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# Folsom Hills Elementary School

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

2015 - 2016



In a time of frequent and sometimes abrupt change, people oftentimes need quick answers to simple questions. Based on the most often-asked questions last year, listed below is the information which the staff at Folsom Hills feels it most pertinent for parents to know. Please note that this document does not, in any way, substitute for reading the *Welcome Handbook* closely. Much more detail can be gained from that document, as well as answers to those questions which did not make it onto this year's FAQ. Likewise, please remember that much of this information is specific to Folsom Hills Elementary; other sites may have different processes and systems.

### CALENDARS, DATES, AND TIMES

- **When is the first day of school? Where can I find the dates for other events and activities?**
  - The first day of school is Tuesday, August 11. All school events are listed in the *Welcome Handbook* on pages 8, 9, and 10, and on the school website under the *Calendars* link. The *Welcome Handbook* can be found on the school website under the forms and documents tab.
  
- **What time does my student start and end school?**
  - Depending on their grade level, students start at different times.
    - Transitional Kindergarten: Parents received a phone call from Folsom Hills explaining whether their student was an early slip student or a late slip student in May.
      - Early slip: 8:25 am to 12:02 pm
      - Late slip: 10:06 am to 2:11 pm
    - Kindergarten: Parents received a postcard from Folsom Hills explaining whether their student was an early slip student or a late slip student in May.
      - Early slip: 8:25 am to 12:02 pm
      - Late slip: 10:06 am to 2:11 pm
    - Grades 1 and 2: All students in grades 1 and 2 will start school at 9:10 am and end at 2:37 pm from August 11 through September 4. Starting on September 8, students will be divided up into early and late friend (also known as early bird and late bird) groups by teacher assessments done via a schedule devised by each 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher.
      - Early friend: 8:25 am to 1:52 pm
      - Late friend: 9:10 am to 2:37 pm
        - Important Reminder: Starting on September 9, and on each and every Wednesday thereafter, *all students in grades 1 and 2 will start school at 8:25 am and end at 1:52 pm, no matter what their am or pm assignment is.* Please refer to pages 4 and 5 of the *Welcome Handbook* for more detailed information.
  - Grades 3, 4 and 5: Students in grades 3, 4 and 5 start at 8:25 am and end at 2:37 pm.

- **Why are grades 1 and 2 starting the first four weeks of school at a later time?**
  - Students in grades 1 and 2 are starting at 9:10 am and ending at 2:37 pm in an effort to lessen the traffic and parking issues around Folsom Hills the first three weeks of school. Now that Kindergarten students arrive at the same time as the rest of our student body, this change eases parking issues and improves student safety.
  
- **What is a slip session? (This applies to TK and Kindergarten students)**
  - A slip session schedule is most simply defined as an early/late program for Kindergarten students, similar in nature to the early/late programs in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades. It is beneficial to both teacher and child, in that it allows for a 15:1 student/teacher ratio for most of the day, with a short, common session encompassing all 30 students in the middle. The common session will be where students will participate in physical education, computer lab, and library sessions. The small group session (early or late) of 15:1 will be primarily used for more academic activities.
  
- **How do I know if my student is early slip or late slip? (This applies to TK and Kindergarten students)**
  - Parents received a postcard from Folsom Hills explaining whether their student was an early slip student or a late slip student in May.
  
- **What is an early or late friend?**
  - The early and late friend schedules are in place to allow for teachers to work with specific student groups in regards to their reading. These small groups are roughly half the size of a full classroom and allow for leveled academic programs, aimed to best serve your student.
  
- **How do I know if my student is an early friend or a late friend?**
  - Teacher based student assessments will be completed during the first three weeks of school. These assessments allow teachers to level students and place them into what they consider to be appropriate groupings. Parents will receive notice of whether their student is a late friend or early friend on September 2, 2015. The information will be in their Wednesday folder.
  
- **Can I request early or late start times?**
  - No. While Folsom Hills understands that parents may have extenuating needs or preferences based on childcare or work issues, we do not take requests nor will we honor them. Our early and late programs are based on the academic needs of the students solely; placements based on ancillary needs undermine the efforts of teachers to provide the most appropriate education possible to students.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING**

- **Where can I park as a parent or volunteer?**
  - Unfortunately, there is no on-site parking available for parents or volunteers between 7:30 am and 3:00 pm, the only exception being those who need to utilize our handicapped parking spots. All on-campus parking is reserved for staff, necessitating parents to park on the street. Parents and volunteers are welcome to utilize any reserved parking spot after 3:00 pm.

