reach a bit further with each task. Trusting relationships encourage the development of self-confidence and independence. A child's growing independence fosters a greater awareness of the self as a valued individual and a competent learner. Children learn to be responsible members of a family, classroom, school and community. Families are included as important partners in the life of the classroom and the school.

The Reggio Emilia philosophy has inspired our thinking about children and curriculum. Reggio Emilia is a small town in Northern Italy that has become internationally known for its philosophy and approach to early childhood education. Specific elements of the Reggio Emilia approach that have inspired our own practice are:

- A deep respect for the potential of young children.
- Rich environments that are engaging, welcoming, organized, beautiful, and supportive of the work of children and teachers.
- Sustained connections in both play and learning to the outside and natural world.
- Documentation that makes visible the learning and the voices of the children.
- Emergent curriculum and small group work based on both children's and teachers' interests.

- Long-term studies of topics with periods of uninterrupted time throughout the day for exploration.
- Children and teachers constructing knowledge together through exploration and problem.
- The use of many expressive “languages” to represent ideas, questions, and learning, such as clay, paint, wire, drama, play, music, graphic arts materials and more.

In the early childhood classrooms, we follow an emergent curriculum/project approach and accordingly our themes, projects and studies most often come from and follow the ideas and interests of the children in each class. Therefore, you will seldom see all the classrooms engaged in the same study at the same time. For example, a project on transportation may emerge after teachers observe the children in the block area and this theme continues to emerge in their play. A study of birds may emerge as the children notice and discuss many different birds on walks around our campus. The theory of the emergent curriculum/project approach is that children will be far more interested in a topic that is meaningful and important to them. A particular topic is studied in great depth and detail and thus, children cover fewer themes over the course of any given year, but learn much information about the topics. Teachers are seen watching and listening to children, documenting their play with photos and notes and offering resources to support and extend the topic of study. The classroom truly becomes a laboratory, offering the tools and materials to inspire delight, curiosity and inquiry in each child. We believe that this approach builds intrinsic motivation and a long-term love of learning.

Children are given many opportunities to expand their cognitive abilities through hands-on, open-ended exploration and a project-based curriculum. Children develop their thought processes leading to greater understanding, awareness, and curiosity through investigation, research and exploration, and utilization of a variety of resources and references. Experimentation with tools, materials, and manipulatives encourages children to observe, compare, describe, and explore questions and to discover solutions.

Children learn to appreciate literature for pleasure and knowledge, as well as develop and understand the relationship between the spoken and written word. Engaging in meaningful conversations with peers and teachers, children develop respectful listening skills. Children develop language skills to convey wants, needs, ideas, thoughts, and feelings by expressing themselves through words, drawings, stories and dramatic play.

Through a variety of visual arts, music, drama, literature and creative movement activities, children learn to appreciate the expressive arts and cultures of diverse people, places, and times. Children engage in creative movement activities using music and drama to develop coordination and rhythm.

In the early childhood program, our Music, Art, Spanish and Library resource teachers spend time with the students each week and bring their areas of expertise to the on-going curriculum. The science resource teacher is available to support the classroom science curriculum. Working with resource teachers provides our youngest students with incredible opportunities for learning, exploration and investigation of topics in which they are interested.

### **Teaching Children about Physical and Sexual Development**

Children in the early childhood classrooms will grow and experience many physical changes. We recognize and respect family members as the primary source of education in a child’s life. Children also need teachers to be accurate and honest about physical and sexual development issues. The information that children will receive will be factual and developmentally appropriate. If the discussion involves judgments of a moral nature, teachers will be careful to provide an unbiased response and will support children in addressing these questions with their families. Teachers use correct names for all of the body parts and functions. Teachers also explain differences between private and public behavior, appropriate touches such as back rubs at rest time and inappropriate touches. Teachers help children to establish personal physical boundaries and teach

them that it's ok to say "no" to touch.

At certain ages, it is developmentally appropriate for children to explore sexuality, sexual development and differences through touch, observation and play. Teachers respond to these situations in a respectful, open and non-shaming manner. This may include answering children's questions, re-directing behavior, bringing in resources such as books and visitors, and confirming personal choices and boundaries. When appropriate, families will be notified of these discussions and explorations. Teachers and the Director are available to answer questions families may have and give further information.

### **Family-Teacher Conferences**

A significant way of increasing the effectiveness of what we do is communicating with families about their child's experiences while in our program. We do this informally through conversation as children are dropped-off and picked-up and more formally through parent conferences held three times each year.

