

Mercer

Elementary School

• Forest Hills School District •

ENGAGE • EMPOWER • EXCEL



Student-Parent Guide

2021-2022

The comprehensive PK-6 FHSD Parent-Student Handbook can be found by visiting
www.foresthills.edu.

Important Mercer Information for 2021-2022 School Year

Welcome to Mercer Elementary School! We are pleased you and your student(s) are joining us for the upcoming school year. We look forward to working as a team to make your learning experience as engaging and successful as possible. This information, in conjunction with the FHSD PK-6 Parent-Student Handbook, helps provide a safe and productive learning environment for students, staff, parents and visitors. We encourage you to review this information and use this document as a reference throughout the school year.

School Hours:	AM Kindergarten:	9:15-12:00
	All Day Kindergarten:	9:15-3:45
	Grades 1-6:	9:15-3:45

Children should arrive no earlier than 9:05 a.m. The school cannot be responsible for students who arrive before 9:05 a.m.

Office Phone: 513-232-7000 (main line)
513-231-3156 (fax)
513- 588-8805 (attendance line)

Websites:

District: <http://www.foresthills.edu> School: <https://www.foresthills.edu/mercer>

Twitter & Instagram: @gomercereagles

Contact Information:

Jodi Davidson, Principal jodidavidson@foresthills.edu	232-7000 xt.2302	@gomercereagles
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Kimberly Beard, Assistant Principal kimberlybeard@foresthills.edu	232-7000 xt. 2307	?
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Gigi Naughton, School Counselor giginaughton@foresthills.edu	232-7000, xt.2300	@giginaughton
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Nanette Wegman Administrative Assistant nanettewegman@foresthills.edu	232-7000, xt. 2303	
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Ann Wolfe, Health Aide annwolfe@foresthills.edu	232-7000 xt. 2310	
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Morning Bus Riders:

Students arriving by bus will enter the building through the main entrance and walk through the cafeteria to their classrooms.

All kindergarten students will enter through their own entrance, to the right of the main entrance. Kindergarten teachers will greet their students when they get off the buses.

Morning Car Riders:

Students may be dropped off between 9:05 a.m. and 9:10 a.m. Children should not be dropped off at school by parents/guardians before 9:05 a.m. unless they are participating in a school sponsored activity. We do not provide supervision for students that arrive before school except for those in planned school activities.

Parents dropping off students in the morning will turn left at the first driveway and travel in front of Turpin High School until reaching the upper parking lot. Turn right down the 1st lane of the upper parking lot and travel to the dead end. Students will exit the right side of the car onto the sidewalk. They will walk down the stairs and enter the building at the early childhood entrance. Once the students are dropped off, cars will loop around onto the 2nd upper parking lot lane and exit past Turpin.

** Students at Mercer either ride the bus home or are picked up at the side entrance. A written request for side entrance/exit should be submitted in advance so that the teacher and side entrance monitor are aware of all students reporting to the outdoor classroom for parent pick-up.

Walkers/Bike Riders:

All students are expected to ride the bus home unless there is a note from a parent giving permission for their child to walk home or ride a bike.

**Students must leave the school grounds immediately after school and go home. We are attempting to provide the safest procedures for your children.

Pick Up By Parents At Dismissal Time: When you arrive at dismissal time for the purpose of driving your child home from school, you must follow the pick-up procedure. Please park in the side lot and wait at the side entrance/exit for your child.

If you are late arriving at school to pick-up your child after school, your child will be waiting in the office.

Absence Reporting

The parent/guardian should call the attendance line to report a child absent from school. The attendance line for Mercer is 513-588-8805 or call the main line @ 513-232-7000, option 3.

- Parents/guardians will receive written notification from schools when their student has reached what the state classifies as excessive absences (38 hours absent and 65 hours absent) these absences include both excused and unexcused absences.
- If a student is deemed habitually truant the student and parent will be referred to an Absence Intervention Team (AIT) to develop a corrective plan for attendance issues.
- A student will be considered habitually truant if the student is absent without a legitimate excuse for thirty (30) or more consecutive hours, for forty-two (42) or more hours in one (1) school month, or for seventy-two (72) or more hours in one (1) school year.
- Special Note: Please be aware anytime a student is not in school (tardies, early dismissals etc...) the minutes/hours accumulate for absenteeism. To avoid unexcused time out of school, which could lead to a habitually truant identification, make sure the times meet the reasonable excuses as set forth in board policy.

The Mercer Pledge

Each morning, students will start their day with the Pledge of Allegiance and the Mercer Pledge. The Mercer Pledge is aligned with our PBIS Eagle Expectations (see below).

I pledge that I will respect all members of the Mercer community, be responsible for my actions, make safe choices, and always try my best.

