"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

2026-2027 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 (Quakers).

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 within the RFS community is responsible for nurturing a sense of community that will lead to 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 differences 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 8th 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 encourage 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 all genders, 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 each student needs individual attention in addition to group instruction. Small class sizes allow teachers to push students to their individual potential. 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 interests, abilities, and 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
- Nature Preschool Guidelines
- Garden

Co-curricular Initiatives:

- Service Learning
- Worm Bins
- Compost Tumblers
- Rain barrels
- Certified River Watcher (teacher) through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Plastic Lid Recycling

Waste Reduction and Conservation Initiatives:

- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Our classrooms, lunch room and offices have specially marked bins for trash and recyclable materials, and our lunch room also has a bin for compostables.
- 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.

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 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. 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 Google Drive where all parties involved have access to view.

Aaron Cooney, *PreK-K Lead Teacher*

Aaron graduated from Earlham College in 2012 with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. During his time at Earlham, he worked with kids in a variety of internships and volunteer settings. After graduating from Earlham, Aaron worked as the assistant PreK-K teacher under the mentorship of Marianne Cope. During this time, Aaron discovered his passion for teaching and enrolled in Indiana Wesleyan's Transition to Teaching Program. In 2015, Aaron took over as the lead teacher in the PreK-K classroom.

Aaliyah Newsome, *PreK-K Assistant Teacher*

Aaliyah is a Richmond high school graduate who started working as a lunch/recess assistant here at RFS in August 2022. She has always had a passion for working with kids. Once she saw an opportunity at RFS, she took it. She's excited to be the PreK-K aid and to be mentored by Aaron and the RFS staff!

Laura Sheets, *1st-2nd Grade Teacher*

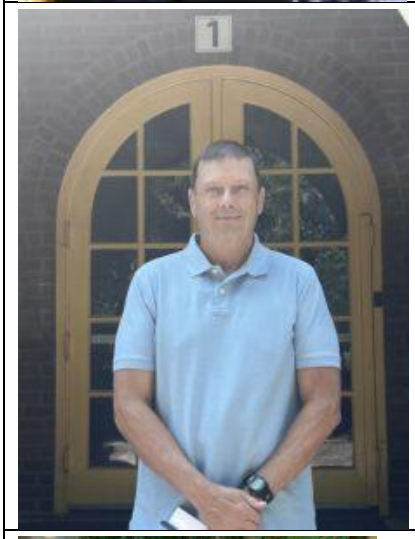
Laura graduated from Bates College with a Bachelor's Degree in psychology, and from California State University Long Beach with a Master's Degree in Education: Curriculum Development and Instruction. She holds Indiana teaching licenses for grades preschool to 8th grade and special certification as a 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, *3rd-4th 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, *5th-6th 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.



Greg Guffey, *7th-8th Grade Lead Teacher*

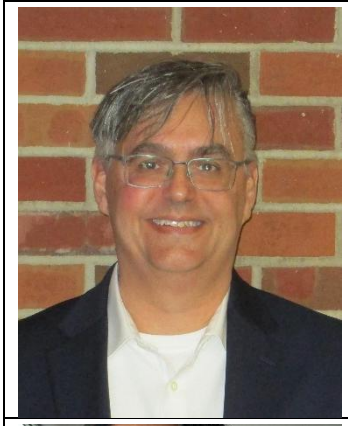
Greg is a graduate of Ball State University. He earned his B.S. in Social Studies Education in 1989, and later he earned M.A. degrees in both Special Education and Educational Administration and Leadership through Ball State University. Greg is a 36 year veteran teacher and a New Castle native. He spent the majority of his career teaching in the Anderson Community School district as a History Teacher and as a Dean of Students. Greg loves to build positive relationships with his students and he tries to make learning fun! He enjoys connecting past events to help his students have a better understanding of the world around them today. In his spare time he enjoys writing and recording music and spending time with his family.

Lizzie Labadie, *7th-8th Grade Math Teacher*

Lizzie graduated from the University of North Texas with a B.A. in Secondary Mathematics Education. She taught middle school math for 6 years in Houston, Texas, prior to joining RFS. Her favorite things about teaching are being able to make math accessible and empowering her students to become lifelong problem solvers. In her free time, she loves to hike, cook, read, and practice yoga.

Rae Hunter, *Spanish Teacher*

Rae Hunter is a valuable member of the Richmond Friends community. She has taught Middle School, worked as a substitute teacher, created an All-School Theater, and stepped in seamlessly to the role of Spanish teacher in 2018. She has worked with Quaker Youth and been involved with the Richmond Shakespeare Festival.