The Lower School will be closed on Family Conference days. Please make a note of these dates and make arrangements that will enable you to be available to meet with your child's teachers. During the first Family Conference/Orientation Day, families will have an opportunity to sign up for the conference in November. Childcare will be provided during the time of your conference and full-day childcare will be available with advance registration for an additional fee.

During the conferences, you will receive a written form documenting some of the areas that will be discussed. If you are unable to attend the conference, the written form will be mailed to your home. All families will be asked to initial and date a copy of the written reports as they are kept in each child's file as a record of the conference. Prior to the year-end conference in May, families will be mailed your child's year-end developmental profile, written by his or her classroom teachers. This report will help to inform your end-of-year parent conference.

Open and honest communication between families and teachers helps to ensure a happier and more successful experience for your child. We urge you to take advantage of the conference opportunity to talk with your child's teachers in a relaxed atmosphere, free from the typical distractions of arrival and departure times. Conferences are also welcomed by the Lower School Director. If you wish to speak with the Director, please contact the Administrative Assistant for Lower School at 215-576-3960 for an appointment.

## **VII. KINDERGARTEN THROUGH FOURTH GRADE INFORMATION**

### **Overview**

As children move to the older grades of Lower School, they join the home of creek walks and peace tables, mold symposiums and Meeting partners, Egypt Night and reading breakfasts. Our students are active, engaged thinkers with a powerful sense of their own abilities and respect for the gifts each person brings to the community. We provide a high level of intellectual challenge in a program designed to guide and inspire children as they discover the full extent of their abilities. Through hands-on interdisciplinary work our students participate actively in projects that teach them to conduct research, calculate, experiment, and solve problems. We educate children also in Quaker principles such as non-violent conflict resolution, and we believe in the timeless and vital institution of free play, knowing it helps children build sensitivity and respect and learn to live peacefully and joyfully in community.

The particular focus of kindergarten through 4th grade is to develop the natural skills and interests that children bring to class and to provide them with new skills, new ideas, and new challenges. We want children

to begin to appreciate that knowledge and understanding open countless possibilities for their lives. William Damon, Professor at Brown University and nationally renowned thinker on the moral development of children writes,

“Children do best--intellectually, personally, morally--when they are striving for excellence. Any activity that encourages children to strive for excellence will enhance their motivation to learn, and any instruction that shows them how to achieve excellence will advance their competence. Children are inspired, not stressed, when faced with challenging tasks. They crave the chance to achieve something meaningful.”

Emphasizing a developmentally appropriate approach, teachers give students time to grow, explore, and discover. Recognizing the varied ways that children learn, the program is designed to integrate the traditional disciplines that enhance children's abilities as thinkers, speakers, readers, and writers. Children are taught to conduct research, to calculate, to experiment, to compute, and to solve problems. The study of a second language emphasizes both culture and language speaking skills. Children participate in a variety of experiences in art and music - acquiring techniques, developing creativity, and understanding and appreciating aesthetics. Physical education encourages an awareness of good health and fitness while developing individual motor skills and modeling ways to contribute to team goals.

The very nature of the world our children live in requires that they learn the value of cooperation and collaboration. Children are encouraged to learn from one another by working together on projects, by answering classmates' questions, and by listening to the opinions, ideas, and beliefs of others. AFS wants children to understand and appreciate that they are positive and powerful individuals living constructively within a community of learners.

### **Classroom Grade Level Team**

The classroom grade level team oversees your child's general academic and social/emotional well-being. Each class has a lead teacher(s) and a collaborating teacher. A language arts specialist and a math specialist regularly work with each grade. In addition, there are six resource teachers who teach art, music, technology and library, physical education, science, and Spanish. The names, email addresses and phone numbers of all AFS faculty and staff are listed on the website and in the AFS Directory. If you have questions at any time during the year, please contact the classroom teacher. If you have general questions about school issues, please contact the Administrative Assistant in the Lower School office to schedule an appointment.

### **Family-Teacher Conferences**

A significant way of increasing the effectiveness of what we do is communicating with families about their child's experiences while in our program. We do this informally as well as more formally through parent conferences held three times each year.

The Lower School program will be closed on the Family Conference Days. Please make a note of these dates and make arrangements that will enable you to be available to meet with your child's teachers. During the first Family Conference/Orientation Day, families will have an opportunity to sign up for the conference in November. Similarly, during the November conference, families will have an opportunity to sign up for the February conference. At the February conference, families will sign for a time slot for the final conference of the school year. Childcare will be provided during the time of your conference.

