

“RFS was the school and community our girls needed to grow and flourish, and we are confident it has set them up for success in high school and beyond.”

-Richmond Friends School Parent

# Parent/Guardian

2020-2021 Student Handbook



Richmond  
FRIENDS SCHOOL

Richmond Friends School

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## **SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION**

### **Mission Statement**

Richmond Friends School is committed to providing a quality educational experience for each child, creating an environment that nurtures individual intellectual, emotional, creative, spiritual, and physical gifts within a community that is explicitly framed by principles of the Religious Society of Friends.

### **Statement of Quaker Principles & Beliefs**

We believe:

- That each child is unique and gifted in diverse ways.
- That all children have intellectual gifts. RFS will help children recognize and build their strengths while also recognizing and nurturing under-developed talents and the joy of learning.
- That students can demonstrate understanding in diverse ways. RFS will encourage students to develop many talents, become independent thinkers, and will help them demonstrate knowledge by using multiple modes of intelligence.
- That all of us are connected to the larger world; therefore, our children will learn from, appreciate and serve our local and worldwide communities in ways that honor and celebrate diversity and the natural environment.
- That each individual in the RFS community is responsible for nurturing a sense of community.
- That will lead to a sense of community and a safe and caring environment in which the peaceful resolution of conflict is the norm.
- That parents, children, teachers, and the entire RFS community are collectively responsible for maintaining an environment that explicitly embraces the virtues of integrity, service, patience, and simplicity.

### **Quaker Beliefs continue to shape and inform Richmond Friends School.....**

The philosophy and tradition of RFS draws from a commitment to the values and testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends (also called Quakers), especially those of community and community service, peace and non-violent resolution of conflict, and respect for all people. These values form a lens through which the curriculum is built. We teach cooperation and consensus building, and non-violent conflict management, which are practiced in a developmentally appropriate manner throughout the school. Respect for diversity of background and learning style is modeled by adults in the community, reflected in our program, and encouraged among students. Each classroom gathers together for a few minutes of silence to start each day. This introduces the children to the idea of silent contemplation, and helps settle them as a group before they begin other classroom activities. Weekly All School Meeting, held in the manner of Friends, provides a time to reflect together as a community for Pre-Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **Philosophy of Curriculum**

The Richmond Friends School curriculum is guided by the underlying beliefs and principles stated in our mission statement, and our Quaker values. Richmond Friends School is proudly aware of its Quaker roots. The school cares for and educates all members of its community in regards to Quaker testimonies: conflict resolution, pacifism, simplicity, global awareness, respect for all life, diversity, and community service. These testimonies are clearly stated in our mission and come alive for our students throughout our curriculum. Making connections between these values and Quaker faith is not as important as it is to simply understand, embrace, and live these values. If given a 'teachable moment' to link the two, teachers may address Quaker faith as educationally

appropriate. RFS observes moments of silence, in the manner of Friends, each morning and for portions of our weekly All School Meeting. We hope that this is an open time of reflection and sharing that attends to the spirit inside each and every one of us. We strive to welcome all, no matter their faith, race, or background – making special strides to be inclusive in our language and practice.

Academically, starting with the very youngest, students are encouraged to explore topics of individual interest and are directed toward development in the core content areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies. The Indiana academic standards are used as a guide in reinforcing curriculum development. Teachers act as guides in the learning process and facilitate student exploration and the development of student knowledge and self-confidence. The small class size and multi-age classrooms encourage individualization of curriculum and enables a deeper connection between teacher and student. The educational aim of the school is to enable every student to learn at their own rate, guide each student in their personal development, and, allow every student to achieve to their highest potential.

### **Commitment to Diversity**

From its very inception, central tenets of the Quaker faith have been inclusion, diversity, and equality. Springing from the deeply held conviction that all people have "a Light within", Quakers have sought to include peoples of both genders and all races, classes, creeds, learning differences and disabilities. We continue to strive for inclusion by actively seeking a diverse board, faculty, and student body. We admit students of any race, color, religion, national, or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. RFS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, financial aid programs, and other school administered programs.

### **Learning Differences & Disabilities**

RFS operates with the assumption that all students learn differently. Teachers seek to understand each student's learning style and, within curriculum limits, tailor classroom activities accordingly. The staff of the school consciously avoids using diagnostic labels out of the belief that labels of any sort can become limiting in how an individual views herself/himself and is viewed by others.

"Learning differences" and "learning disabilities" are terms which are sometimes interchanged. RFS reserves the latter term for more severe differences which have been described or diagnosed by qualified clinicians as a result of formal assessment.

While RFS is not considered a school for children with learning disabilities, the smaller class size and more flexible, integrative curriculum at RFS enable us to successfully work with students with a range of learning styles and special needs. Experience has taught us that limits do exist in both the range of needs that we can meet and in the number of students with special needs we can serve effectively. Modifications can only be made when the remedies fall within the existing resources, policies and facilities, and when they do not cause an undue hardship on the school, its faculty and its students.

In order to make necessary judgments concerning special needs, staff and students alike are best served when parents share whatever assessment information they possess. Please be sure to bring this information to the attention of your child's teacher as well as the Head of School. Failure to disclose information could result in your being required to withdraw your child(ren) and forfeit tuition.

## Environmental Initiatives

We take Stewardship seriously at RFS. We are committed through teaching our students and modeling good practices to helping this young generation and our families to become the important stewards our Earth needs for a healthier future. Please join us in doing what YOU can.

### Curricular Initiatives:

- Interdisciplinary, thematic curriculum and projects
- Field Trips
- Experiential Education
- Natural History
- Project Learning Tree certified teachers
- Nature Preschool Guidelines
- Garden

### Co-curricular Initiatives:

- Service Learning
- Cans for Lands: This tall, round receptacle is located beside the WRF's basement door. Please deposit your aluminum cans here. Proceeds go to benefit Whitewater Valley Land Trust who helps care for Wayne County's Nature Preserves.
- Worm Bins
- Compost Tumblers
- Rain barrels
- Certified River Watcher (teacher) through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Plastic Lid Recycling
- Nature Preschool Curriculum development & professional trainings

### Waste Reduction and Conservation Initiatives:

- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Our classrooms, lunch room and offices have specially marked bins for trash, compostable and recyclable materials.
- Best-Way Disposal / East Central Recycling shared, multi-use dumpster: RFS shares the expense of this dumpster with West Richmond Friends Meeting and all participating families may use it. It's behind our playground at 607 W. Main Street. It takes all plastics, all paper, glass and aluminum.
- Encourage healthy shared snacks and foods with minimum packaging. Provide your own place settings for school snacks and community potlucks events- this eliminates waste.
- Turn lights off when not in use.
- Turn off computers and power strips when not in use.
- Use energy saving light bulbs.

### Next Steps:

- Use more recycled paper for copier
- Use more post-consumer, recycled paper for mailings and marketing materials
- Use more green cleaning products
- Become an Eco-School
- Zero-Waste days and / or functions
- Establish a Green Club
- Commit to sustainable / renewable energy source

## Committee & Board Structure

The Richmond Friends School governing arrangement shall consist of the following:

**Clerk of the Board** that will be selected by recommendation of the Governance Committee and approval of the Board. The clerk should be a current board member and will serve a two year term, not to exceed two terms—4 years total. The Clerk is responsible for planning Board meetings, facilitating discussion among Board committees, parents and community members, and assisting with the day to day operations of the School.

**Executive Council (EC)** that consists of at least 2 members- the Head of School and the Clerk of the Board. The Executive Council will meet twice a month and will invite other Board and/or community members as appropriate.

**School Board** that consists of additional members from the community at large (both RFS and outside the school). Governance committee is charged with keeping an appropriate balance on the school board in relation to numbers of parents, Quakers, and historically under-represented groups. The total board (including the EC) numbers no less than 10.

**Governance Committee** is charged with making appointments to the EC and the School Board as well as designing and implementing board education initiatives. This Committee meets as needed to nominate individuals to serve on the EC and the all-school board. Nominations for the EC and School Board are brought to the School Board monthly meeting for approval.

**Parent Committee** calls on parents for various duties related to the school's functions and oversees family fundraising activities. The Parent Committee should have 1 representative from each class.

Board Members will be asked to serve as clerk for one of the following working committees:

- Recruitment & Marketing
- Development
- Finance
- Facilities
- Administrative & Curriculum Committee

In addition to board members, working committees may also be comprised of community members, outside RFS, and parents with specific interest and expertise in the designated area. Ad Hoc groups may be formed when necessary.