Mercer Code of Conduct

A major component of the educational program at Mercer is to prepare students to become responsible citizens by learning how to conduct themselves properly and in accordance with established standards. Students are expected to behave in a way that respects the rights and safety of others in accordance with Federal, State and local laws and rules. Students are also expected to behave in accordance with Board policies and Administrative Guidelines. Staff will take corrective action to discipline a student and/or to modify the student's behavior when a student's behavior does not fall within these parameters.

School staff may report suspected criminal misconduct by a student to law enforcement. Law enforcement officers will be permitted to carry out necessary law enforcement functions in the schools, including the removal of a student from school grounds in appropriate circumstances.

PBIS

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a proactive approach to establishing the behavioral supports and social culture needed for all students in a school to achieve social, emotional, behavioral and academic success. Mercer has infused PBIS strategies into the everyday functioning of the school culture--all grades and all areas. The [PBIS matrix](#) contains specific information on these strategies and our Eagle Expectations-- Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe.

Classroom Environment

It is the responsibility of students, teachers, and administrators to maintain a classroom environment that:

- A. allows a teacher to communicate effectively with all students in the class; and
- B. allows all students in the class the opportunity to learn.

Student Responsibilities

Mercer's rules and procedures are designed to allow students to be educated in a safe and orderly environment. All students are expected to follow staff members' directions and to obey all school rules.

Students must arrive at school on time and be prepared to learn and participate.

In order to keep parents informed of their child's progress in school, parents will be provided information on a regular basis and whenever concerns arise. Many times it will be the responsibility of the student to deliver the information. Parents are encouraged to build a two-way link with their child's teachers and support staff by informing the staff of suggestions or concerns that may help their child better accomplish his/her educational goals.

Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences

Formal school conference times are offered twice during the first semester and twice during the second semester.

Fall Conferences:

October 20

November 1

Spring Conferences:

February 17

March 3

Please see the 2021-2022 District Academic Calendar at www.foresthills.edu for specific details regarding conferences and other important dates.

Student Well-Being

Student safety is the responsibility of both students and staff. Staff members are familiar with emergency procedures such as evacuation procedures, fire and tornado drills, safety drills in the event of an intruder or other violent attack, and accident reporting procedures. A variety of drills are practiced numerous times throughout the school year. If a student is aware of any dangerous situation or accident, he or she must notify a staff person immediately. State law requires that all students have an emergency medical authorization completed and signed by a parent or guardian on file in the school office.

Dress and Grooming

Students are expected to dress appropriately at all times. Any fashion choice that disrupts the educational process or presents a safety risk will not be permitted.

Student Valuables

Students are advised not to bring items of value to school. Items such as jewelry, expensive clothing, electronic equipment, etc. are tempting targets for theft and extortion. Mercer is not liable for any loss or damage to personal valuables.

Student Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Agreement

Parent/Guardian(s) and student(s) reviewed and agreed to this agreement as part of the student registration process and annual student information update/confirmation procedures. This agreement can also be found on the FHSD website at <https://www.foresthills.edu>.

Student Homework

Homework may be assigned. Student grades may reflect the completion of work. Homework is also part of the student's preparation for assessments and graduation. Homework, if given, must be related to the instructional program.

Homework assignments should be appropriate to grade level and the abilities of the students involved. Suggested times:

- K – 1.....as requested through teacher correspondence
- 2 – 3.....15 – 30 minutes
- 4 – 5.....30 – 45 minutes
- 6..... 45 – 60 minutes

Your child may be expected to read nightly and may be included in the above minutes. Schoology is used frequently and will be explained during Meet the Teacher Night.

Homework During Absence

Requests for homework must be made when you call saying your child will be out for the day. This will give the teacher enough time to compile the work your child has missed. You need to let the school know if the work will be picked up in the front office by 4:15 or if the work needs to be sent home with another student. If the homework is to be sent home with another student, please give the child's name, grade and teacher. When an absence occurs, students will be given the opportunity to make up missed schoolwork. Please work with your child's teacher to determine a reasonable amount of time in which make up work should be completed. In general, a student has two days for each day of an excused absence. In the event of an extended absence, special arrangements will be made.

Weekly Update

Look for the *Mercer Message* each Friday from Ms. Davidson. It is important to read these updates as they include upcoming events, student recognition, etc. If you are not receiving these emails, please contact Nanette Wegman, Administrative Assistant.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The PTA is involved in promoting the welfare of children and youth in home, school and community. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to join the PTA to strengthen the partnership between school and home.

Lost and Found

Students who have lost items should check the lost and found and may retrieve their items if they give a proper description. Unclaimed items will be given to charity three times a year (Thanksgiving, spring conference time, and end of year).

Birthday Trinkets (No Treats)

No birthday treats are permitted. Your child is welcome to (but not obligated to) bring in a small token or trinket in lieu of a "birthday snack". In the past, students have brought in items such as decorative pencils, pens, erasers, fun shaped post it notes, etc.