Open and honest communication between families and teachers helps to ensure a stronger, more joyful and more successful experience for your child. We urge you to take advantage of the conference opportunities to

talk with your child's teachers in a relaxed atmosphere. Conversations are also welcomed by the Lower School division director. If you wish to speak with the director, call or drop by the office.

### **Extra Help and Tutoring**

If your child is experiencing academic difficulty, please be sure to speak to the classroom teacher. Sometimes a bit of extra attention in school or at home will help resolve the difficulty. If families or the teacher feel that tutorial support is necessary, the teacher will work with families and the Student Support Team to determine what type of additional support is necessary.

### **Show and Tell/Bringing Things From Home**

Children are eager to bring things from home and share with classmates. We encourage sharing but limit it to certain times determined by the teachers. Please do not allow children to bring in electronics or toys associated with violence. We would also caution you against sending in any oversized or expensive items.

### **Snacks and Lunch**

While children in 1st through 4th grades have a scheduled snack time each morning and afternoon, they are responsible for bringing their own snack to school. We request that children in 1st through 4th grades bring in fruits or other wholesome snacks for their scheduled snack time. This provides them with an energizing treat to complete their morning's activities prior to lunch. Please NO CANDY, GUM or SUGAR DRINKS.

First through 4th grade children may purchase their lunches from the school cafeteria using their lunch account. You can access information about our new lunch service provider CulinArt as well as directions on how to sign up via our website. Keep in mind that children who get their lunches from the cafeteria will be helped to choose from an array of foods. Children are allowed to select only one dessert. If your child purchases his/her lunch, we advise that you plan with him/her beforehand. Menu offerings will be posted on the AFS website.

### **Homework**

At AFS we want our children to pursue intellectual activities because of their own curiosity and because of the challenge and personal enjoyment they derive from it. We help them develop as scholars in many ways; one of the formal ways is the homework we assign.

In the Lower School, homework has many purposes. It provides review or practice, or it may be an extension of a classroom activity that is then used the next day to further a discussion. Homework can give you a window into what is being studied in class.

It is important for families to help children establish regular, predictable routines for home study. You should help your child find a quiet, consistent place for study. Find a time of day that is consistent and works well with your family's schedule. All children in the Lower School are expected to read or be read to for 30 minutes per night. To ensure this occurs, classroom teachers will routinely provide opportunities for children to share what they are reading at home. In 1st grade, children will begin receiving other homework assignments on a regular basis in addition to the 30 minutes of reading.

### **SUBJECT GUIDE – Overview**

Children enter kindergarten as young learners with a world of reading, writing, math, and social studies before them. By the time that they leave fourth grade, they will have mastered innumerable skills and an astonishing amount of material. They grow to be fluent readers and writers with a solid grasp of mathematical concepts and an emerging sense of themselves as leaders and community members. Within this extraordinary



spectrum, we work to give each child support and enrichment to ensure their academic growth and their desire to actively engage in the learning process.

### **Language Arts**

Children at Abington Friends School engage eagerly with books from the earliest ages. They discuss and illustrate their own writing; recite and write poetry; and navigate through non-fiction texts as they conduct research. The language arts curriculum is filled with exposure to excellent literature in a variety of genres aimed at exposing our students to all that books have to offer. Our language arts specialist works with all faculty, students, and families in further developing literacy connections. Our language arts specialist is directly engaged in all classrooms beginning in first grade and actively consulting with teachers in our early childhood and kindergarten classrooms to influence program and meet the individual needs of students.

### **Science**

The AFS Science Program combines hands-on activity based exploration of the natural world with an introduction of specific content in biology, chemistry and physics. Whether studying trees, bone structure, temperature or the physics of simple machines, children learn to become strong observers, to ask questions, form hypotheses, and design experiments. Science study extends beyond the science room to the fields, wooded areas and creek within our campus and through science-related field trips.

### **Mathematics**

Our math curriculum stretches from counting, sorting and pattern making, to graphing probability and geometry. We strive to engage students in problem-solving exercises that use real-world contexts. Students learn to use different methods to problem-solve and to seek multiple solutions when appropriate. The operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division spiral sequentially throughout the curriculum each year as students expand their understanding of numbers and numeracy. Our mathematics specialist works with all faculty, students, and families in further developing connections to math. Our math specialist is directly engaged in all classrooms beginning in the first grade, and actively consults with teachers in our early childhood and kindergarten classrooms as a way to both influence program and meet the individual needs of students.