- **Where do I drop my student off in the morning if I am driving them to school and don't want to park?**
  - Students will need to be dropped off in one of two release zones; the first is found in the parking lot next to the student care center on Briggs Ranch Drive, and the second is the south side of the parking lot off Manseau Drive. These zones are easily identifiable by their bright yellow markings and lettering. Please note that students may only exit vehicles in these zones. Do not allow your student or other children in your care to exit the vehicle anywhere else when dropping them off on campus.
    - Do not leave your vehicle when in the drop-off zone. Parents leaving their vehicle will be reported to the police. If you need to leave your vehicle, please park in an available and safe spot on the street.
  
- **Where do I pick my student up at the end of the day if I don't want to park?**
  - Students can be picked up at the same release zones as discussed previously. Please remember that you may not exit your vehicle at any time when in these zones, and may be asked to move forward and return again if you are blocking traffic. Folsom Hills will call the police for those parents who endanger student safety by not complying with these rules.
  
- **Do the police really patrol the area and issue citations?**
  - Absolutely. Last year the Folsom Police Department issued 33 tickets to Folsom Hills' parents who elected to violate fire code, student safety and California driving laws.
  
- **Who can use the bus loop at the front of the campus?**
  - Only parents with parking permits issued through the Folsom Hills office, student care and district vans/buses, district maintenance vehicles, delivery vehicles and emergency vehicles may use the bus loop. Violators of this rule will be issued citations from the Folsom Police Department.
  
- **I live nearby and want to walk my student to and from school. How does this work?**
  - You have many options in this instance, some of which are determined by grade level. The most convenient method for most parents is to wait in the parent waiting area adjacent to the Kindergarten yard or outside the fenced areas of the intermediate yard. However, some parents prefer for their student to meet them in the grass area adjacent to Briggs Ranch Drive or a nearby landmark. Please note the following specific information relating to grade levels.
    - Pre-K: Parents will need to check with their student's teacher for specifics.
    - TK and Kindergarten: Parents of these students are welcome to drop them off and pick them up directly from parent waiting area adjacent to the Kindergarten yard.
    - Grades 1 and 2: Parents are welcome to walk their student onto the primary yard in the morning for the first 3 days of school. Starting August 17, we ask that you allow your students to walk independently to their class line, once you have delivered your student, we ask that parents wait behind the gates to the primary yard if you wish to see your student picked up by their teacher. Parents may wait to pick up their student at the end of the day in the parent waiting area adjacent to the Kindergarten yard. *Do not wait outside a teacher's classroom door or on the playground.*
    - Grades 3, 4 and 5: Parents are welcome to walk their student to the entrance gates of the intermediate yard, but are asked to remain behind the fence. Parents are welcome to wait and see their student get picked up, but must not be physically present on the intermediate yard itself. They may pick up their student there at the end of the day if they wish, but again must remain off the yard itself. We suggest parents meet their student outside the intermediate yard at these grade levels.

- **My student's classroom is in the quad, and not adjacent to the yard. Can I wait outside the classroom to pick them up?**
  - No. Parents are asked to remain outside of the quad and in the areas discussed above unless participating in a sanctioned school activity or event.
    - *Again, there are to be no parents waiting in the quad. This is for student safety reasons. There are no exceptions, unless the classroom teacher has approved it and shared the reasoning with the main office.*

## **ATTENDANCE**

- **What do I do if my student is unable to make it to school?**
  - Please call the school office at 916.985.0771 and talk to one of our administrative support team members. They will document the absence and reason behind it. If you call before or after school hours, you may leave a message on the attendance line (option 3), which is accessible via phone prompt when you call the main number. You may be asked to provide paperwork proving medical appointments or other attendance-related data.
- **Occasionally our family goes on vacation, and we leave early on a Friday or stay through Monday. How do I let the school know this is the case so my student isn't marked unexcused?**
  - In this case, you do not have an option. FCUSD does not allow parents to remove their student from school for a vacation or work-related event, and have it marked as *vacation* or as an *excused absence*. District policy states that since these absences are a choice, they will be marked as *unexcused absence* and can lead to the generation of truancy letters.
- **Our family will be traveling for a long period of time, and our student will be missing more than 5 days of school. What do I do in a case such as this?**
  - If you are planning to pull your student from school for such an event, please contact the office to set up an independent study contract. If the ISC is **completed** and returned by the date listed, the student will not be marked unexcused. Independent study contracts are only permissible for students planning on being absent 5 or more *consecutive* days. You must give at least 2 weeks notice to the office staff should you want to take advantage of an ISC.
- **I received a truancy letter in the mail. What do I do?**
  - These letters are generated by the office and mailed out periodically. If you receive one, please read through it carefully. These letters are not to be taken lightly and may offer you options so as to prevent future absences from occurring. Depending on the numbers of absences or tardies, different actions could take place. You will need to refer to the letter for specifics.