It is the job of the EC to delegate important volunteer and service tasks to the larger board and working groups as needed. *Larger policy and governance issues can be discussed in EC but referred to the monthly RFS board meeting for discussion and approval.* All EC meetings are open to any school board member or teaching faculty that wish to attend and participate. However, parents are invited to attend *only* the monthly all-board meetings.

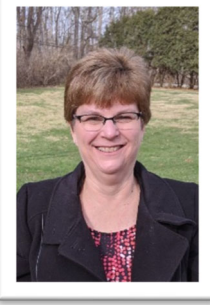
The overall RFS School Board meets once per month and acts partly in an advisory role to the EC and working groups but also (importantly) to oversee major school policy and mission issues that require more careful deliberation and diverse consideration than the EC can accomplish (e.g. annual budget, strategic planning initiatives, etc). These meetings are convened by the Board Clerk. Minutes are officially recorded, typed, and stored in a notebook in the office for community access as desired.

## FACULTY & STAFF – Classroom Teachers



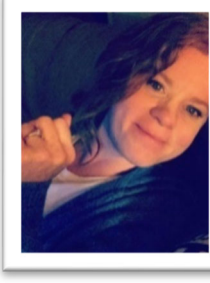
### **Aaron Cooney, *PreK-K Lead Teacher***

Aaron graduated from Earlham College in 2012 with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. During Aaron's time at Earlham he became deeply involved with Girls Inc. of Wayne County, and worked in their after school and summer programs for nearly five years. Aaron also took part in a brief internship with the Children's Crisis Treatment Center (CcTC) in Philadelphia during his studies at Earlham College. In 2014 Aaron went back to school to earn his teaching certification in elementary education with Indiana Wesleyan. Aaron joined RFS in Fall 2012 and served for 3 years as the PreK-K Assistant Teacher, before assuming the Lead Teacher role in 2015.



### **Melody Weikart, *PreK-K Assistant Teacher (Second Semester)***

Melody received her Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Indiana University. She taught choral/general music in Greensburg, IN and Warsaw, IN. Since raising her children, she has continued to engage with children and families while working for Communities In Schools and Centerstone. During her time with Centerstone, she worked as a family support specialist and served within Northeastern Elementary School. Melody lives with her husband Kirk and enjoys spending time with her 3 grown children and their families.



### **Laura Sheets, *1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher***

Laura graduated from Bates College with a Bachelor's Degree in psychology, and from California State University Long Beach with a Master's Degree in Education: Curriculum Development and Instruction. She holds Indiana teaching licenses for grades preschool to 8th grade and special certification as a Language Development Specialist. She taught elementary school in California for eight years before moving to Indiana. Eager to return to the classroom after work in education administration, tutoring reading, and raising her family, Laura joined the RFS faculty in 2008. She takes special joy in helping students with reading, writing, and art. Her classroom has a focus on guiding students to find a

balance between honoring their own uniqueness and becoming self-regulating members of their classroom.

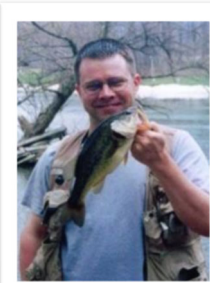


### **Rachel Carpenter, *3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher***

Rachel has a bachelor's degree in Human Development and Social Relations from Earlham College. She taught math at the Arthur Morgan School and 4th/5th grade at Rainbow Mountain Children's School, both in western North Carolina. After her children were born she moved to Indiana and homeschooled them. When her youngest followed in her siblings' footsteps and headed to the Arthur Morgan School, Rachel got her elementary teacher certification through the Transition to Teaching program at IU East. She also has Orton Gillingham tutor training through the Dyslexia Institute of Indiana. Rachel lives in Modoc with her husband, one cat, four chickens, and her three

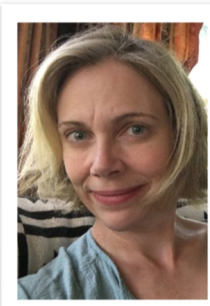
children when they make it home for a visit. She particularly enjoys teaching math and science.





### **John Sheets, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher**

John graduated from Earlham College in 1992 with a Bachelor's Degree in Biology. Deciding his future would be best spent in education, he graduated from Indiana University East in 1997 with a BS Degree and Certification in elementary education. That same year he received the Student Teacher of the Year award while completing his student teaching at the multi-aged, portfolio based Discovery School, a choice school in the Richmond Public School System. He has been teaching at Richmond Friends School since the fall of 1997.



### **Jennie Kiffmeyer, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher**

Jennie received a B.A. degree in Art History from Indiana University Bloomington, a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from University of Illinois, and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Spaulding University. She has worked with children at independent schools for 7 years, most recently as a middle school religion teacher at St. Richard's Episcopal School in Indianapolis. Jennie also has professional experience as a school librarian and taught a course at Earlham College about themes of peace and social justice in children's literature. An award-winning storyteller and writer, Jennie especially loves exploring stories with her students and engaging them in the research and creative processes. When not in the classroom, Jennie enjoys cooking for family and friends, making art, and volunteering at Richmond Civic Theatre. Jennie and

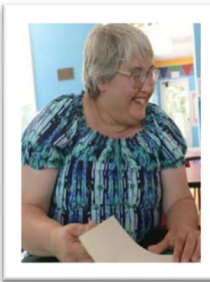
her husband Jonathan are parents to Ben (RFS, Class of '17) and Lizzy (RFS, Class of '20).



### **Nicole Blair, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher**

Nicole received her Bachelor's Degree in Aerospace Engineering from MIT and a Master's Degree in Biology from the University of Notre Dame. She has taught high school chemistry and biology in the Washington DC area as well as Ecological Biology at Earlham College. She has co-led, with her husband Peter, two Earlham College semester abroad programs in Environmental Studies in New Zealand. Nicole is an avid photographer, enjoys gardening (when it is not too hot!), and loves camping with her family and friends. Her two daughters, Savanna and Maggie, have both been RFS students.

## **FACULTY & STAFF – Trueblood Preschool**



### **Roxanne Steele, Lead Teacher**

Roxanne Steele, Lead Teacher at Trueblood Preschool, has a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education from Ball State and a Masters in Education from Indiana Wesleyan. Roxanne has been active with the Friends School in the past with her son, and has worked in preschool and special education settings in the past. Bringing the philosophy of the whole child and multi-sensory learning together is a thrilling task to take on at Trueblood Preschool. Roxanne lives in Richmond with her husband, Brian and their children Mariah, Sara and Nathan and memory of daughter Rachel.

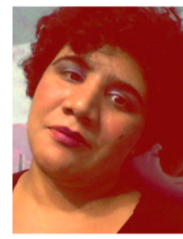


### **Andrew Ervin, Assistant Teacher**

Andrew always had a passion for working with kids even back in his high school years. Andrew has helped with various kids' events at Christ United Church and has served at a summer lunch program through them during high school. He graduated a trimester early from Richmond High School in February 2015 to get his Tech Honors Diploma. More recently, he has completed and passed numerous early and elementary education classes at Ivy Tech Community College and wishes to keep pursuing his degree. He has worked in a preschool class at Kids Kingdom both as an Assistant Teacher and a Head Teacher for 2 years. While working at Kids Kingdom, he was able to connect with a lot of

kids from his preschool class and the elementary kids he worked with in the afternoon and summer and hopes to do the same here at Trueblood.

## **FACULTY & STAFF – Specialty Teachers**



### **Rae Hunter, Spanish Teacher (and Lunch Assistant)**

Rae Hunter is a valuable member of the Richmond Friends community. She has taught Middle School, been a substitute, created an All-School Theater and has served as our Spanish Teacher since January 2016. She has worked with Quaker Youth and been involved with the Richmond Shakespeare Festival. Rae is also assisting during lunch and spending time teaching at Trueblood Preschool!



### **Sandy Yount, Music Teacher**

Sandy Yount comes to RFS after longtime service as an elementary music teacher in Eaton, OH. She received a Master of Education degree from Miami University and is a highly-regarded director, particularly of choral music. Besides her educational experience, she has performed with the Richmond Community Theater and has extensive experience as a church musician.

## **FACULTY & STAFF – Extended Care/Lunch**



### **Kay Maurer, Lunch & Extended Care Provider**

Kay has been with Richmond Friends School since 1987 which makes her a beloved figure for students and families, both present and past. She does morning care, lunch, and after care. Kay worked in the dental field and did bookkeeping before joining Richmond Friends School. She and her husband Jeff live next door to the school and have three children and three dogs of wide-ranging sizes.