### **Social Studies**

Our social studies program is rich with exposure to different facets of human interaction, geography, cultures, communities, traditions, service learning and global connections. The Abington Friends Lower School Social Studies curriculum is highly integrated and multidisciplinary. Students engage in research at all age levels and learn how to identify sources that will help further their knowledge of a particular topic. Students are taught to question and ponder what they learn and to contemplate history from more than one perspective.

### **Art**

Whether making self-portraits of themselves in a Pop Art style or creating paper mache puppets for the Spring Program, students are fully immersed in the activities of the art studio. In this welcoming space, with student-made tiles adorning the ceiling and bright, natural light from large windows, students explore a wide variety of artistic materials and techniques. Through engagement in a range of artistic studies and exploration, students learn about the impact art has on community and society.

### **Music**

The music program in Lower School focuses on developing musically confident students who can remember, perform, notate and create music. Class activities use speech, song, movement, drama and instruments in varied but integrated ways of performing. Most importantly, music is viewed as a pleasurable experience

shared by a community in which each participant contributes to the final result.

### **Spanish**

With the belief that learning a second language is vital work both for the developing brain and for the shrinking boundaries of the globe, Spanish language education begins in our early childhood classrooms and continues through 4th grade. Our focus is on teaching students to use Spanish as a communicative tool. The approach is multifaceted and includes games, puppets, props, dialogues, storybooks, music and visiting native speakers.

### **Physical Education**

The curriculum content for physical education is based on the National Physical Education Standards developed by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education. All activities, game strategies and fitness information are based on the seven standards established to ensure a physically educated person:

1. Show competency in many movement forms and proficiency in a few movement forms.
2. Apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.
3. Exhibit a physically active lifestyle.
4. Achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of fitness.
5. Demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.
6. Demonstrate understanding and respect for differences among people in physical activity settings.
7. Understand that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.

Activities are developmentally appropriate ranging from perceptual motor and locomotor skills to introductory sport skills and strategies. Fitness assessments help students identify what to concentrate on to improve health related fitness.

### **Library and Technology**

How do I know what I know? This is the question that guides the students' experiences in the Lower School library. Students learn to navigate multiple mediums including text, images, sound, and video. Along the way, we foster a love a reading both for pleasure and research. Students deepen their connections with texts and refine their beginning research skills, as we discover our world through books, music, pictures, videos, websites and each other. We explore how to find, verify, manage and share information. Technology is woven into this experience as both a tool for finding information and for sharing what we learn with our peers, families, and the outside world. When our students move on to Middle School, they are prepared to grow into more advanced researchers and independently find age appropriate reading for pleasure.

All resource teachers and classroom teachers meet regularly to plan curriculum, discuss students' experiences, and delve into past, current, and future learning opportunities as a means of integrating all learning. Teachers also work to learn about each other's areas of expertise in order to authentically represent and engage students in rich multidisciplinary experiences. Opportunity exists for integration among the resource teachers and classroom teachers providing students with amazing multimodal learning experiences.

## **VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Our School Nurse is on call to the Lower School for any medical emergency. An Abington Township School district Nurse is here two days each week to collect the Pennsylvania required physical and dental examinations and immunization forms and conduct annual Pennsylvania mandated screenings for height, weight, vision and hearing.

## **Illness Guidelines**

**Fever:** Students must be picked up for a fever at or above 100 degrees. They may return to school only when they are fever free, (without the aid of fever reducing medication such as Tylenol/acetaminophen or ibuprofen) for 24 hours.

**Vomiting and diarrhea:** Students who have vomited or had more than 2 episodes of diarrhea must be picked up from school. They may return to school 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea, and when they are able to tolerate a normal diet.

**Colds/Coughs:** Students should stay home if they have a fever, if their symptoms keep them up at night or worsen with activity, or if they have a severe cough, congestion or runny nose that makes them unable to participate fully in a 7 hour school day.

**Pinkeye (conjunctivitis):** Students will be sent home if Pinkeye is suspected. A note from your health care provider is required to return to school 24 hours after starting antibiotic eye drops or ointment, and when symptoms have subsided.

**Undiagnosed rashes:** A note from your health care provider is required to return to school stating the rash is not contagious. Please contact the nurse's office prior to your child's return to school.