Dan Merkamp, *Music Teacher*

Dan is a veteran music teacher with over 35 years of experience in the music classroom. He has a wide range of interests and experiences that he brings to RFS. Dan stays involved in music education and performing through local opportunities to teach, promote and perform in the Richmond arts community. As a lifelong Wayne County resident, Dan has many family members in the area and is deeply rooted in the greater Richmond community.

Rebecca Casas, *Middle School Art Teacher*

Rebecca received her B.A. in Art History from San Francisco State University in 2004. After many years of working in social services in Los Angeles, she found her passion for working with kids as she began raising her own children. She began working as an art Instructor for the 7th- and 8th grade classes at Richmond Friends School in 2024. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Elementary Education at Ball State University. Rebecca lives in Richmond with her two kids, who also attend RFS, her husband, and their dog. She enjoys finding ways to connect to the greater community of Richmond, Indiana.

Kay Maurer, *Extended Care*

Kay has been with Richmond Friends School since 1987 which makes her a beloved figure for students and families, both present and past. She keeps the students safe and entertained with her stories during morning care, lunch, and Aftercare. Kay worked in the dental field and did bookkeeping before joining Richmond Friends School. She and her husband Jeff have three children and three dogs of wide-ranging sizes.

Jera Smith, *Extended Care*

Jera graduated from Indiana University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. She has over 15 years' worth of experience working in education and child care. As the school's next door neighbor, she and her family enjoy being a part of the Richmond Friends school community. She is the Youth Director for two local churches. Jera enjoys playing music, choir, and spending time with family.

Allie Gresham, *Trueblood Preschool Lead Teacher*

A parent of two RFS students, Allie has experienced firsthand the school's nurturing, thoughtful, and nature-based learning environment—and is thrilled to now contribute as Trueblood's lead teacher.

Allie holds a dual Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education (P-5) and Special Education with a concentration in Moderate to Severe Disabilities from Morehead State University. Prior to joining RFS, Allie worked as a Support Coordinator and Employment Navigator for the Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities, helping individuals and families access meaningful opportunities through education, employment, and community connections.

Outside of school, Allie enjoys tie-dying, baking, reading fantasy novels, and exploring local museums with her family.

Karin Hostetter, *Trueblood Preschool*

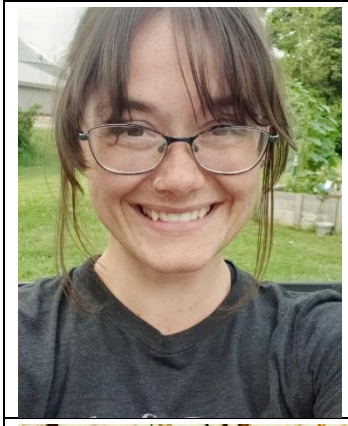
Karin Hostetter joins Trueblood preschool with a strong background in natural history. Most recently the Executive Director for Cope Environmental Center, Karin has worked with education departments for museums, zoos, nature centers, and conservation areas in Indiana, Texas, and Colorado. She is certified as a trainer in several natural history programs such as Project Learning Tree, Project Wild, and Project WET including the preschool curriculum for each of those. Her special love is preschool and family programs. Karin has one grown son living with his wife in Georgetown, KY. In her spare time, she likes to garden, quilt, play piano, show her horse, travel, and hike with her two greyhound dogs.

Autumn Elder, *Trueblood Preschool*

Autumn brings three years of experience as an assistant teacher at a Montessori preschool to her role at Trueblood Preschool. She has taken college courses in Early Childhood Education and is passionate about honoring the innocence, creativity, and joy of early childhood. With experience in nature play and camp facilitation, Autumn loves guiding children through hands-on exploration and imaginative learning. Outside the classroom, she cares for several local families, is a visual artist, loves to play music, and has a sunny personality that brightens every space. Children adore her, and she shares a special bond with her nephew, Soren, who is in Aaron's class at RFS.

Lee Ann Adams, *Trueblood Preschool*

Lee Ann Adams has been a professional educator for over 50 years and holds a Master of Education degree from Ohio University and an Indiana teaching license She recently retired after 30 years at Indiana University East as Reading Specialist where she received the Helen Lees Excellence in Teaching award in 2021. A faculty member in the School of Education, she taught classes in reading and writing for pre-service teachers. Lee Ann is a long-time supporter of Richmond Friends School and is happy to spend her "retirement" sharing her love of reading, creating art, singing and being joyful with our preschoolers at Trueblood. Lee Ann thoroughly enjoys reading a good book, cooking for friends and family, gardening and music. She and her husband of 51 years, Charlie, delight in visiting their son John and his wife Megan at their home and vineyard in McMinnville, Oregon.