**Lisa Butch, *Extended Care Assistant & Trueblood Assistant***

Lisa received her B.S in Environmental Science from Allegheny College and a M.A. from the University of Rhode Island. She has worked in watershed management, college campus sustainability, and in outdoor education with North Carolina Outward Bound. In addition to RFS she currently serves as the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Joseph Moore Museum at Earlham College. She enjoys the fact that combining her two positions allows her to work with students from Pre-K all the way through college. In her free time Lisa enjoys yoga, reading, and walking her awesome dog Georgia.

**FACULTY & STAFF – Administration**



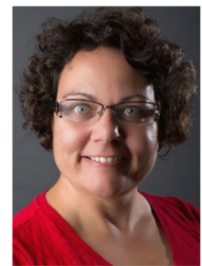
**Joe McHugh, *Interim Head of School***

An experienced leader in K-12 education, McHugh has focused in recent years on helping schools during periods of leadership transition. He served as Interim Head of School at Carolina Friends School (Durham, N.C.) during the 2018-19 school year and at Friends School of Minnesota (St. Paul, Minn.) in 2017-18. Earlier in his career, he held leadership positions at Hill-Murray School of St. Paul, Hales Franciscan High School in Chicago and Hawaii Catholic Schools. He also has an extensive background in human resources and consulting services in corporate environments.



**Steve Cleaver, *School Coordinator***

Steve earned a Bachelor's Degree in Biology and K-12 Comprehensive Science Teaching Certificate from Rutgers University and an M. Div. from Earlham School of Religion. Prior to joining Richmond Friends School, he directed a residential environmental education center and summer camp for inner city children, served as Interim Religious Life Director at Earlham College and taught (and teaches) yoga at Earlham, Indiana University East and Journey Yoga Studio. Steve is the author of the award winning novel, *Saving Erasmus* (Paraclete Press, 2007) which he wrote while in class with Tom Mullen at the Earlham School of Religion. A lifelong Quaker, Steve attends Clear Creek Meeting where he is a member of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee. He is also is founding member of the Richmond Writers Group. Steve loves a good laugh, the outdoors, and finishing a good book (either by reading it or writing it).



**Patti Peterson, *Development Coordinator***

Patti Peterson joins RFS following eight years at Girls Inc. of Wayne County where she provided human resource support and was the Development Director. Patti's three children are alums of Richmond Friends School and Trueblood Preschool. She is excited to share the RFS's growth and the many new opportunities now available to a new generation of families

## **Earlham & IU East Students, *Interns***

Throughout the year, we have the pleasure of welcoming college students who offer their talents to our school. The students have a wide variety of job, from office duties to teaching and helping in the classroom.

## **SECTION TWO – ADMISSIONS & ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

### **Admissions**

Admission to Richmond Friends School is based on application materials, school visits for both the child and the parents, previous school records and recommendations. We actively seek students of every race, creed, nationality, social or economic background, regardless of learning differences and disabilities. Limited need-based scholarship assistance is available in order to provide opportunities for learning at RFS.

### **Multi-Age Classrooms**

RFS consists of six multiage classrooms - Trueblood Preschool through Middle School (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>). Children are placed in multiage classrooms to provide an opportunity to meet social as well as academic needs, as a vital part of creating our learning environment. Just as academic readiness varies among individuals, social needs vary from year to year. By having children spend multiple years in the same classroom with the same teacher, they are provided with greater continuity and security. Not only will the child better understand the expectations of the teacher, but he or she will also have the opportunity and learning experience of being both the younger and older child among peers. This allows for development of learning and leading skills inherent in this setting. Multiage classrooms allow students to work at their own pace, and give students the experience of teaching others, which is vital to long- term understanding.

### **Evaluations/Parent Teacher Conferences**

Richmond Friends School does not use letter grades, opting instead for a more thorough system of evaluation and communication. A written evaluation of students is sent to parents twice a year at the end of each semester. Additionally, there are mandatory fall and spring parent-teacher conferences to discuss on-going development. Parents and/or teachers can call for additional conferences at any time. 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades do take sample standardized tests. However, the scores are not kept on file at school as an assessment tool.

### **Tuition, Fees & Payment Plans**

Tuition for each year is decided by the Board of Trustees. Tuition and other fees, such as application and book fees, may increase from year to year to meet the short and long-term financial needs of the school. Contact the School Coordinator or accountant with billing questions.

### **Extended Care**

The Extended Care program is provided to assist RFS parents/guardians with childcare in grades PreK-8th. The guidelines are as follows:

- Morning Care begins at 7:45 AM and ends at 8:30 AM.
- After Care begins at 3:00 PM and ends at 5:30 PM. Children enrolled in Aftercare must be picked up by 5:30 PM. A \$25 fee will be assessed for all children left after 5:30 PM.
- Please turn in August/September monthly calendars to inform our Extended Care manager of the times and days your child will be in Extended Care, so that adequate supplies and preparations can be made.
- It is a necessary safety measure that children are walked into Before Care by their parents and contact is made with a caregiver.

- Extended Care is based on the RFS School Calendar and not on the Richmond Community School calendar.
- Parents need to notify the school of any changes in use of Extended Care. A 24-hour notice is required unless it is a genuine emergency.
- Parents must sign their children in (for Before Care) and out (for After Care).
- The cost of Extended Care is \$3.00 per hour for the first child and \$2.50 per hour for siblings. Extended Care billing will be included on monthly invoices.
- Extended Care can be available to RFS siblings and alumni on a case by case basis. A two week trial period may be necessary in order to determine whether or not the sibling/alum is a good fit. Enrolled students have Extended Care priority.

## **SECTION THREE – GENERAL GUIDELINES**

### **Arrival, Departure & Punctuality**

Pre-K to 6th grade School Hours are from 8:30am to 3pm. Middle School Hours are from 8:30am-3:30pm. Trueblood Preschool is a half-day program. Morning drop-off is between 8:00-8:30 am and pick-up is between noon-12:15 pm.

*Parking at W. Main St.:* The school's main entrance is in the front of the building, facing West Main Street. PreK-K families may use the back foyer entrance off of the playground. For drop-off and pick-up, please park on West Main Street, in the parking lot south of West Richmond Friends Meeting or on SW 7th Street. Always use extreme caution when driving near the school.

*Bikes, Etc.:* Older students with parental permission may ride their bikes or walk to school on their own. Any student who brings or rides their bike to school must wear a helmet.

*Student Arrival:* Punctuality for important events is crucial and successful students view school as an important event. Late arrival impacts students' academic success and our academic program. Students who are late miss critical announcements and academic work, and often remain out of sync for the rest of the day. Also, chronic lateness is "contagious"; when students see other students arrive late on a regular basis, the problem escalates. Attendance is reported by individual teachers. If we notice that a pattern of lateness (more than 5 tardies in a semester) is developing with your family or carpool, we will send a note home urging you to address this problem quickly. If lateness continues with 10 tardies in a semester, a conference will be scheduled to address the problem. Remember that you are helping your child establish patterns that he/she will carry into adulthood. Punctuality shows respect and helps ready the child for a consistent day. At Trueblood Preschool, parents must accompany their children into and out of the classroom and must sign in and out of the log book every day.

*Student Departure:* Your dependable success in picking up your student(s) in a timely manner demonstrates respect for their teachers, who also have very busy schedules. PreK-8<sup>th</sup> students remaining after five minutes following dismissal will be sent to Aftercare and parents/guardians will be billed for the time accordingly. If someone other than the student's parent/guardian or an approved helper is going to pick them up, please leave the office a note to that effect in the morning. For supervision and safety reasons, students not in Aftercare may not continue to be on school grounds after 3:30 without parent / guardian supervision.

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is critical to success at school. Thus, students should attend school every day unless they are sick. When a student is going to be absent, a parent (or the adult responsible) should call the school between 8:00a.m. and 9:00a.m. to let us know. We ask that RFS families adhere to our school calendar when scheduling family vacations. If participation in a particular activity requires a protracted absence from school, prior permission should be obtained from the Head of School and classroom teacher at least one week in advance. Students who are absent more than five days in the first semester (without prior arrangements with the school) will be asked to attend a conference with the teacher, parent, and Head of School.

Please refer to the Policy Section (Section Six) of this handbook for more detailed information.

## Family Correspondence

We will send an email each week with important updates, news and logistics. Once a month, you'll receive an electronic newsletter with pictures and columns written by the Head of School and all of our teachers. Please read these to be well informed. Daily correspondence such as fieldtrip sign off forms, etc. will be set home in take-home folders. Please check with your child each night regarding notes that may have been sent home and require your attention. Tuition invoices will be mailed electronically directly from our accountant unless another format is requested.

