

**Fort Sanders Educational Development Center
2020-2021 Parent Handbook**



Fort Sanders Families,

Welcome to our school family! We are honored to serve as administrators at Fort Sanders and look forward to a great school year! Strong communication with the families we serve is critical for a successful school experience. We encourage you to be involved in our school and your child's education as much as possible.

This handbook will help explain school rules and regulations, expectations and general information for both students and the adults who care for them. Please take time to review it carefully and keep a copy for your records.

Thank you for sharing your children with us. It is a privilege we don't take lightly. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any concerns, questions, or comments. We look forward to getting to know each of you and seeing our students grow during their time here at "The Fort."

Sincerely,

Shelli Eberle and Jennifer Calloway



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PLAY, LEARN, GROW

Fort Sanders Mission Statement

Together, Fort Sanders Educational Development Center, parents and community will provide a nurturing learning environment for all children with individualized opportunities for social, emotional, physical and academic growth.

We believe:

- In helping all students become confident, independent learners.
- In developmentally appropriate strategies to prepare students for future success.
- In fostering a nurturing, high quality learning environment.
- Students learn best through play and interaction.
- In preparing students for the learning journey of life.
- In modeling the love of learning through our own actions.
- School should be a happy, safe place that encourages all learners to grow.

School Security

Our first priority is to maintain a safe and secure learning environment for all students at Fort Sanders. The following guidelines are in place to keep all the students safe and to protect instructional time from interruptions and distractions.

- All Knox County Schools are controlled access facilities. All exterior doors remain locked during the school day. Visitor entrance is permitted through the buzzer system at the main door or cafeteria door. When you push the buzzer a staff member will speak to you on the intercom. The door lock will be released after you've identified yourself and your purpose for entry.
- All visitors must report to the office immediately upon entering the building. All visitors must sign in and wear a visitor's badge. No exceptions! Please be sure to sign out when you leave the building. We need to know who is in the building at all times.
- If you need to bring something for your child (backpack, lunch, etc.) we will not interrupt instructional time. We will make sure the item is delivered at an appropriate time. Double-check each morning to ensure your child has what he/she needs for the day.
- A school safety plan is in place and all staff members are aware of what to do in the rare case of an emergency (fire, weather, intruder, etc.) The details of these plans are not shared with the community at large to ensure our highest level of security.
- A Knox County Schools Security Officer is on site to assist staff and students in our day-to-day operations.

School Hours

No Parents or students will be permitted in the building before 7:30 a.m. Staff members are not available to supervise students until 7:30 a.m.

For all Voluntary PreK (VPK), Co-Taught Pre-K and Blended Pre-K classrooms the school day begins at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 1:15 p.m. Children may start arriving for class at 7:30 a.m. All Pre-K students must be signed in and out every day. No child (except bus riders) will be admitted before 7:30 a.m. All doors will be locked at 7:45 a.m. Students arriving after 7:45 will need report to the main office to check in. If you need to pick up your student before 1:15 p.m. you must sign them out through the main office. No child will be released prior to being signed out in the office.

To ensure safety and a smooth dismissal each day, NO students will be checked out early after 12:45 p.m. If you have an appointment or conflict where you need to pick up your children early, please do so by 12:45 p.m. Our instructional time is critical and we want to limit interruptions as much as possible.

There are several days during the school year when students will attend for a ½ day. For the 2020-21 school year those days are: December 18 and May 25. On these days the children arrive at 7:45 and dismiss at 10:15.

In the **K-12th Grade Developmental Classroom** students begin their school day at 7:45 a.m. and end at 2:45 p.m. Students arriving after 7:45 a.m. will need to check in through the main office before going to their classroom. If you need to pick your student up before 2:45 p.m. you must sign him/her out through the main office. No child will be released prior to being signed out in the office. The half day schedule for the K-12th grade students is also 7:45 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

In the **Language Group and Blended Language Group** students will come during one of these times:
Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday 7:45 to 10:15 a.m.
Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday 10:45 to 1:15 a.m.

Visitors

Volunteers are welcome in our school. ALL VISITORS MUST REPORT TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE BEFORE VISITING A CLASSROOM. Visitors must sign in and get a volunteer badge from the school secretary. Volunteer opportunities must be scheduled with the teacher in advance.

If you would like to visit your child's classroom you must have permission from the classroom teacher and principal at least 24 hours in advance. Classroom observations are limited to 30 minutes. If you are volunteering the time frame will be decided between you and the classroom teacher. Knox County Policy prohibits the use of audio or video recording and still photos while visiting a classroom.

Per Knox County School Board Policy, all volunteers must register online before volunteering at school. Registration information can be obtained through the main office.

Attendance Policy

We adhere to the Knox County Schools attendance policies. State law requires children to be present for a minimum of three hours and 15 minutes to be counted present for the day (two hours and one minute for Pre-K and Kindergarten students). This rule applies to both full and 1/2 days.

Knox County excuses absences for sickness, death in the immediate family, recognized religious holidays and true family emergencies. Knox County does not excuse absences for reasons other than those listed. Excuses for student absences must be in writing and turned in within five days of the students return to school. All excuse notes should include the student's printed name and be dated and signed. Up to ten absences per year may be excused with a parent/guardian note. After ten, a doctor's excuse will be required for any additional absences to be excused. A phone call to the office will not be accepted as an excuse and it is not necessary to inform staff. Once a child reaches 5 absences, you may receive a call from the school principal or social worker to discuss your child's attendance and offer support in developing more consistent attendance habits.

