

Parent Policies and Guideline 2023

Philosophy and Goals:

First School welcomes you to our early care and education program! First School implements a Montessori program throughout the preschool and kindergarten classrooms. Children interact in a prepared environment that allows them to learn and progress at their own pace. Learning occurs when children feel good about themselves and about the people around them. Our broad-based curriculum includes reading readiness and early reading, math readiness and math skills, geography, science, practical life activities, art, music, Spanish, social skills, and physical skills. First School's goal is to foster the joy of learning now and throughout your child's life.

Enrollment and Orientation:

Enrollment at First School is open to children from birth to 12 years of age. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability; and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, or disability.

We strive to make sure that children will prosper in our environment and that parents support our program. First School invites all parents to tour our center, to meet teachers, and to visit the classroom. If you and your child feel that your child would be comfortable and happy at First School, we will arrange an orientation meeting where you may discuss any questions or issues. At this time, you will receive enrollment forms. After the forms are completed with payment of the registration fee and returned, you will be given a start date for your child's attendance.

In order to enroll an infant, one weekly tuition fee is required to hold your enrollment. This fee is nonrefundable and guarantees your infant enrollment at the agreed-on date. This fee is applied to the first week that your child is scheduled to attend. A \$70.00 (child) or \$100.00 (family) annual registration fee will be paid when your child begins attendance.

The Enrollment Application and Fee Agreements are not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing services for any duration. Any refunds will either be applied to their account or written by check.

First School reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

Continued enrollment at First School is contingent upon the parent's emergency contact persons' and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of First School as outlined in this Parent Policies and Guidelines including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Parents are required to notify First School immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change.

Class Assignments:

Your child will be placed in a classroom accordingly to their age. Generally, the ages of the various classes are the following: birth to 15 months—infant, 15 months to 24 months—toddlers, 24 months to 36 months—twos, 36 months to 5 years—prekindergarten, 5 years to 6 years—kindergarten, 6 years to 12 years—before and After school Recreation Program. First School may need to re-assign your children any time during the school year because of staffing requirements or because of personality difficulties between children. However, we will not re-assign unless necessary.

Staff Assignments:

The classrooms will be staffed with the following staff to child ratios: infant classroom--1 teachers to 4 children, toddler classroom--1 teachers to 5 children, two-year-old classroom--1 teacher to 8 children, prekindergarten--1 teacher to 10 children, Before/After School Age--1 teachers to 20 chil

Nap/Rest Time:

Generally, nap/rest time will be scheduled from 12:30-2:30. Infant nap/rest schedule may vary. Toddlers through Kindergarten will be provided an option to purchase a rollee pollee to use on their cots. Parents are required to wash the rollee pollee on Friday and return on Monday. Parents need to provide extra clothes for their child. If the clothing is used please return the extra clothing the next day your child attends. Parents of infant and toddlers will provide diapers and diaper wipes for the child.

Transition into the Classroom:

We want your child to have a positive experience when he or she joins our school. Your child may visit his or her new classroom as many times as it is necessary before beginning his or her new program. Visits with parents, without parents, and visits of various lengths of time may ease your child's new enrollment. We also provide this type of transition when your child graduates to each new classroom. When your child graduates to each new classroom, a transition report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by the teacher, parent, and the director or assistant director. Transition sheets are used to record the process of the transition.

Arrival and Departures:

First School ensures the safe arrival and departure of all our children. The First School building opens at 7:00 am. The classrooms are open from 7:30am to 5:30pm. Children that need care before 7:30am or after 5:30pm will need Directors' approval to arrive/stay. Parents need to schedule the times they usually arrive and leave. We schedule staff according to your schedule--each individual parent's schedule--as practical as possible. Please have your children arrive before 9:30am. This prevents the disturbance of the morning learning program. Tuition fees are based on ten hours of maximum attendance per day. All children must be picked up by 5:30pm. There will be an extended charge of \$2.00 per minute for children who leave after their scheduled time.