Bri Redd, *Trueblood Preschool*

Bri brings a passion for child led learning methods and has spent the last 6 years in self study of Montessori, Waldorf and Reggio Emilia practices. She has experience curating homeschool curriculum for a family co-op in Muncie, providing early developmental activities for her daughter, and spent over a year in the toddler room of a Montessori Preschool. Her goal is to inspire children to become lifelong learners through play and imagination. After seeing the classroom, Bri decided Trueblood and RFS was the perfect fit for her little one and she is very excited to be a part of such a wonderful environment. In her free time, she loves exploring nature with her daughter, reading, and playing music.

Becky Dimick Eastman, *Head of School*

Becky has been a professional educator for over 25 years. She earned her BA from Earlham College, her MAT from Brown University, and her PhD from Ball State University. Early in her career, Becky taught high school biology and math. She later became a teacher educator, teaching and coaching student teachers as well as experienced educators. Becky's research interests include gender equity, school athletics, and rural schools. Becky is a Quaker and a member of West Richmond Friends Meeting.

Becky enjoys spending time with her family, including her two sons, who are both Richmond Friends School alumni. She also enjoys reading and making pop-up cards.

Jamie Shepherd, *Administrative Coordinator*

Jamie has a Bachelor's Degree in General Studies with a concentration in Humanities from Indiana University East and studied elementary education during some of her college experience as well. She has a daughter at RFS and has a deep love and appreciation of the community and learning environment the school espouses, especially the time spent outdoors and exploring nature. Jamie is incredibly excited to be working in this capacity at RFS. She looks forward to encouraging our students and helping them grow in creativity, confidence, and self-esteem. In her personal time Jamie enjoys spending time with her husband and daughter and their two dogs, cooking and baking, gardening, hiking, reading, and knitting or crochet.

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 (7th-8th). 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. Children are provided with greater continuity and security when they spend multiple years in the same classroom with the same teacher. 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/Family 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 family-teacher conferences to discuss ongoing development. Parents/guardians and/or teachers can call for additional conferences at any time. 7th-8th 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 Administrative Coordinator or Bookkeeper 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:

- Beforecare begins at 7:45 AM and ends at 8:30 AM.
- Aftercare 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.
- It is a necessary safety measure that children are walked into Beforecare 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 must sign their children in (for Beforecare) and out (for Aftecare).
- The cost of Extended Care is $15 per week for unlimited Beforecare. Aftercare is $20 for one day, $40 for two or three days, and $50 for four or five days.
- 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 has half-day and full-day options. Morning drop-off is between 7:45-8:30 am and pick-up is at noon for the half-day option and 3:30 for the full-day option.

Parking at W. Main St.: The school's main entrance is in the front of the building, facing West Main Street. Each class has a designated entrance. 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.

Student Departure: Picking up your student(s) in a timely manner demonstrates respect for their teachers, who also have very busy schedules. PreK-8th 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 pickup 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 Middle School or Aftercare may not continue to be on school grounds after 3:00 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. Periodically, you'll receive an electronic newsletter with pictures and columns written by the Head of School. 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: depicts or advertises alcohol, tobacco, or related products; supports violence or the military; or displays images 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, and 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, student, and family 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 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. 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 No Sugar Added 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

Band is an optional extra-curricular activity for students in 5th - 8th grade. The small size of the student body limits the number of extracurricular activities we can offer. 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 their education by being responsible for assignments and continually striving to give their 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 newly enrolled child of required immunizations performed by a physician or nurse practitioner. If record of immunizations is not on file within 30 days 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 relevant 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
- Exposure to a communicable disease (see below)

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, covid, 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 school 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. 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 email 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 staff member 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 and Ibuprofen as well as antacids on hand. 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 present or if a child is in pain, such as a headache.

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 they 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 front office locked drawer (or a classroom 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 spreadsheet indicating child's name, name of medication, dosage given, date & time. 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. 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-8th Grades)

For our community, All-School Meeting is held on Wednesdays 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-8th 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 Beforecare) and after children are dismissed to parents/guardians in the afternoon (excluding children in Aftercare), 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. We do have two required family work days each year, which help to strengthen our community bonds, prepare and upkeep the facilities through the school year, and instill in our students a sense of pride and ownership of our school. Here are some additional, optional 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 chaperone 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
- **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…

- Sign up for a part of the **Kroger Community Rewards Program.** Register online at krogercommunityrewards.com – RFS's number is 25133. The more we have signed up, the more we benefit!
- Be ready to be involved in **parent fund raisers. T**he **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 Administravia. 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 at 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 football?), 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 compromises 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 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-8th 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.