Arriving to school on time and regular attendance are critical components of a successful school career. Please make every effort for your child to faithfully attend school and be on time. Remember, parents are legally responsible for keeping children in school. Students arriving after 7:45 a.m. must be checked in through the main office.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency Contacts: It is critical we have the most current emergency contact information, including current cell phone numbers, at all times. Please inform the office and classroom teacher immediately if phone numbers or contact information changes. If your child is ill or injured, we must be able to contact you immediately. If there is a child custody agreement in place, it is your responsibility to provide legal documentation for our files.

School Closing: During bad weather, if the possibility of a school closing is apparent, you may come to school to sign your child out with no attendance penalty. You do not need to call the school office beforehand. It is important to keep the phone lines open for emergency information from school and county supervisors. Please listen to local radio or TV stations for information and updates on school closings, or check the Knox County Schools website for this information. Although buses will attempt to keep their regular routes, please be aware any bus route can be shortened or cancelled due to flooding, ice or snow.

School Clinic and Medication

Medication: As a general policy, medicines are not administered to children at school. However, in some circumstances, long-term medication required during school hours will be dispensed by the school nurse or trained staff if necessary. The following procedures must be followed for prescription medication:

- The physician must fill out and the parent must sign a medical form for each medication. A new form must be completed when there is a change in time or dosage. A new form must be filled out every school year. Forms are available in the school clinic.
- Medication must be brought to school in the original prescription bottle by the parent/guardian and submitted to the school nurse. Students must NEVER bring in medication. The school nurse and parent will verify the quantity. Medication will be kept in a locked area.
- The school nurse will notify the parent when medication is almost gone.
- All medication must be picked up by the parent/guardian at the end of the school year.

Illness: For the safety and well-being of our staff and students, a child with a contagious medical issue cannot remain at school. This includes common conditions like pinkeye, nausea, a rash or fever. Students who throw up, have diarrhea or fever at school may not return until they are symptom free (without medication) for 24 hours. A fever of 100.6 or a low grade fever coupled with other symptoms of illness warrant exclusion from school. THE SCHOOL NURSE AND ADMINISTRATOR WILL MAKE ALL FINAL DECISIONS REGARDING STUDENTS BEING EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL FOR ILLNESS. Because many of our students are medically fragile, we are very cautious in this regard. We appreciate your understanding and respect for other students' health.

School staff cannot apply sunscreen, diaper cream, or any other over the counter product. Please see the "Guidelines for Illness" included in your beginning of year packet for more details.

School Breakfast and Lunch Program

We are lucky to be one of the 52 schools in Knox County selected to participate in the USDA's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This program provides ALL students enrolled at Fort Sanders a breakfast and lunch at no charge. This program is federally funded and does not require any financial support from Knox County Schools. Parents are welcome to join their students for breakfast or lunch with advanced permission from the classroom teacher. A-la-cart items are available for purchase if your child wants to supplement his/her breakfast or lunch.

Cafeteria Prices for Visitors:

Breakfast: \$2.75

Lunch: \$3.75

Milk \$.75

Dress Code

Please provide a change of clothes for your child, as well as extra diapers, pull-ups, underwear, and/or wipes as needed. Accidents happen from time to time and we have a limited supply of extra clothes. Tennis shoes are strongly encouraged each day. Flip-flops and sandals create a safety concern and are strongly discouraged.

To help create the best learning environment for students, the following standards for dress must be observed in all Knox County Schools:

- Pants must not sag below the waist and must be at a safe length.
- Head apparel, except for religious or medical reasons, must not be worn inside the school building.
- Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for indoor and outdoor physical activity.
- Clothing or accessories may not display offensive, vulgar language or images, and must not advertise products that students may not legally purchase.

The principal reserves the right to determine whether the student's attire and appearance are within the acceptable limits. In matters of opinion, the judgement of the principal/designee shall prevail. The principal may allow exceptions for school wide programs or special events.

Party Policy and Nutritional Guidelines

We welcome you to celebrate birthdays here at school. However, you must follow these few guidelines.

- You must have permission from your child's classroom teacher at least 24 hours in advance.
- Please obtain permission from the classroom teacher regarding appropriate snacks for the students. Healthy treats or non-edible treats are acceptable.
- You must check with the teacher regarding allergies.
- Due to severe allergies, NO LATEX BALLOONS are allowed in the building. No exceptions.

Parent Teacher Conferences and Family Events

We strongly encourage meaningful communication between parents and teacher to benefit the child. Conferences will occur after student dismissal to protect instructional time. We encourage you to schedule a conference at any time throughout the year to discuss your child's progress. Please make plans to attend our family engagement events throughout the year.

Social Services

If your child is in need of materials necessary to attend school, personal hygiene items, or other needs, please notify the office. We have resources available to get you the appropriate help you may need.

If You Have a Problem

Most problems can be handled at the classroom level and the first person to notify when you or your child experience a problem is the classroom teacher. If the problem cannot be resolved at that level, then the principal should be informed. You may call our school office at 594-5035 or email Mrs. Eberle or Mrs. Calloway. Our first priority is always the safety, well-being and development of all our students.

Safe School Choice Notice

Under the Tennessee State Board of Education's Unsafe School Choice Policy, any public school student who is the victim of a violent crime as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated 40-38-II(g) or the attempt to commit any of these offenses as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated 39-12-101, shall be provided an opportunity to transfer to another grade-level appropriate school within the district. Additional information regarding this option may be obtained from Brian Hartsell at 594-1502.