PROCEDURE:

- Each parent or authorized pick up person will be given a registration number that will allow you to scan your fingerprint into our touchscreen computer system. This fingerprint allows parents to access entry to First School and allows us to identify who is picking up or dropping off your child as well as your arrival and departure times. Do NOT scan your print if a person is attempting to enter the front door and does not have a fingerprint in the system. That person may ring the front door bell and may, or may not, be admitted by staff.
- Emergency cards are included in the application packet when your child is enrolled. Please keep this list current. All authorized pickup persons must have their picture ID when picking up your child. This system allows parents to access to First School during all hours of operation. Parents are welcome at all times and full compliance with Arrival-and-Departure Policy is what makes our "Parent-Open-Door-Policy" possible.

Safety:

Our responsibility to the safety of all children in our care is the guiding force for daily events in our program. Adult supervision and safety proofing go hand in hand to ensure, to the best of our ability, that children can participate in daily activities without fear. Playgrounds are carefully supervised, safety rules are enforced, and equipment is continuously and regularly maintained. Cleaning supplies are

always stored out of the reach of children. Medications are stored in locked containers out of reach from the children in the front office.

MEDICATIONS:

- Please place prescription medicines and non-prescription medicines to be given to your child in the locked medication box located at the front desk. The parent should then fill out the necessary information on a medicine slip located on the front desk. The medicine container must show the full name of the child, full pharmacy label, and the name of doctor. Over the counter (non-prescription) medication that is in the original container shall be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. The container shall be in such condition that the names of the medication and the directions for use are clearly readable. Medications will be given at 12:00 noon, please adjust your child's medication time accordingly. Only infant and toddler classrooms may sign up for medication as needed. These medications are to be stored at the front desk as well. This medication is usually Tylenol that is used for teething discomfort. Please do not use Tylenol or any medication to lower the child's body temperature. An elevated body temperature usually indicates an infectious condition.
- Only emergency medications should be kept in the classrooms. See the director or the assistant director for approval.
- The parent must administer the child's first dosage of medication.
- The director or assistant director will record the time medication was given and sign his or her name.

With all that we do to maintain a safe environment, children may still get hurt. Therefore, this program adheres to parent notification and action which includes a written accident report completed by the teacher and signed by the Director, Assistant Director, and the parent. A telephone call to the parent, or parent's agent as listed on emergency card, is made if the accident involves a head bump or head injury, or if a severe injury that requires medical attention. Staff performs basic first-aid. The emergency card gives permission for emergency professionals to give care to your child if that is needed.

First School maintains a high level of compliance with state regulatory, licensing, and national accreditation standards. We are licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, registered with the Illinois Department of Education, recognized by The International Montessori Council, inspected by the Champaign County Department of Public Health, inspected by the Illinois State fire Marshall, nationally accredited by the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education and have been awarded a certificate of Silver Circle of quality through Excel Rate Illinois.

Medical Emergencies:

In the event a child in First School is hurt or injured the paramedics will be contacted immediately. Parents will also be informed by telephone. The paramedics will decide whether they can administer treatment at the First School or whether the child should be taken to Carle Hospital for emergency care. Parents may accompany their child or meet at the hospital. The signed and notarized "Consent for Treatment" form authorizes First School to act on behalf of the parents by requesting that the hospital staff treat the child.

Alternate Safe Location:

Should the administration of First School or any emergency personnel determine the building to be dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken to the Bridle Brook assisted living facility located behind First School. Once the children are assembled here, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact persons for pick up. The children would need to be picked up as soon as you are able.

Parent conduct:

When you enter First School you can expect to be greeted and assisted by friendly helpful people.

Likewise, we expect parents to be equally friendly and pleasant when visiting First School. We want the children's environment to be peaceful, joyful, and free of stress.

In the event that a parent would ever threaten or be harmful to any First School child, First School staff member, or the First School environment, it would be grounds for immediate termination for that family from the First School center and its programs.