Discipline Policy

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. This includes reports of or observations of bullying.
- 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 and/or their peers.
- 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, including instances of bullying, the teacher has the authority to call parents to remove the child from school. A multidisciplinary team including the child's teacher, a teacher not directly involved, and the Head of School will review the situation. 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.
- When a situation puts other students of staff at significant risk, the board might be alerted to help manage the process. Others, such as the school board clerk, board attorney, and/or health professionals might be consulted.
- 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: 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 up to 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

Principle: We cherish the students in the Richmond Friends School community and the trust that they place 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.
- RFS teachers, staff, and volunteers are responsible for monitoring the behavior of students and interceding when necessary. Parents of students who misbehave should be informed and asked for assistance in dealing with the behavior problem.
- The Teacher and Head of School should review repetitive or serious incidents of misbehavior in consultation with the parents/guardians of the child to determine a course of corrective action including possible removal from school.
- When a situation puts other students or staff at significant risk, the board might be alerted to help manage the process. Others, such as the school clerk, board attorney, and/or health professionals might be consulted.
- RFS teachers, volunteers, and staff are mandated reporters and comply with Indiana Law. If anyone witnesses, suspects, or a child discloses abuse (adult to child or child to child), they will immediately report it to the Head of School (HOS). The HOS and teacher, volunteer, or staff member will immediately call the Department of Child Services. If the HOS does not act on the incident (due to lack of presence or initiative), the initial witness is required by Indiana Law to contact DCS themselves. RFS is committed to keeping our students safe and will strictly follow this policy.
- RFS will follow the disciplinary action procedure outlines in this handbook for all sexual misconduct incidents involving child to child abuse; however, due to the severity of this issue, children might be removed from the situation without warning to prevent further abuse. In these situations, the HOS will communicate directly with the parents/guardians to determine whether or not the child is allowed to remain as a student in the school.

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.

Bullying Policy

Principle: We recognize that every person has inherent value, that differences are an opportunity to celebrate gifts that each child brings, and that as a community we care for one another.

Definition: Richmond Friends School uses the federal definition and description of bullying, quoted directly below.

What Is Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Types of Bullying

There are three types of bullying:

Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments

- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurtingsomeone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

Where and When Bullying Happens

Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like on the playground or the bus. It can also happen travelling to or from school, in the youth's neighborhood, or on the Internet.

Source: https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/what-is-bullying

Bullying on the internet is often called cyberbullying. Below is a federal definition of cyberbullying, quoted directly:

Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

Source: https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it

Guidelines:

- All disciplinary guidelines in the Discipline policy above apply to bullying
- Because of the serious detrimental impact of bullying, behavior contracts will be put into place quickly when bullying is discovered
- Any observations or reports of bullying should be communicated to faculty, staff, or the Head of School as soon as possible

If bullying continues, for the safety of the school community, Richmond Friends School may unenroll a student who consistently bullies others

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. All children must be picked up by an approved guardian by their scheduled time, no later than 3:30 pm for full day students. 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 they are loved, and that someone will pick them 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 a 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 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 in July. Invoices will go out on July 1 and be paid on the 10th.
- Families are required to enroll in auto pay through the link found in your first invoice. This can be set to a bank account, credit card, or debit card.
- The bookkeeper will email invoices on the first business day of each month.
- Auto pay requires a consistent payment amount each month. Therefore, extended care will be invoiced separately and can be paid through a link in the invoice.
- Payments are due by the 10th of the month.
- If an account becomes two months past due Extended Care services may be suspended and a conference with the Head of School will be held.
- All tuition payments are non-refundable.
- Families may pre-pay tuition. 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 1st corresponding to the end of the previous academic year, will be forwarded to Collections, 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. Teachers will be evaluated annually.

Evaluation Components:

1. 2 classroom observations by an evaluator using rubrics from Cognia, our accreditor
2. 2 meetings between the evaluator and teacher
3. 1 self-evaluation responding to prepared questions

Evaluator: The Head of School conducts the majority of teacher evaluations. However, teachers need and deserve different perspectives. The Head of School arranges for outside evaluators, who are educational leaders in the community, to observe teachers at least one third of the time.

· In addition to formal evaluations, the Head of School visits each classroom at least once each week.

· Parents or guardians who have a concern regarding a teacher should, in most cases, address this with the teacher directly. If this is unsuccessful, or it the concern is one that does not lend itself to a direct conversation, guardians/parents should contact the Head of School to share the concern.

Simplicity

Peace

Integrity

Community

Equality

Stewardship

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