Lunch Guests

Please report to the office, sign-in, and get a lunch pass. In an effort to work within the district wellness policy and keep lunch options equitable, we ask that if you plan to eat lunch with your child or have a guest come in, we ask that you choose items from the school menu. If you choose to bring food into the school from an outside source, please bring it only for you and your child.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

We believe all students can learn. We are also committed to meet the varying needs of our students from support instruction to rigorous coursework to enrichment opportunities. By using a systematic approach to know our students as learners, including progress monitoring and regular data analysis, we maximize the learning potential for individual students.

A multi-tiered system of support is put in place, including strong core curriculum and differentiated instruction at a Tier 1 (classroom) level. Response to Intervention (RTI) includes screening of all of our students, and utilization of data to guide educational decisions in a problem solving model. Much as doctors use screens such as temperature and blood pressure checks to help determine which patients may require a deeper diagnosis, we use universal screeners to help identify students who need further attention and more careful consideration. The purpose of screening activities is to predict possible academic and behavior problems as well as to identify areas of student strength. Students demonstrating needs based on data based decision rules will receive instruction and proven, research-based intervention at varying levels of intensity. By monitoring student achievement throughout intervention, we are able to adjust the level of needed support.

Bullying/Harassment Information

Legislation passed by the state legislature requires school districts to provide parents/guardians of students with a written description of the district's bullying policy and the consequences for violations of the policy. The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. The Board's bullying policy applies to all activities within the district, including on a school bus, or those activities sponsored by the district occurring off school property. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying behavior by any student/school personnel in the Forest Hills Local School District is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, in accordance with House Bill 276, means any intentional written, verbal, graphic or physical act including electronically transmitted acts by a student with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule, or humiliate. Such behaviors cause mental or physical harm, or reasonable fear of physical harm and/or damage to students' personal property; and, is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for other students. Please review the Board of Education's Policy 5517.01 t. (just linked directly to policy) The policy includes additional information related to types of conduct, complaint procedures, reporting procedures and intervention strategies.

Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying Complaint Form

A student, parent or guardian, or staff member may file a complaint of harassment, intimidation or bullying pursuant to Board policy. Complete this form and submit to the building principal. Complaints against building principals should be submitted to the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be submitted to the Board of Education President. Complaints received by other

staff members shall be promptly forwarded to the appropriate individual.

District Guidelines For Medical and Food Related Conditions

In compliance with recent national legislation (FAAMA) and Ohio Revised Code 3313.719, which directs all Ohio school districts to put in place a policy safeguarding students from food related allergies and medical conditions, the Forest Hills School District has adopted important guidelines. These guidelines safeguard students from life-threatening (peanut or other) food-related allergies as well as extreme medically related conditions. The guidelines also encompass practices from the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition and Women, Infants and Children Act and the development of a District Student Wellness Program, designed to include goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities.

- All District classrooms will be free of peanuts, tree nuts and other nut products.
- Food served to all students in the classrooms (i.e. special events, birthdays) needs to be in pre-packaged individual servings and from an inspected facility. Nutrition and ingredient labels must be attached. Suggestions for acceptable snacks, ingredient information and carb counts are posted on the District's website. Fruits and vegetables for these special events are highly encouraged. Parents may also contact their building principal or teacher for more information.
- When food is being used in a curriculum related activity, teachers will notify parents of students with food/health related conditions at least 3 days in advance. This information will include ingredients and nutritional labeling, the approximate serving size, and how it is being used. The teacher will incorporate appropriate food safety practices (e.g. without cross contamination) while teaching the lesson. Peanuts/nut products may not be used in any classroom activities.
- Special food related events such as pizza parties, cultural activities, end of year lunches and tasting parties must include the following:
 - Food served must be from a health inspected facility (e.g. grocery stores, restaurants)
 - Nutritional and ingredient labels must be provided for each item served
 - Parents of students with food/health related conditions must be notified 3 days in advance
 - These events should be in place of lunch (not in addition)
 - Food should be discouraged as a reward for students. It is important to promote health and wellness, encouraging physical activities and non-food items
- Teachers must check all items that are brought into the classroom (e.g. classroom pets, potting soil, latex items, lotions, soaps, coffee creamers, candy, and individual food reinforcements) as these items may contain allergens.

- School bus drivers will be informed of important food/medical related conditions to ensure safe travel needs.
- **District Early Childhood Program** - It is a licensing requirement that snacks be provided during the program sessions. These snack items may not contain peanuts, tree nuts or nut products. Snacks may be bulk items (items purchased in large quantities) but must be sealed/intact as purchased from an inspected facility/grocery. These snacks will be distributed in portioned serving sizes by the classroom teacher. All of the above guidelines apply to the Early Childhood Program.

****These guidelines do not impact activities that take place outside of the school day including team or club meals, open houses, ice cream socials, etc. where parents accompany their child. We will notify/share these guidelines with groups who are utilizing our district facilities (i.e. PTA, Latchkey, Sports Teams, and Scouts). ****

Revised 8/2017