**Communicable/Infectious diseases:** Please report any infectious diseases (strep throat, influenza, chicken pox, mononucleosis, ringworm, impetigo, 5<sup>th</sup> disease, hand, food and mouth, scarlet fever, etc.) to the Nurse's office, EXT. 3978. A note from your health care provider is required to return to school stating they are no longer contagious.

**Head lice (pediculosis):** When a case of head lice is identified in the school, measures will be taken to minimize further spread and assist in the elimination of the problem. The infested child will be sent home from school to receive treatment by the families, who should consult with their pediatrician. Students may return to school after treatment with an effective pediculicide and the removal of all nits (eggs) from the child's hair. Your home should be treated as well. Upon arrival to school after treatment, and before returning to the classroom, students must be reexamined by the school nurse to determine that they are lice and nit free. Please notify the Nurse's office if you discover head lice on your child so that other families may be notified. We will make every effort to examine all the children in your child's grade and anyone else who may have been in close contact with your child.

For additional information visit: <http://www.ced.gov/parasites/lice/index.html>

## **Illness/Injury at School**

If a student becomes ill or injured at school, he/she should tell their teacher or the office, and then come to the nurse for evaluation. The student is not to call home before notifying an adult at school. No student is permitted to leave school during school hours for illness or injury, without the school's permission.

If a medical emergency occurs at school, we will call 911 and then contact you. If we are unable to contact you, we will call your emergency contact numbers. **Please make sure all contact and medical information is**

**completed and up to date in CareDox.** If your child becomes sick or injured at school, we will call you to pick up your child as soon as possible. If you cannot be reached, we will call your emergency contact numbers.

### **Staying Healthy**

1. Hand washing is the single most effective way to kill germs, prevent their spread and keep from getting sick. Wash often with soap and water for 20 seconds, or the time it takes to sing Happy Birthday.  
**<http://www.ced.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>**
2. If soap and water is not available, use an effective hand sanitizer.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
4. Use respiratory etiquette, Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when you cough or sneeze, throw the tissue away, and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.
5. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces like door knobs, faucets, phones, keyboards and toys.
6. Avoid sharing food, cups and eating utensils, especially with those who are sick.
7. Avoid close contact with those who are ill.
8. Make sure your child has a regular bedtime and is getting enough sleep. Lack of sleep impairs the immune system's ability to fight infection.
9. Make sure your child is well nourished, well hydrated and has breakfast every morning. Keep the immune system healthy by eating plenty of colorful fruits and vegetables (they're loaded with vitamin C), healthy proteins and whole grain breads and cereals. Avoid excess sugar!
10. Make sure your child dresses appropriately for the weather and for outdoor activities.

### **Food Allergy Guidelines**

AFS has many students with food allergies. If exposed to even a small amount of allergen, a life threatening reaction called Anaphylaxis can occur. Abington Friends is not a peanut/tree nut free school. However, in order to provide a safe environment for all of our students, we do not serve peanuts or tree nuts on campus. In addition, we ask that the following guidelines be followed.

1. No peanuts or products with nuts should be brought to school for parties, snacks, bake sales, class projects, bus trips, after school or sports activities. Carefully examine the label of packaged foods to confirm their contents. Do not use nuts/peanuts/nut oils in homemade goods. Exceptions must be cleared by faculty and/or the school nurse.
2. Although AFS discourages it, peanuts/nut products may be brought to school for lunch to be eaten **in the cafeteria**. Students eating peanut/nut products should wash their hands well after eating or use the wipes available in the cafeteria. If a student has peanut butter or nut products for breakfast, please make sure they wash their hands before coming to school.
3. All students who are in class with a student with a life threatening food allergy should wash their hands after eating.
4. Students should not trade or share lunch, snacks or drinks.

### **Medication Policy**

When medication, prescription or over-the-counter, is to be administered to a child during the school day, the parent/guardian must bring the following to the School Nurse:

1. Written orders from a physician giving the name of the drug, dosage, when prescription medication is to be taken, diagnosis and/or the reason that the medication is being given.
2. A completed Medication Permission Form from a parent or guardian requesting that the School comply with their physician's written order.
3. Medication in an appropriately labeled pharmacy container and/or an over-the-counter medication in its original container as purchased. In either case, an adult should bring the medication to the School

Nurse.