Health:

The health and well-being of your child is of utmost importance to us. In order to provide an environment that supports good health, First School's program recognizes the critical importance of hand washing. Teachers and children follow established guidelines regarding when and how to wash hands. Children have regular opportunities for exposure to fresh air, experiences with activities that support development, regular rest and activity periods. Sanitary procedures are followed for cleaning toys, materials, equipment, and furniture on a regular schedule. Immunization records are updated on a regular basis and daily health checks are done to insure children in attendance are ready for a wonderful day. However, with all that we do to maintain good health, children may become ill. Therefore, when a child experiences symptoms such as diarrhea, rash combined with fever, 100 F underarm temperature, vomiting, mouth sores, purulent conjunctivitis (pink eye), or when children are prevented from participating in activities because of feeling sick, then that child is isolated from other children and the parent is called to confirm the best course of action in the best interest of the child. Your child needs to be kept at home when sick and returned to school only if they have been fever free for 24 hours without controlling the elevated temperature by giving medication and your child has been diarrhea free for 24 hours. You may be asked to provide a doctor's note when returning.

Pictures and Videos

We would like to post field trip, classroom activities and special events pictures and videos on our website www.firstscholinc.com. Your child may be included in the pictures. However, we would not include names of the child. Signing of the "Parent Policies and Guidelines" gives us permission to post pictures.

Weather and Outside Play:

Children need to be able to play outside whenever the weather is favorable for their health and safety. Parents need to provide the appropriate clothing i.e. coats, mittens, boots, and sun screen. We will plan for daily outside activities daily and use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or cold while outdoors.

Nutritious Guidelines:

Good nutrition is important for a child's physical, cognitive, mental, and emotional growth. Meals are planned with regard to the fact that children have small stomachs and that they burn energy in big bursts. A small breakfast snack is served at 8:30 a.m. and some classes have snacks available throughout the morning. Lunch is served between 11:30 a.m. and 12 p.m. Snacks are served after nap\rest time. Fresh fruits, fruit juices, and nutritious foods are served. Mealtime is a pleasant part of each day where social skills are developed by experience. Meals are served in a family style setting where children and teachers sit together at the table. The child has responsibility for deciding how much he or she will eat. No child is forced to eat and no child is denied food as a method of discipline.

Proper nutrition is important, so parents are discouraged from providing any foods without prior discussion with the child's teacher. Any food brought into First School must be obtained from a commercial vendor. Weekly menus are posted at the front desk and in your child's classroom.

Children may give special thanks to God before our snack and meal time. Children may or participate or not.

If your child is required to have a special diet due to medical records, allergic reactions, or religious beliefs, documentation from the parent and or doctor will be required. When providing a special diet causes undue hardship or expense for the child care center, meals or portions of meals may be provided by the parent upon written agreement of the parent and the center. This will only happen by the approval from the Director of First School.

Transportation:

The safety of your child is fundamental in the development of our transportation policies.

ON FIELD TRIPS:

When children are involved in a field trip, advance notice is provided to the parents. Proper safety seats or seat belts are used in all First School Vehicles. Prior to the trip the Field Trip Permission Form is posted which tells the place, time of the field trip, departure time, and return. Parents are required to sign the form if permission is given for the children to participate. If you do not wish your child to attend a field trip, alternate plans will be made by First School.

TO AND FROM SCHOOLS:

Children are transported by the public-school buses. Children should arrive at 7:50 am to catch the bus by 8:00am. The bus will also transport your child back to First School. A "Transportation Agreement" needs to be read, understood and signed before your child is transported to any public elementary schools. This agreement states that once your child boards the public-school bus she/he is the responsibility of the public school. The responsibility of First School begins when your child leaves the public-school bus upon returning to First School. Should your child not return as scheduled we will attempt to phone the parents or emergency contact persons.

Discipline Policy:

Discipline is an important part of the learning experience in early education. It helps children learn self-regulation, self-control, and respect for others. An atmosphere of respect is maintained between the adults and children and between the children themselves. A teacher's role is to assist each child in reaching his or her full potential by helping the child learn self-control and self-discipline, as well as creating and enforcing age appropriate boundaries. Children may misbehave because they have not yet learned how the world works. When they do misbehave, teachers use the following positive discipline techniques:

- Avoid problems by offering an organized, stimulating program
- Reinforcement for positive behavior
- Modeling
- Redirection to more acceptable behavior
- Setting clear limits
- Offering choices
- Ignoring negative behavior (when appropriate)
- Acknowledging good behavior
- Timeout or removal of a child from the area, for short periods of time (one minute per age of a child) for children over age of two only.