## Clothing

We want children to take advantage of all classroom and outside activities without worrying about their clothing. Children are urged to wear clothing appropriate for an active curriculum which includes sitting on the floor, climbing, running, painting, and other potentially messy activities. All clothing should be simple, modest, and secure. We do not permit clothing which: supports or advertises alcohol or tobacco or related products, violence, the military, and other displays or wordings that are contrary to the values we express and promote in the school community. Additionally, all children need a complete extra change of clothes to leave at school. Please make sure that this change of clothes is seasonally appropriate. Remember that when the weather starts to get cool, your child/children will need to dress appropriately and have hats, scarves, mittens, etc. Outside play happens in all kinds of weather!

## Confidentiality

All sensitive information regarding students and employees, e.g., their behavior, relationships, health or medical issues, assessments, should be treated with the strictest confidence and only released to authorized persons.

External release of such information for each child other than to custodial parents or guardians will require written approval of the custodial parent or guardian. In the case of divorced or separated parents, release of information may only be appropriate to the custodial parent.

Confidential employee information (with the exception of medical and social information) may be released to the following:

- Persons authorized by Division of Family Services
- Child protective services personnel and other agencies authorized by law

## Birthdays & Invitations

Teachers in each classroom have details relating to the celebration of birthdays in their class, so please refer to their guidelines. Students and parents should be sensitive to inclusion/exclusion issues when planning birthday parties. Please, do not distribute party invitations at school unless all members of your child's class are invited to the party.

## Lunch & Snack

Based on the statement of health and nutrition in the policies section, we ask that parents work with these guidelines when providing shared snacks for Preschool through 2nd grade. Snacks should be healthy and meet the school's nutrition guidelines.

Examples of good snacks include:

- Fresh fruits such as bananas, apples, oranges, clementines, or melon



- Fresh vegetables such as carrots, celery, cherry or grape tomatoes
- Dried fruits and nuts (with no added sugar and low salt) such as apples, raisins, apricots, pineapple, peanuts, sunflower seeds, or popcorn
- Crackers etc. (with no partially hydrogenated or hydrogenated oils, no corn syrup or high fructose corn syrup, low added salt and sugar) such as corn tortilla chips, wheat crackers, pretzels, rice cakes, pita bread, wheat bread, or bagels
- Other suggestions include unprocessed cheese, peanut butter, and 100% fruit jam

We encourage parents to be considerate of over packaging as well when they provide snack. Additionally, upper elementary students need to bring a nutritious lunch, drink and snack each day. Soda pop, sweets and candy are not acceptable. Parents are free to take children home or out for the lunch period, which is 11:30-12:30 for PreK-8 grade levels.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

With such a small student body, there are currently few extracurricular activities, and no organized sports offered by the school, though we always welcome the introduction of new ideas and possibilities. Please contact your child's teacher or the Head of School with any ideas you may have for enhancing the extracurricular activities offered by/at RFS.

### **Standards of Behavior**

We expect students to conduct themselves according to the statements of Quaker Principles and Beliefs.

*Attitude* - To come to school with an open and generous attitude towards fellow students, their curriculum and faculty and staff. To see the positive in all situations, even the difficult ones.

*Respect* -To respect not only the people at the school, but all people in the student's life, their grounds and possessions.

*Preparedness* - To come to school prepared for the day, well rested with proper nutrition. Bringing all supplies and/or articles that are required for that day.

*Homework* - To come to school with homework assignments up-to-date. If you do not understand an assignment, you are to contact your teacher in the way he/she has set forth in class before the assignment is due.

Communication with your teacher is key to learning. Waiting until the assignment is due can hinder you and impact the entire class.

Naturally, we ask each student to become fully engaged in his or her education by being responsible for assignments and continually striving to give his or her best effort, but we ask more. We ask each student to wrestle with questions of conscience, to appreciate simplicity, to choose a healthy, substance-free way of life, to develop healthy habits in both work and play, and to become a positive member of a close-knit and caring multi-generational community.

### **Medicine, Health & Illness**

The primary concern at RFS is the wellbeing of the students. RFS personnel should be attentive to all measures necessary to achieve wellbeing at all times, including modeling safe, healthy behavior.

RFS is concerned for and is aware of its responsibility for the safety of the employees and our students. It is important that employees comply with all safety and security measures, perform duties in a safe manner, and follow all established safety rules. Employees and families should report any concerns regarding personal safety, or the safety of other employees, children, or families immediately.

**Immunizations:** By the first day of school, written verification must be submitted for each child of required immunizations performed by a physician or nurse practitioner. If record of immunizations is not on file within 30 day of enrollment, the child will be excluded from the program.\* The documentation should include the child's medical history and a record of required immunizations, as well as a statement indicating there is no health condition that would be hazardous to the child or other children.

\*Exceptions to the requirement are possible with the following documentation:

- A **Vaccine Medical Exemption** form and the **Acknowledgement of Consequences of Incomplete Vaccination** form must be completed in full and submitted to the school by the first day of school

Children who are not immunized may not attend school when contagious diseases are present.

Follow up exams may be requested if:

- 1) the child has a condition that is potentially hazardous to other children or
- 2) the child requires frequent separation from the rest of the group or
- 3) staff observe frequent fatigue, illness, or emotional upset. If dietary or physical modifications are required because of medical conditions or allergies, these must be documented by a medical professional.

**Illness:** Parents are asked to keep a child home when the following symptoms occur within 24 hours of the start of the day:

- Red, discharging eyes
- Has a rash (until diagnosed by a doctor)
- Upset stomach, diarrhea, or vomiting
- Fever of 99.5 or more
- Unusual complaints of pain
- Also, if a child or anyone in the family has been exposed to a communicable disease (chicken pox, pink eye, flu, etc.) and may become contagious within a 24- hour period, please keep your child at home. Check with your physician before returning after a contagious disease. If your child does get a communicable disease, please call the school and notify the Head of School immediately.

**Lice:** All children must be lice and nit free to attend school. Families should follow standard treatments if anyone in the home contracts lice. Any child found to have evidence of lice or nits will be sent home and will not be allowed to return to school until completely free of infection.

**Open Wounds:** If a child has an open skin wound, parents are asked to cover the wound with a bandage before bringing the child to school.

**Outside Play:** As a reminder, if your child is well enough to come to school, your child is well enough to go outside during any scheduled outside activity time. We do not have the capacity to supervise children who cannot join their class outdoors. Please dress them appropriately and remember to always have a change of clothes at the school.

**Communicable Diseases:** If a child or anyone in the family has been exposed to a communicable disease (chicken pox, pink eye, flu, etc...) and may become contagious within a 24 hour period, families are asked to keep the child home and check with their physician before returning the child to school after contact with a contagious disease. All staff members should be particularly vigilant in checking to be sure a readmitted child does not have any conditions which would prevent his/her participation in center activities.

Any employee of RFS who has knowledge of or suspects that a student has or may be carrying a dangerous or highly infectious disease (other than the flu or common cold) must report such information to the Head of School

who will follow the protocol appropriate for the presenting symptoms as indicated in the Indiana Communicable Disease Reporting Rule for Physicians, Hospitals and Laboratories. This includes head lice, ringworm, conjunctivitis (pinkeye), chicken pox, H1N1 and other common childhood diseases that may adversely affect the students, faculty and families if allowed to spread unabated. All toilets, toys, cots, and furnishings will need to be disinfected. If bodily discharges are present, they must be safely disposed of.

When more than one child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, RFS will immediately (same day) notify all parents and staff by posting a note on the school door and call a health consultant or the local health department.

**Illness During the School Day:** Teachers have the responsibility to refuse admission or send home a child who is observed having any of the following when they arrive at school.

- Red, discharging eyes
- Has a rash (until diagnosed by a doctor)
- Upset stomach, diarrhea, or vomiting
- Fever of 99.5°F or more
- Unusual complaints of pain

If a child becomes sick while he/she is at school, the child will be removed from contact with other students until the parents or the emergency contact is able to come and pick them up. It is critical that families pick up their children immediately (within ½ hour of being contacted).

Depending upon the number of staff available at the time, the child will either be placed in a quiet area or in the staff office. A teacher or aide will need to stay with the child during this time. All children with a fever of 99.5 or above should be sent home. A thermometer will be kept in the school medical supplies to be used to determine if a student has a temperature.

**Sanitation:** When a child becomes ill at school, the teachers will make every effort to control the spread of disease by sanitizing the bathroom, work tables, cot, and any toys the child may have handled.