4. The School has some over-the-counter medications in stock to administer to students. For your convenience, we have created a Medication Permission Form that has a list of the over-the-counter medications provided by the school. If you have any questions, please call the School Nurse at 215-576-3978. LS families will be contacted prior to over-the-counter medication being dispensed.

### **Epipens, Inhalers and Medication**

1. No medication is permitted in the classroom, except with approval of the school nurse, even if the Medication Permission Form is on file in the Health Room. This includes over-the-counter medications. Note: The School conforms with the public health law of Pennsylvania in respect to medication administration. If you wish any special consideration in respect to this practice, please notify the Lower School Director in writing.
2. No epipens or inhalers are permitted in the classrooms unless the proper Medication Permission Form is on file in the Health Room.

### **Pediculosis (Lice) Policy**

When a case of head lice is identified in the school, measures will be taken to minimize further spread and assist in the elimination of the problem. The infested child will be sent home from school to receive treatment by the families, who should consult with their pediatrician. Students may return to school after treatment with an effective pediculicide and the removal of all nits (eggs) from the child's hair. Your home should be treated as well. Upon arrival to school after treatment, and before returning to the classroom, students must be reexamined by the School Nurse to determine that they are lice and nit free. Please notify the Nurse's office if you discover head lice on your child so that the other families may be notified. We will make every effort to examine all the children in your child's grade and anyone else who may have been in close contact with your child.

For additional information visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/index.html>.

### **Safe Outdoor Play**

We follow weather watch alerts to determine safe temperatures for outdoor play. Please ensure that your child is dressed/prepared appropriately for the weather, which may include gloves and hats for very cold days and sunscreen to protect them from the sun's rays. All children in Lower School need a change of clothing in the event of wet or muddy exploration.

### **No-Idle Initiative**

Please turn car engines off upon arrival at school. While this is always an important safety precaution, the school has a specific "no idle initiative." We know that by having fewer idling cars, we can improve the air quality around the school. We ask that everyone join us in this important environmentally friendly initiative.

### **Car Seats**

Injuries suffered while riding in cars are the number one preventable cause of death in young children. The state of Pennsylvania requires the use of seat belts in cars for all riders. The following are guidelines to follow to keep your child safe in the car:

- The rear seat is best for children 12 years and younger.
- All car passengers must wear a seat belt. Be sure that you wear a seat belt, as young children learn by example.
- Children under 4 years of age and any child under 40 pounds are required to use an approved child restraint device. Children older than 4 but under 8 years of age are

- required to use a booster seat.
- Never hold a child in your arms or lap while traveling in the car.

## **IX. EMERGENCY PLAN AND CLOSINGS**

### **Emergency Plan**

AFS has completed a detailed Emergency Operations Plan that defines and refines our response plans for a variety of types of emergencies.

#### *Highlights of the Plan:*

Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- Building Evacuations- children will be evacuated to a safe area on the grounds surrounding the building in the event of a fire, bomb threat, etc.
- In-Place Sheltering- sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- Evacuation Away from the Building- total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the immediate area. In this case, children will be taken to a safe location.
- Modified Operation- may include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems that make it unsafe for students (such as utility disruptions,) but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

#### *Communication:*

In an emergency, our power sources may be shut down, precluding some communications options. Cell phones and local television networks can become overloaded in an emergency. Every effort will be made to keep families informed rapidly as to what we are doing and where we are to be found. The Directors and Administrative Assistant will implement the communication plan.

- A message will be sent via the K-12 Alert system.
- Please be sure we have correct and updated contact information at all times.
- School voicemail - will be updated if possible.
- Email - brief messages will be sent to our entire email list and on the AFS home page.

We ask that you not call during any emergency. This will keep the main telephone lines free to make emergency calls and relay information, if we are able.

The Division Directors will be in contact with the Head of School (or designated person in charge) and will respond to events as they unfold.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills are held periodically. Evacuation routes for fire drills and other emergencies are posted near the exit doors in each classroom, bathroom and office. If the fire drill occurs while you are present, follow the lead of the teachers and evacuate with us. Do not re-enter the building until we have been cleared to do so.

### **Snow or Emergency Closings**

Announcements of the closing of school because of weather conditions will be made over major Philadelphia radio and television stations, the school website at [www.abingtonfriends.net](http://www.abingtonfriends.net) (on the home page), via your e-mail, via K-12 Alert and on the main and Lower School Office voicemail system. Announcements of school closings are usually posted by 6:30 a.m. The AFS code number is **360** (as in the degrees in a circle.)