The following discipline techniques are PROHIBITED.

- Physical punishments
- Screaming at a child
- Ridiculing a child or the child's family
- Blaming, teasing, insulting, name calling or threatening the child with punishment
- Withholding food
- Withholding affection or positive attention

Sometimes the inappropriate behavior of a child is not able to be corrected with the above-mentioned normal behavior management techniques. Some of these inappropriate behaviors negatively affect the health and safety with other children and teachers. Biting, hitting, kicking, and emotionally abusing classmates are behaviors that need to be addressed with a specific guidance/discipline plan. The parent, teacher, and director will need to confer in order to discuss the behavior problem and decide on the goals for the child. It may be suggested to the parent to access a child behavior specialist that could evaluate the child and assist with the behavior plan. The plan would be recorded, signed by the parent, teacher, and director. A follow-up meeting would also be determined. Usually a two-week interval would be planned between conferences. Progress toward a possible behavior will be evaluated. All staff members who interact with the child would need to be aware of the behavior plan and agree to cooperate in its implementation. Dismissal from First School would be seriously considered if the child's behavior does not demonstrate improvement. If possible, the parents will be given a period of time to find alternate arrangements for their child. If a child's behavior causes the continual danger to another child, the parent will be called and the child will be required to leave for that day.

Developmental Screening:

At First School we use the ASQ (Ages and Stages Questionnaire) tool to screen our children. We know the first 5 years are the most critical in a child's life. If we can detect a developmental delay or disability the faster, we can connect children with services and support. The parent could be directed to Caregiver Connection. Caregiver Connections phone number 217-493-0100. We also direct parents to have the children screened at Middletown. Mahomet schools will give an evaluation on their child after doing a developmental screening. This will cover several areas of development (IEP). Parents can contact Child Care Resource Service for assistance for a developmental screening (U of I). Therefore, we screen our children within 60 days after enrolling in First School. Parents help with the screening as well.

Our children are routinely screened at 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, and 5 years. If a child is scored in an area of concern, we will communicate our findings with the parents and encourage a connection with a specialist.

Annual Screenings:

Public Health comes to our school, they conduct visual and hearing screening.

To check a child with developmental delay we use a Dial-3 screening

Academic Screenings:

Parent teacher conferences are held twice a year. At these times the teacher will go over Montessori curriculum achievements

Financial Policies:

The following financial policies ensure that quality child care and education is consistently available. First School is primarily supported by parents' payments. The fees have been determined based on the

cost of providing quality services, including materials, supplies, food, utilities, equipment and a well qualified, educated staff. Tuition fees may be paid weekly. Fees are collected on Monday of the first day of the week that your child attends First School. Tuition fees are collected through an automatic withdrawal from the parent's checking or savings account. Each child's tuition may be discounted by $\frac{1}{2}$ for two weeks per enrollment year (summer and parttime programs excluded) for vacations and sickness. The discounted fees are due before leaving for a scheduled vacation. If for any reason the payment is late, notification needs to be made to the office. Also, if an overpayment is made, please request a refund check from the administration. A two-week notice of disenrollment is required.

Parent Involvement:

For your child to grow and flourish in our early care and education environment, he or she needs to experience his or her parents' physical participation and emotional support. Parents are asked to annually assess our program. Parent assessments are confidential and are helpful in informing us in which areas the program maybe lacking. Problems or concerns may be relayed to your child's teacher either by telephone or by scheduled discussion. Concerns or problems are best discussed not in the presence of your child, other children, or other parents. Teachers are always happy to relate facts about your child's day to you. Communication notebooks can be a beneficial way to communicate with your child's teacher if your schedule does not allow you to personally discuss concerns together. A parent information board is located outside each classroom. Daily information is routinely recorded on daily reports for infants and toddlers. A weekly lesson plan is posted each Monday outside your child's classroom and monthly newsletters are posted on our website www.firstschoolinc.com. Parents may also be involved by helping with the curriculum, helping with parties, and helping with field trips. You are encouraged to ask questions or give your child's teacher suggestions. Parent teacher conferences are held twice a year. A time will be scheduled that is convenient for you.