For the protection of all parties, employees are expected to observe "universal precautions" for handling blood and body fluid spills, including using rubber/latex gloves, using disposable towels and disinfecting soiled surfaces with 1 part bleach-9 part water solution.

**Prescription and Non-Prescription Medications:** RFS will keep chewable or liquid children's acetaminophen. If a parent cannot be reached and the parent has signed the appropriate permission form, staff may give this pain reliever/fever reducer according to the directions on the box once every four (4) hours if fever is above 101.

Parents may sign permission forms annually for their child to receive these non-prescription medications as needed.

RFS will also keep bacitracin ointment for minor cuts and scrapes and may be covered with a sterile bandage.

Other first aid supplies will include the following: a first aid guide, mild soap, 2"-3" sterile gauze pads and bandage tape, disposable gloves, 1% bleach, alcohol and hydrogen peroxide, hand sanitizer, thermometer, scissors, tweezers, flashlight, and sunscreen.

If a child must take prescription medicine during the school day, the parent will need to send the medication, in its original container, along with orders from a physician or nurse practitioner and detailed instructions for use (dosage, frequency, etc.).

Medications will be stored in the classroom (locked closet or refrigerator as needed) and will be administered as indicated by instructions. Medications requiring refrigeration will be stored in the refrigerator in a lidded plastic

container labeled "MEDICATION." Unused portions of any child's prescription will be disposed of or returned to the child's family.

A record of medications administered will be kept in a notebook indicating child's name, name of medication, dosage given, date & time, and teacher's name. If the prescribed medication is not given, a note will be made explaining the reason.

**Injury Reporting and Medical Emergencies:** In the event of an injury, the incident should be reported to a faculty member, first aid administered, and a Student Injury Report form should be filled out. Parents or guardians should be contacted immediately in the case of a head injury of any kind.

If the injury requires medical attention beyond basic first aid, parents or emergency contacts should be called immediately, and the injured party should be transported to the appropriate facility by a parent/guardian or emergency contact identified by parent/guardian.

If an injury or medical emergency occurs that requires a 911 call, a teacher trained in CPR and first aid will remain with and tend to the injured student while another teacher calls 911 and follows the operator's instructions. Parent should be called immediately following the call to 911.

If a parent is not readily available and the injury needs immediate medical attention, the student may be transported to a medical facility by school staff or by ambulance and will be accompanied by a staff member until a parent/guardian or emergency contact arrives.

## **SECTION FOUR – THE SCHOOL DAY**

### **Learning Excursions, Day & Overnight Trips**

At Richmond Friends School, field trips and learning excursions are a vital part of the school curriculum. Parents must submit a "Release of Liability Agreement" form (in the back section of this booklet) at the beginning of each year, permitting students to participate in field trips. Children are able to learn in much greater detail when they not only study a subject in class, but also visit a location that reinforces and enhances the subject matter.

All of our classes go on developmentally appropriate trips. All of our students go on half-day and full-day trips throughout the community. From this we work up to a point where our oldest students go on several day trips that enhance and complement our curriculum, culminating in a multi-day to week-long spring trip. Field trips are an integral, compulsory part of our curriculum, and occasional all-school field trips are a valuable community building experience.

Parents are asked and encouraged throughout the year to chaperone and drive for field trips. All parents / guardians who wish to attend a field trip will need to complete a background check. If you wish to drive children other than your own, you must complete the "Motor Vehicle Safety" paperwork. All children through the age of seven must have car seats with them for driven field trips. It is also recommended that children must be at least 4'9" or greater than 80 pounds to sit in a car without a car seat.

Trips that involve vehicular transportation will require a separate permission slip to be filled out and returned at least three days prior to each trip.

### **All-School Meeting (PreK-8<sup>th</sup> Grades)**

For our community, All-School Meeting is held on Thursday's at 9:00am. This gathering together of all students and faculty into a caring community provides time for reflection, introspection and the value of silence in our world. This quiet time is followed by a prepared program, presentation, or sharing led by each of the classes in turn. Parents and friends are always welcome to join us for this time.

### **School Buddies (PreK-8<sup>th</sup> Grades)**

Older students are paired with younger students in "school buddy" relationships every year. Each week there are several opportunities for them to get together for All-School Meeting, reading, special projects, and other off-campus All-School events. This creates a caring relationship between the "older students" and their younger friends.

## **SECTION FIVE – THE FAMILY’S ROLE AT RFS**

### **Parent/Guardian Supervision of Children**

Before the school day begins (unless the child is in Before Care) and after children are dismissed to parents/guardians in the afternoon (excluding children in After Care), supervision and safety of each child is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. If parents/guardians have children on campus during these times the parent/guardians must monitor and supervise their children. They should be in close enough proximity to the children so they can intervene appropriately. For safety and legal reasons, it is particularly important for all parents/guardians to re-enforce that their children **cannot stay** on campus after the school-day ends unless they are at the main campus participating in the Aftercare program.

### **Involvement 101**

We are thrilled that you are a part of the Richmond Friends School Community! We recognize that all of you are busy and have different time commitments, interests, and abilities when it comes to being involved with the school. Here are some ways in which you can help. Please do what fits best with you and your schedules - every little bit makes a difference.

#### You Can...

- **Read** your monthly newsletters and weekly emails to stay informed
- **Volunteer** to drive &/or chaperon for exciting field trips
- **Be / support** the classroom representative for your child's class
- **Volunteer** to help with special events
- **Bring** in needed items for special events or weekly snack
- **Share** special skills or abilities (i.e. Storytelling, Music / Arts, Carpentry, trailer / truck for moving and hauling, etc.).
- **Serve** on the parent committee or a board working group
- **Provide** lunch for a professional development teacher lunch
- **Fill out** teacher evaluations in the spring and return them promptly
- **Work and communicate** with your child's teachers and school staff
- **Help spread the word!** Parent (past and current) and friend referrals are the best way to attract new students. Get informational brochures in the front foyer to give to friends as needed. Take a magnetic bumper sticker!
- **Ask your teacher how you can help!**

#### Family Fundraising Initiatives...

- Collect school **box tops** (put them in the jar / box in the front foyer)
- Sign up for a part of the **Kroger Community Rewards Program**. Register online at [krogercommunityrewards.com](http://krogercommunityrewards.com) – RFS’s number is 25133. The more we have signed up, the more we benefit!
- Amazon shopper? Designate RFS to receive 5% of your purchases through Amazon Smile.
- Be ready to be involved in **parent fund raisers**. The **READATHON** is our big one- it’s in February. You will also receive information regarding **annual fundraising** initiatives.

Please consider all of the ways you can give / help RFS. Together, we are responsible for keeping RFS strong and vibrant for your children and future children. **THANK YOU!**

## Communication Agreement

*(an article to be used as a resource)*

By Carolyn R. Shaffer and Kristin Anundsen

Co-authors of Creating Community Anywhere; Finding Support and Connection in a Fragmented World

*Take responsibility for your own feelings. Do not expect others to read your mind. Use 'I' statements and refrain from blaming others.*

*Communicate directly with the person or persons involved in an issue. Do not work through go-betweens or serve as a go-between for others. If someone asks you for information about an issue in which you are not directly involved, direct him or her to the proper source.*

*Do not speak critically about others behind their backs unless you voice the same criticisms to their faces. To avoid unhelpful speculation, give specific names when you make a critical comment in a meeting.*

*State your position or concern before asking how others feel about it. Do not set someone up to give a "wrong" answer. Be courageous and put yourself on the spot first.*

*Practice active listening. Listen silently and with your whole self until the speaker has finished speaking. Then restate what the speaker has said and wait for confirmation.*

*Provide continual feedback. Do not allow resentments to build up, and do not forget to give positive strokes.*

*Respect and validate others' feelings. If you do not agree or do not support another's statement, acknowledge what has been said, then make your point.*

*Use humor softly, not sharply.*

*It is our goal as a school for all members of our community to communicate compassionately with one another, and we encourage individuals to follow the school's communication agreement.*

There may be times when issues become too complex and/or too emotional. If you have a concern or issue that can't be resolved following the communication agreement, please follow the Procedure for Addressing Concerns and Grievances.

## Ten Guidelines for Independent Schools

Following is an article that appeared in the educational journal Administraviva. This article was written by the editor of the journal, Laurence Boggess and appears here with his permission. He is a past teacher and parent of RFS and therefore understands the complexity involved in these roles and relationships. Larry has most recently served as the Head of the State College Friends School and currently works for UPenn.