If snowfall begins during the school day, AFS will make every effort to avoid mid-day closures. Should the school have to close during the day, you will be notified by phone, with as much advance warning as possible. If we cannot reach you, we will notify your emergency contact person. In the event that the building must be evacuated, a message will be left on the school voicemail, on the AFS website and via a note on the main entrance doors as to the exact pick-up location(s).

On days of “threatening” weather, please be sure to inform your child’s teachers of the best phone #'s to reach you on that day (i.e. cell, work phone). This greatly assists us in time-consuming process of needing to contact each family.

### **Access to the Lower School Building**

The front door that provides access to the Lower School building is unlocked between 7:30 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. and re-locked from 8:20 a.m. till 2:30 p.m. The side entrance in the Nature Playground is unlocked between 7:30 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. and then again from 2:30 p.m. till 3:30 p.m. Between 8:20 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., the side doors will be locked and will be accessible only by AFS employees. When families enroll in the program, they receive two electronic access fobs. The fobs will allow access to the main entrance door between the hours of 7:30 and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If families need additional fobs, or if it is lost, they should contact the office 215-576-3960. All access fobs must be returned when a family leaves the school.

To ensure the safety of the children, we request that access fobs be used only by the individual to whom they are assigned to. Lost or stolen fobs should be reported to the office immediately so that the fob can be deactivated. Please be cautious when holding the door open for other individuals entering or exiting the facility. If you do not recognize the individual, we request that you let Tricia welcome the visitor to the building.

## **X. FAMILIES AND THE SCHOOL**

### **Website: [www.abingtonfriends.net](http://www.abingtonfriends.net)**

Please be sure to regularly visit the AFS website, in addition to visiting the Lower School blog. This is a great way to learn about happenings throughout all of the AFS community.

### **AFS E-Mail**

E-mail is now the primary form of communication between the school and families. At the beginning of the year, all families are added to the school email list in order to get emergency info, on-going mailings and other information. Please let the office know of an e-mail address change (215-576-3960).

### **Home and School Association**

All families/guardians of AFS students are automatically members of the Home and School Association. Activities are led by the families/guardians and supported by the school as a whole. The Association is very active, and its contributions to the school are many and varied. Home and School events aim to build community and bring everyone together. The work of families/guardians in our school, whether through the organized services of the Association or on an informal basis, is both vital and enriching for all of us. We cannot overemphasize the many benefits resulting for children through the generous, caring and enthusiastic help of their families.

This year Amanda Hirsch and Daniel Woodlin are the Lower School Clerks of the All-School Home and School Association. In addition, each grade has corresponding clerks. The Home and School Association’s meeting

dates, as well as a calendar of activities, will be announced on the AFS website. We encourage you all to become active participants in this important Association.

### **Fundraising at AFS**

As in the case of all independent schools, tuition alone does not cover the full cost of educating each child at the school. The gap of approximately \$2,000 a year is made up by contributions to the Annual Fund and proceeds from endowment. In addition to the annual needs, periodically the School will organize a capital campaign to raise needed funds for new buildings, for endowment, for teacher salaries and for tuition assistance. All families are asked to support these fund-raisers to the extent they are able. No gift is too large or too small; 100% participation is always our goal. Today's students benefit directly from the generosity of past families and donors.

### **Communication**

In addition to our detailed Family Handbook and web site, we have scheduled family-teacher conferences, newsletters and the Lower School blog, Lower School News and Notes. Our blog address is [afslowerschool.blogspot.com](http://afslowerschool.blogspot.com). A family bulletin board in the main entranceway provides information about family events and other resources. We work hard on creating an environment where teachers work in partnership with families establishing and maintaining regular, ongoing two-way communication.

Please feel free to share ongoing information about your child, as well as ideas to support your child's learning. We encourage families to raise any concerns and work collaboratively with teachers to find mutually satisfying solutions that teachers then incorporate into classroom practice.

Please check the calendar for Back-to-School Night and Family-Teacher conference days. If you wish to meet with your child's teachers at any other time, let us know and we will arrange it. We try to refrain from discussing children in their presence, but will gladly conference in person or by phone at an appointed time.

Please notify the Director if written communication is needed in a language other than English.

### **AFS Friday Notes**

Notes or letters announcing classroom plans, needs, events, or field trips as well as general AFS information are sent home to families on Friday via email. Occasionally a note from the School or from your child's teacher will come home on another day of the week. Please develop a daily habit of reviewing items brought home in your child's school bag.