## **COMMUNICATION**

- **What are the different methods used to communicate with parents at Folsom Hills?**
  - Folsom Hills has numerous ways of communicating with parents. PowerSchool, the school website, the *Welcome Handbook* and email are the best initial options. Phone contact is of course available, but may take a while longer to respond to. Please consult your student's teacher for their preferred method of communication. Please check your student's Wednesday folder for information as well.
- **Can I check grades, attendance and other data online?**
  - Yes. Please ensure you have set up your PowerSchool account. This information has not changed over the course of the summer, and any previous credentials are still valid. If you are new to Folsom Hills, this information will be given to you when you pick up your child's schedule.
- **What is the school website's address?**
  - You can view the school website at <http://www.fcusd.org/fhe>
- **Where do I find the email addresses of staff members?**
  - That information is available online or on page 15 of the *Welcome Handbook*.
- **I understand how to communicate with the school, but what about PTA? Where can I find information about how to volunteer my time at a PTA sponsored event or help organize a PTA event?**
  - That information is available online under the PTA link on the school website. You will also be receiving information about PTA membership at registration and the first few weeks of school. Please utilize the school website for appropriate contact information.

## **VOLUNTEERING AND PARENT ACCESS TO CAMPUS**

- **What is the process for a parent to gain access to the campus between 7:45 am and 2:45 pm?**
  - If you wish to come onto campus for any reason other than to drop off an item for your student at the office, you need to check in with our administrative support team. Category 1 or Category 2 volunteers will need to sign in at the main office and receive the appropriate badge for your visit.
- **Category 1 volunteer and category 2 volunteer... what does that mean?**
  - Category 1 Volunteer: Category 1 volunteers only need to fill out the category 1 application form and provide TB clearance to participate in a school event. Category 1 volunteers are with a teacher at all times and are never alone with students.
  - Category 2 Volunteer: In addition to filling out a category 2 volunteer form, category 2 volunteers need to provide proof of TB negativity from your doctor or health provider, and fingerprint clearance from the Department of Justice and FBI to participate in a school event. As opposed to category 1 volunteers, category 2 volunteers can work with small groups of students away from the classroom teacher; an example of a category 2 volunteer's duties would be the ability to lead small independent groups on a school-sponsored field trip.

- **My student left their instrument, lunch, or schoolwork at home. Can I just run to their classroom very quickly and drop it off?**
  - No. Please bring any item which you need your student to receive to the office. Our staff will ensure it gets to them in a timely manner. *The only exception to this notification policy is in regards to musical instruments. It is up to the student to check in with the office to see if their instrument has been dropped-off. The office will not notify a classroom teacher about an instrument being dropped-off, due to the number of interruptions this brings to classroom instruction.*
  
- **May I have lunch with my student?**
  - Absolutely. However, you will need to have lunch with your student away from the main lunch area. Please check in with the office, and they will direct you to an available location so you may enjoy lunch together. Parents may not eat in the multi-purpose room with their student.
  
- **I really enjoy playing with my student and their friends. Is it possible for me to occasionally join them at recess?**
  - No. Due to safety and liability concerns, the only adults permitted on the yard with students at any time are those working for the district or participating in a school function. A school function can include events sponsored by PTA or a special event put on by the school (an example being the helicopter visit during Red Ribbon Week). Please check with the office if you are unsure.
  
- **I have a very friendly dog, and like to walk it to school in the morning or bring it to lunch when I eat with my student. This isn't a problem, right?**
  - It is. *Dogs (and for that matter, any animal) are not allowed on campus without the expressed written consent of both the classroom teacher and principal.* Please understand that while your household pet may be sweet and non-aggressive, many students have deep-rooted fears regarding animals and/or health issues which have nothing to do with your animal specifically.
    - *Again, dogs are not allowed on campus at any time for any reason, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without the expressed, written consent of both a classroom teacher and the principal.*

**As a parent, what do I need to do if I wish to participate in a classroom activity?**

- Please contact your student's teacher directly to initiate this process; most teachers will review their individual policies with you at Back to School Night (which is on August 19, 2015). Please be aware that not all teachers ask for the same amount/level of parent participation. Please remember that parents must always sign in and out of the office and have the appropriate clearances as mandated by FCUSD, the State of California, and Federal Government.