### ***Ten Guidelines for Independent School Parents***

*Independent schools are blessed with parents who are invested in the success of their children. Quite literally, independent schools could not offer the quality of education, service, and sense of community they do if not for parental involvement as volunteers, committee members, and supporters. Parents are essential resources in a school, providing the home that integrates with the School in order to educate the Whole Child.*

*Many parents enrolling in independent schools... do so as newcomers to private education, and, as such, may be unsure about their roles in the school community. They may wonder, "What do I get for my tuition dollars?" or "How can I best work with the teachers and administration so that my child gets the most out of school?"*

*The following guidelines are straight-talk, offered as support for the parent as well as administrators and teachers.*

*Parents can best work for the benefit of their children if they:*

- 1. Understand that enrollment means more than a service for a fee. Membership in a school community means forming a long-term relationship with the school. In essence, schools say to you, "Yes, we will educate your child through thick and thin. We will serve him or her over the coming years." That's quite a commitment schools do not take lightly. While enrollment is renewed yearly on a business-like basis, schools see membership in the community as an idealistic blend of contract and covenant, a delicate web of trust that holds parents, child, teachers, and administration together. The Home and School relationship exists with only one proviso: that the school's educational service and the child's educational needs remain a good fit.*
- 2. Recognize that enrollment means entrusting your child to the professional expertise and devoted care of the school's personnel. Independent school administrators and teachers know what they are doing. They are not perfect, and they do not claim to be. But they are experienced and well intentioned; they genuinely care about your child. They do their jobs not for the money but because they love kids and believe in the ideals of education. While teachers and administrators should be expected to explain methods, discuss philosophy, include constituencies in decision-making, and be open to honest discussion, they do not have to justify their existence or defend every action, decision, or policy.*
- 3. Understand and accept the values upon which a school operates. You should explore a school's values with admissions people and other administrators and teachers, asking questions like: How does the school balance individuality with group harmony? What values are central to your discipline policy? How will the school's core values remain unchanged as my child develops and passes through the divisions of the school? What values are behind the grading system and practice of testing? What does the school believe about competition in the classroom and on the playing field? What kind of events does the school sponsor for fundraising, and what are the values inherent in those activities? How are curricular, disciplinary, policy, and financial decisions made, and what values do those processes reflect?*

*Parents cannot pressure schools to change their values nor do schools govern by public opinion. If you and the school honestly seek together what's best for your child, then you and your child's teachers and administrators shall not stray far from the school's core values. The harmony of the values prevents a clash of beliefs that often spells tragedy for the child, the family, and the school. When disappointments or disagreements place you and the school on opposite sides of an issue, your child is always left in the middle.*

- 4. Use channels of communication appropriately. It is the job of administrators to make those channels understood, clear, and open. It is also their job to help you understand that access to information is limited. Everybody can't know everything in a school, otherwise the school would suffer from an implosion of individual opinion. If you have a question or a problem, be it logistic (Can Sara leave school five minutes early on Tuesdays for her piano lesson?) or philosophic (why can't the third grade play interscholastic foot- ball?), you ought to know where to go for a response. Angry or fearful parents who break the channels, going directly to the head or a board member, tend to tear apart the web of relationship and ultimately do a disservice to their child, who inevitably absorbs their frustration and attitudes. While you may get rumor or second-hand*



*information about school issues from the pick-up line or in the parking lot, you will get the best information if you seek it out through proper channels.*

5. *Accept the timing of the school's bureaucratic clock. Schools often take a long time to make a decision, fix a solution, or reach a compromise. This is because independent schools tend to be conservative institutions. Also, school time can seem slow to impatient parents because many school personnel are involved in the decision-making process, and those people spend most of their day educating children. Sometimes you may feel worried or frustrated or entitled to faster service; adults are not used to waiting, particularly when the welfare of their children is at stake. Schools need time and your patience if they are to truly honor your child and do what is in her or his best interest.*
6. *Understand a teacher's job and its scope of responsibility. Teachers are not surrogate parents or drill sergeants or licensed therapists. A modern teacher is a guide and coach with expertise in an area of subject matter and a deep devotion to children. Independent schools take great care to hire the very best faculty they can; they look for qualifications such as rapport with children, knowledge of subject area, appropriate training, communication skills, and positive energy. Teachers are usually given a lot of say about what and how they teach within guidelines set by the division and/or department. This autonomy, combines with smaller classes, supportive parents, and stimulating colleagues, is the independent school recipe for excellent and inspired classroom instruction.*
7. *Understand the duties and scope of authority of an administrator's job. The head carries ultimate responsibility for the educational quality tone, and personnel of the school. The head delegates responsibility for particular areas of the school to other administrators such as division heads, development and admissions directors, department heads, and assistant heads. Administrators help govern the daily operation of the school. Most of their work is behind the scenes. They attend many meetings throughout the day and week and confer with students, teachers, and parents. They articulate the school's mission and values both on campus and in the community, and they help write and enforce policy. Administrators also handle emergencies, resolve problems, manage the flow of information, and answer questions. The Board, another part of the leadership of the school, oversees administration and is ultimately responsible for the present and future well-being of the school. The Board usually hires the head and entrusts to her or him, the daily operation of the school.*
8. *Understand the role of the parent. You are indispensable to the school. You provide money in the form of tuition and gifts, you provide energy and time on fund-raising projects and teacher support, and you make your expertise available. You are responsible for supporting your child's education at home by complementing the methods and values and philosophy the school espouses. You are given a voice in many decision-making processes through a parent council or school committee. Depending on your school, the Board may engage you as a member.*
9. *Know and believe the mission of the school and its promises to children. Most schools promise the following:*
  - *to educate your child*
  - *to provide a safe environment in which he or she can develop appropriate social and academic skills*
  - *to emphasize values like scholastic excellence, civic involvement, personal responsibility, respect of self and others, emotional well-being, and creative expression*

*Upon this common ground, every school builds a unique mission, and it's the school's job to articulate the mission clearly. Parents who misunderstand the mission or seek to change it or who challenge its values almost always create unhappiness and interfere with the learning of their child. When choosing a school,*

*you should do so for reasons of philosophic and academic fit. The wrong reasons for enrolling a child in a school all center on parents and include*

- *to improve your family's reputation*
- *to guarantee your child's acceptance in the next school of choice*
- *to mold your child in your own image*
- *to live vicariously through your child*
- *to increase your self-esteem*
- *to buy your child good grades and success*

*Schools promise none of these outcomes. The consequences of mis-enrollment usually surface sooner rather than later: unhappiness with the school, poor student performance, a clash of values, rumor-spreading that leads to taking sides, and nameless accusations that lead to war.*

10. *Honestly examine your expectations for the school. Independent schools create wonderful educational communities. They encourage a sense of belonging and even a feeling of family, but schools are not families. They are too big, their resources are too limited, and their purpose is too narrow to be a true family. We have seen schools stretch the definition of what comprises an education. While schools may provide breakfast and lunch, childcare, counseling, and friendship to students, in addition to their educational program, they cannot take the place of over-busy, distracted, and absent parents. Schools cannot make learning disabilities disappear or heal broken or dysfunctional families or teach children to be moral. Enrollment in an independent school is an educational decision. Independent schools can't and shouldn't pretend to do it all; but what they do, they do well. You play a vital role in your child's development by maintaining reasonable expectations for what your school can do and by providing a home in which your child can learn the crucial life lessons not found in the school's curriculum.*

## **SECTION SIX – POLICIES**

### **Severe Weather Policy**

During winter storms and other types of severe weather, the following procedures will apply. If the Richmond Community Schools are closed, then we will take that under advisement and either close or remain open after wide consultation, posting our own announcements on area television and radio stations, as well as our website, phone voicemail, and emergency texting system.

If the Richmond Community Schools are operating on a delay, or are closing early, **THAT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE FRIENDS SCHOOL**. Because their morning delays and early dismissals are mostly related to concerns about busses, they do not apply to us. If, for any reason, the school does need to close early, we will contact you. Of course, if at any time you feel uncomfortable leaving your child at school, you are welcome to pick them up early or keep them at home due to inclement weather. In the case of school closure or in an emergency, you will be notified via an emergency text system.