### **Families/Guardians/Visitors to the School**

At 8:20 a.m., all main doors to the Lower School entrances are locked. The Redbud Nature Playground entrance is not accessible via fob again until 2:30 p.m. Between 8:20 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., please enter through the main door of the Lower School building and sign in at the counter of the LS front office. You may be asked to wear a name tag for the duration of your visit and will return the tag and sign out at the end of your visit.

### **Family Grievance Procedure**

In our day-to-day communication with families, we strive to resolve issues as they come up. However, from time to time a parent may feel that an issue has not been satisfactorily addressed or resolved and may wish to pursue the matter further. It is essential that families are heard when they raise a concern. All parent concerns should be addressed initially at the level closest to the event in an effort to achieve a resolution. The early identification of a concern and the prompt initiation of a resolution can help avert further problems.



The levels through which a grievance resolution should proceed are:

- The classroom teachers
- The Director of the Lower School
- The AFS Head of School

### **Holiday and End-of-Year Gift Giving**

While many children like to express appreciation to their teachers, this is purely an individual matter. Simplicity is basic to Quaker philosophy and an appropriately simple expression of appreciation such as a special card or homemade baked good mean a lot, as does a donation to the Abington Friends School Annual Fund.

## **XI. GENERAL ALL-SCHOOL INFORMATION**

### **Financial Obligations**

The Business Office is responsible for handling tuition and student accounts. Accounts must be paid in a timely manner. By regulation of the School Committee, students are not permitted to attend classes nor have transcripts released if payments to the school are not made in accordance with the agreed payment plan. Accounts are delinquent if payment is not made by the scheduled date. Overdue library books must be returned or payment must be made before records can be released. Accounts are delinquent if payment is not made by the scheduled date. Furthermore, no student will be enrolled for another academic year until all accounts are clear. Tuition payments received are applied to the oldest debt.

### **Insurance**

We assume that all children are covered by the health and accident insurance of their families, and that this information is indicated on registration forms. The school also purchases student accident insurance to help offset the out-of-pocket medical costs associated with school-related accidents. Should your child be involved in an accident at school, contact your division director for assistance with the claim process.

### **Release of Records**

If you need to have records sent outside of the school, for any reason, you must sign a release form from the school you are applying to and submit it to AFS. It will take approximately two weeks from the receipt of the signed release form to complete the review process and mail the records.

### **Confidentiality**

The school will maintain confidentiality and respect each family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of any confidential information and intrusion into family life. If we have reason to believe that a child's welfare may be at risk, it is permissible to share confidential information with agencies or individuals who may be able to intervene in the child's interest.

### **Special Circumstances**

When there are any special circumstances that might affect your child and family, such as, absence of families/guardians, family illness, etc., a telephone call to your division director is very helpful and important.

### **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

The Internet is a rich resource of information and communication with the potential to be a powerful learning tool. Unfortunately, it also has the potential to be abused and made inappropriate for a learning community. Use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and the purpose of the school policy is to define acceptable and unacceptable use of the Internet by the AFS community. Unacceptable use, as described here may result in

restriction or cancellation of the access privilege.

- 1.) Acceptable Use - Acceptable use of the AFS Internet access is any use which is consistent with the educational objectives of AFS. The Internet offers a wealth of material for research and educational use. The communication tools of the Internet also offer the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and information and collaborative work. All communications should be polite with appropriate language use.
- 2.) Unacceptable Use - Illegal Activity. It is unacceptable use to in any way promote or engage in any activities which are deemed criminal under federal, state or local laws, including but not limited to copyright laws.
- 3.) Hacking and Other Vandalism - It is unacceptable use to maliciously attempt to harm or destroy the hardware or data of another user, whether at AFS or at any site connected to the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the creation and spreading of computer viruses. It is also unacceptable use to attempt to use another's account, including the System Administrators' accounts, without written permission of the other person.
- 4.) Offensive and Obscene Materials - It is unacceptable use to send or receive any data which are offensive and/or obscene according to AFS standards and purposes.
- 5.) Private Commercial Gain - It is unacceptable use to engage in activity for private or financial gain. AFS will work with its service provider to make Internet service reliable and secure. AFS will also work with every user to promote technical skills and acceptable use. However, AFS makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. AFS will not be responsible for any damages you suffer. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries or service interruption from whatever cause.