### **Attendance Policy**

Regular attendance is critical to success at school. Thus, students should promptly attend school every day unless they are sick. Difficulties with regular attendance or tardiness can disrupt the classroom and cause students to miss important lessons and/or learning experiences. Additionally, as part of our mission to educate the whole child, we strive to establish good habits concerning personal responsibility and responsibility towards others, which can be exemplified for the students through regular and prompt attendance. Teachers are encouraged to communicate with parents as soon as they observe that tardiness and/or absence from class has become an impediment to education. Additionally the following guidelines are to be followed:

- When a student is going to be absent, a parent (or the adult responsible) should call the school between 7:45 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. to let us know.
- We ask that PreK-8<sup>th</sup> grade RFS families adhere to our school calendar when scheduling family vacations. If participation in a particular family activity requires a protracted absence from school, prior permission should be obtained from the Head of School and classroom teacher at least one week in advance. This will also allow for substitute educational activities to be planned for the student while away from the classroom.
- Students who are absent more than five days (without prior arrangements with the school) will be asked to attend a conference with the teacher, parent, and school coordinator.
- Students who are tardy more than ten days (without prior arrangements with the school) will be asked to attend a conference with the teacher, parent, and school coordinator.
- Conferences concerning attendance will focus upon any disruption this has caused for the student and/or class and ways to prevent such difficulties in the future.

### **Statement on Health & Nutrition**

Because we at RFS strive to teach and nurture the whole child, we believe that the intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development of our students are equally important. Our programs seek to both challenge and enlighten the students as they work towards gaining an understanding of the world around them.

In order to provide the best possible ground for discovery, RFS believes that our students should be provided with simple and healthy snacks and meals. In so doing, our students will be exposed to nutritious food choices that will lay the foundations for a physically healthy life as well as a lifelong love of learning.

While RFS recognizes that our students come from many different backgrounds and that each family has its own value system, we want to ensure that RFS is the richest environment for growth that we can provide our students.

Snacks provided by parents should consist of fresh fruits and vegetables, dried fruits without sugar, crackers without hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils, 100% natural peanut butter, unprocessed cheeses. We encourage parents to be considerate of over-packaging as well when they provide snack.

Lunch and snacks provided by RFS will contain no hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils, trans fats, and corn syrup or high fructose corn syrup. They will be low in added salt, and sugars. Fruit and vegetable options will be fresh.

Teachers when cooking with their students will provide ingredients that meet the standards provided above.

## **Discipline Policy (The Social Curriculum & Logical Consequences)**

**Principle:** Richmond Friends School is a school that encourages all members of the community, teachers as well as students, to live lives characterized by kindness, toleration of differences, understanding of alternative points of view, peaceful conflict resolution, and social outreach. We believe these qualities are educationally sound and developmentally appropriate, and will contribute to the development of each person's potential.

The mission of the Richmond Friends School discipline policy is to help children learn how to play and work with others in a community while, at the same time, celebrating the unique individuality of all our children and adults. We are committed to providing healthy and safe classrooms for all our students, and we recognize that achieving the balance between group harmony and individual expression is ongoing.

Out of this foundation comes an understanding of discipline that is child-centered rather than authoritarian, healing rather than punitive, and articulated rather than implied. In short, we hope that our children grow to be internally motivated and self-disciplined. Some children will need more guidance and intervention than others, and it is for all children and parents that we express our discipline policy and expect families to work with the school. This policy recognizes the responsibility of the school to provide a positive learning environment and outlines approaches for parents and teachers to pursue if disciplinary problems present special challenges to the educational mission of the school.

Adult members of the school community who fail to uphold or live up to the spirit of the discipline policy may be referred to the Richmond Friends School Board of Trustees for consideration which may result in action by the Board.

### **Guidelines:**

Normal disciplinary practices:

- Conflict resolution skills are an ongoing concern of teachers in the school.
- Whenever possible, differences should be resolved through discussion by the people involved.

- Observed disciplinary difficulties should be communicated to school faculty and/or staff for an appropriate response and follow-up.
- Teachers may use appropriate measures to limit the ability of any child to disrupt the learning process. This may include such measures as requiring a time-out period for the child. For younger children, this should be limited to one minute per year of the child's age.
- Teachers are expected to keep records of disruptive behaviors that impede the work of the class and/or show a pattern of disrespect for the teachers.
- Teachers are expected to notify parents when a pattern of disruptive behavior becomes evident, and teachers and parents are expected to work together toward resolving the problem. Teachers will request parent conferences to discuss concerns and develop strategies when there are problems to address.
- If a student becomes physically or emotionally dangerous to self or others during the course of a day, the teacher has the authority to call parents to remove the child from school. Then, after a conference that clarifies expectations, consequences, and strategies, the student may return to school if the teacher and Head of School feel confident the family is willing to work with the school toward a solution.
- If, after a series of parent-teacher conferences, the school continues to have serious concerns about the behavior of a student, the Head of School and teacher will discuss with parents the possibility of implementation of a behavior contract after a prescribed period of time without improvement. In urgent situations, this could be implemented as a condition for a child returning to school.
- If damage is done to the school or property in the school (not including accidental breakage), the student (together with a parent) must contribute their efforts to compensate the school outside of regular school hours. For example, if a chair gets thrown across the room and is broken or paint chipped off, then the student or parents may be asked to repair or replace the chair.

## Playground Policy

**Principle:** Play is an integral part of personal expression, interpersonal growth, and community building. To foster creative play in our students Richmond Friends School has play areas outside and inside the school. Richmond Friends School wants playtime to be safe, fun, and a positive learning experience for our students.

### Guidelines:

- Children will be encouraged to partake in physical play outside in all kinds of weather, as long as safety is not compromised by doing so. We do not go outside for extended periods of time (recess at lunch, aftercare) if it is below 15 Degrees F or if the Wind Chill is in single digits.
- Children must understand and respect the physical boundaries of Richmond Friends School.
- Children must inform a caregiver of their whereabouts at all times.
- Children must be encouraged to take responsibility for the appearance of the school both inside and out.
- No gun play with sticks, shovels, or other improvised media is allowed. Caregivers will redirect violent play into constructive and peaceful interacting.
- Children must respect the property and building of West Richmond Friends Meeting.
- Discipline of students is to be handled, whenever possible through children considering their behavior, communicating with each other, and thinking through a reasonable resolution. Verbal name calling and/or physical violence of any kind is never tolerated between either students or adults. A cooling

down time, when the child/children are removed from the area of conflict, may be required for extremely “hot” situations.

- Disciplinary problems, especially repetitive ones, should be responded to according to the Richmond Friends School Discipline Policy.
- Any concerns regarding student discipline, including, but not limited to, name calling, intimidation, and physical violence, should be communicated **by the parent or volunteer** to the school staff, since discipline is the responsibility of the staff.

## Drug, Alcohol & Smoking Policy

**Principle:** RFS is committed to establishing and ensuring an atmosphere that nourishes the minds and bodies of the students, faculty and staff. We recognize that smoking tobacco products, using drugs, or drinking alcohol in the vicinity of any member of our community will adversely affect their physical and mental health and could help promote these unhealthy practices to some community members.

**Guidelines:** We prohibit smoking upon school grounds from 7:30A.M. till 5:30P.M. This period covers the hours that school is in session as well as the hours that the school usually has before and after school care. Additionally, we prohibit the use of any tobacco products by anyone actively involved in the transportation and/or supervision of the students during field trips. People with tobacco addictions should consider this policy carefully before volunteering to assist with any school activities. Additionally, drinking alcohol or using illicit drugs is prohibited on school grounds at any time, as well as at school events and on any off-campus school field trips.

## Procedure for Addressing Concerns & Grievances

### (Parent/Guardian/Faculty Support for Committee Grievance Procedure)

**Principle:** RFS From time to time there will be issues and/or concerns that the Board of Overseers will need to address. These issues/concerns are brought to the board’s attention when the parties concerned cannot resolve the issue(s) themselves. In such cases, the grievance is sent to the Parent/Faculty Support Committee, which is formed as needed at the discretion of the Board. This committee will use the following procedure in an attempt to resolve the concern(s):

1. Concerned parties meet together to try to resolve the concern(s).
2. Head of School brings concern(s) to the Board. The Board sends concern(s) to the “Parent/Faculty Support Committee”.
3. The “Parent/Faculty Support Committee” meets with all parties concerned to hear the issue(s).
  - a. Each party is met with separately for 30 minutes, one after the other.
  - b. The committee meets to discuss and try to resolve the concern(s). This meeting is not to last more than 1 hour.
  - c. If a resolution cannot be met the committee then chooses a time and date to discuss what the next step will be.
4. The committee can decide to either resolve the issue themselves or refer the concern to an outside conflict resolution mediation group.
5. The committee then reports to the full Board for approval.
6. The parties concerned are informed on the committee’s recommendation(s).

## Child Abuse Policy

**Principle:** We cherish the students in the Richmond Friends School community and the trust that they trust in us as caring adults. We are sadly aware that abuse of children and youth, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse occurs in school communities as well as in the wider society. We are therefore committed to policies and procedures that will help us reduce the risk of harm happening to our students while in our care as well as responding properly when abuse is suspected.

### Guidelines:

- Faculty will annually study the forms of child abuse and the possible physical and behavioral signs of each.
- A criminal background check will be done on all paid staff before they have unsupervised contact with children at Richmond Friends School.
- All volunteers or staff, who have yet to complete the background check, will be supervised at all times. Under no circumstances will these workers be left alone with a child other than their own.
- In transportation situations it is required that if only one child is in a vehicle that at least 2 adults must be in that vehicle or if only one adult is in a vehicle that there must be at least two children in the vehicle. Only a custodial parent/guardian may transport their child alone.
- All staff at Richmond Friends School is required to comply with Indiana Law and report any reasonable suspicions of child abuse to either Indiana Child Protective Services at **1-800-800-5556** or to a local law enforcement agency.

## Motor Vehicle Safety Policy

**Principle:** Any time that a child is to be transported in a motor vehicle by RFS teachers, staff, agents or other employees, or by volunteer drivers, such transportation shall be accomplished in compliance with the following guidelines.

### Guidelines:

- All motor vehicles used to transport RFS students on trips must be currently insured as required under Indiana law, without exclusion of coverage for children being transported in specific circumstances of the trip, have a current proof of liability insurance card and be equipped with all safety devices or equipment required by federal or State law or regulation, and comply with all other applicable requirements of federal or State law or regulations.
- All drivers must sign a field trip driver form prior to driving on any fieldtrip.
- All drivers must have an Indiana State Police background check completed prior to driving on any fieldtrip.
- All drivers must turn in a BMV Driver Report at the start of the school year prior to driving on any fieldtrip.
- A child less than eight (8) years of age must be properly fastened and restrained in a child restraint system that meets applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, in accordance with the child restraint system manufacturer's instructions.
- Parents/guardians must supply each child with a child restraint system that complies with Paragraph 3 for use on any trip away from the school where transportation will be by means of motor vehicle.
- All children 8 years of age or older must be belted in a seatbelt meeting applicable Federal Motor

Vehicle Safety Standards at all times when they are being transported on a school trip.

- A child shall not be permitted to ride in the front seat of a car unless said child is over the age of seven (7), weighs more than 80 pounds, and the child's parent or guardian has given express written permission for the child to be seated in the front seat of the car.

## Drop Off & Pick Up at Trueblood Preschool

**Principle:** The safety of the children in our care is our first priority. Preschool age children require greater assistance when arriving and departing school safely.

**Guidelines:** Parents are expected to accompany their children in and out of the classroom. Children must be signed-in and signed-out by name and time in the log book by the center door every day. All children must be picked up by an approved guardian by their scheduled time, no later than 12:15 pm. Please see the Tuition and Fees section for charges for late pick-up.

- When bringing your child, make sure your child is secure in the knowledge that you have kissed him/her good-bye, that he/she is loved, and that someone will pick him/her up. Your child may display separation anxiety upon your departure. The teachers will be ready to comfort and talk with your child if this happens. Children normally settle into the day quickly, but if they do not, your child's teacher will contact you.
- If a child has difficulty separating from a parent, teachers will work with parents to develop a plan to make this time of separation easier for the child. They may encourage families to provide a family photo for the cubby or a special comforting toy; they may show the child a clock indicating where the hands will be when the parent will return; they may help the child draw a picture or write a letter to the parent; they may redirect the child to an special activity in the classroom.
- At the time of admission, the parent will complete an emergency contact form identifying those adults who have permission to pick up their child. Whenever a staff member does not recognize the person picking up the child, he/she MUST ask for identification and compare it with the emergency contact form. If the person picking up the child is not listed on the permission form, staff will not release the child.
- If a court order prevents a person from contact with your child, a copy of the court order must be on file, and the center will comply with that order.

## Nonpayment of Tuition Policy

**Principle:** Richmond Friends School is a community that desires to embrace members without regard to their financial background. Towards these ends Richmond Friends School is constantly striving to increase all means of financial aid for families that wish to become a part of our community yet do not have the financial means to do so. Additionally, RFS Board fundraising is almost totally directed towards funding scholarships, and there are dramatic discounts for families with multiple students attending the school.

The RFS Board must balance this desire with the obligation to maintain a fiscally sound learning institution. This policy has been established to provide an appropriate response to families that will not make an honest attempt to fulfill their financial commitment to the school.

### Guidelines:

- Tuition is divided into monthly installments. The first payment is due upon confirmation of your child's enrollment for the academic year. The second invoice will be sent August 1st or the Monday closest to



that date.

- The bookkeeper will email invoices on the first business day of each month.
- Payments are due by the 10th of the month. A late fee of 5% of the monthly balance will be assessed if not paid by 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.
- If an account becomes two months past due Extended Care services will be suspended and a conference with an RFS Board Member will be held.
- All tuition payments are non-refundable.
- Families may pre-pay tuition, that is, they may pay 100% of the tuition in June, 50% in June and 50% in January, quarterly or monthly. Monthly invoices will reflect these payments.
- RFS reserves the right to suspend any and all services at any time for a student with an excessive past due amount on their account.
- Any student with a balance remaining on their account at the end of the current school year will not be able to enroll for the next school year until the account is settled. Any balance remaining as of August 1<sup>st</sup> corresponding to the end of the previous academic year, will be forwarded to our attorney, who will work with all parties to see that the tuition balances are paid in full.

## Teacher Evaluation Procedure

**Principle:** Richmond Friends School is committed to enabling our teachers to develop their strengths as educators as well as assisting them to them to improve areas that they may want and/or need some assistance in. To help foster that growth we have established a procedure for teacher evaluation which combines several forms of evaluation and assessment in order to provide a diversified quality of assistance for each teacher. New RFS teachers will have a 90 day review in addition to the process listed below. 2-3 year teachers will have annual reviews. Those with more than three years of service at RFS will have a review every three years, but complete evaluation components 'c' and 'd' in the intervening years.

### 1. Evaluation Components:

- a. 2 classroom observations by an evaluator
- b. 2 meetings between the evaluator and teacher
- c. 1 self-evaluation responding to prepared questions
- d. a parent questionnaire

### 2. Evaluation Timeline:

- a. By October 1: Board selects an evaluator for each teacher
- b. By winter break: First meeting between evaluator and teacher and classroom observation by the evaluator
- c. By February 15: Parent questionnaire distributed
- d. By February 15: Teacher self-evaluation distributed
- e. By April 1: Parent questionnaire completed
- f. By April 1: Teacher self-evaluation completed
- g. By spring break: Second meeting between evaluator and teacher and classroom observation by the evaluator
- h. By May 1: written report compiling the 7 evaluation components completed by the evaluator
- i. May Board Meeting: synopsis of the report presented to the Board by the evaluator

3. **Evaluator:** The Board will seek an evaluator either from within the Board or outside of it, but the person who is asked to perform as an evaluator must not have a student in the class of the teacher they are being asked to evaluate. Additionally, the person should have some experience in the education field, either as an educator or administrator.

4. **Meeting between teacher and evaluator:** Both of the meetings may be scheduled before or after the classroom observation, but if it is to be before the observation then some means should be agreed upon to communicate the notes, observations, and/or recommendations of the evaluator to the teacher soon after the observation is completed.
5. **Written Report:** The written report compiled by the evaluator from all the evaluation components must be shared with the teacher as soon as possible and before the synopsis is presented to the Board. The written report should be shared at a face-to-face meeting between the evaluator and teacher, but it may be shared via letter if both teacher and evaluator agree to this form of communication in advance and if extenuating circumstances make a direct meeting impractical. A copy of the report should be given to the teacher and another placed in the teacher's employment file in the office.
6. **6. Teachers Response:** Teachers will be given the option of responding to the written report. They may explain their interpretation of the contents of the written report, provide more information which they feel is necessary to properly understand the written report, and/or may provide an opportunity to refute any or all portions of the written report. If a teacher responds to a written report then that response will be shared with the Board and a copy of the response will be placed in her/his employment file and attached to the relevant written report.

*Simplicity*

*Peace*

*Integrity*

*Community*

*Equality*

*Stewardship*

Richmond Friends School  
607 West Main St., Richmond, IN 47374  
765-966-5767  
[RichmondFriendsSchool.org](http://RichmondFriendsSchool.org)

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