First School will be open year-round except the following holidays:

New Year's Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Day

First School closes at 2:30 on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Tuition agreement:

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Fee Agreement prior to enrollment of their child in First School.

If you decide to disenroll, a two-week notice is required.

In order to minimize administrative costs, tuition is collected through an electronic process called "Tuition Express". Your child's tuition will be taken out weekly on Mondays. There will be a surcharge of \$20.00 for any insufficient withdrawals. The form for tuition express will be attached to your enrollment papers. Please remember to attach a voided check (deposit slips are not accepted.) Saving accounts may also be used. If you need a weekly receipt for your tuition, please let the office know. Tuition does not include fees for field trips and extra curriculum activities such as dance or gymnastics.

Pick-up Procedures:

Parents or other authorized adults are required to sign their child out of care on the computerized punch pad located at the reception area. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on First School's premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Parents are required to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child.

Children are considered late when they are not picked up by the designated agreed upon time. If you are picking up later than your scheduled time you need to call First School and inform us of the change. If you decide that a new schedule needs to be determined, please discuss this change with the office.

There will be a \$2.00 per minute charge if your child is picked up after their scheduled time. This fee will be applied to your ledger at that time.

If your child is not picked up by their scheduled time, First School will call all contacts designated on your child's application form and emergency card at least two times and will leave messages to whom indicated. First School will keep your child at school until one hour after closing or 6:30pm. After this time the child will be released to the Mahomet Police Department. The Mahomet Police will contact the Department of Children and Family Services and will be guided by their policies.

Therefore, it is very important to keep your emergency numbers current with the First School office.

First School acknowledges our responsibility for your child's protection and well-being until the child's parent or outside authorities arrive.

Persons Appearing to Be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick-Up:

The Staff of First School will contact local police and/or other custodial parent should a parent appear to the staff of First School to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired is respected. However, First School staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, then local police and Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick-up a child and appears to the staff of First School to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of First School will contact the child's parents, local police and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

Vacation and sickness procedures:

If a child does not attend school for a full week (for a maximum of 2 weeks each year) and if First School is notified at least two weeks in advance, one ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the normal tuition is charged. It is best to notify First School in writing. If a parent has used the two-week half-tuition allotment, full tuition will be charged whether or not the child is in full attendance. There is no credit given for scheduled public school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at First School; however, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Director immediately. If alternate arrangements for payment are approved you will be notified by the Director.

Parents of a subsidized child must complete all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment at First School. Parents of subsidized children are also required to sign a fee agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of co pay and the tuition in the event they become ineligible to receive child care subsidies.

The youngest sibling pays the full tuition rate and each additional child's tuition is discounted 10% per

child.

All tuition is based on the total yearly cost of the program. The parent weekly fees are a breakdown of this yearly cost to facilitate parent payment.

Complaint Procedure:

Administration and staff of First School welcome open communication with parents. Parent concerns may be addressed to their child's classroom teacher. If the issue is not resolved the concern may be addressed to the administration. Complaints may be made in person (in confidence), by telephone, and/or a note dropped off in the slotted box on the front counter top. A meeting may also be arranged to discuss the concern. Please do not discuss negative situations in the presence of your child, other parents or other children.

Holiday and Party Guidelines:

If parents wish to celebrate their children's birthday at First School, we request that you only provide nutritious treats. Fruit, vegetables, cheese crackers are examples of nutritious foods. Please read the entire Nutrition Guidelines from your Parent Agreement. (Reminder: Food treats need to be purchased from a commercial vendor).

Pest Management:

First School has in place an integrated pest management plan for the protection of your children. Our goal is to prevent insect and animal pests from becoming an issue inside our school and to eliminate or reduce the use of pesticides. First School shall notify all parents or guardians before a pesticide application. Also, we will maintain a registry of parents or guardians who wish to receive written notification of when we will receive a pesticide application and send a written notification to them. Notification of the intended date of the application of the pesticide will be posted on the front desk and will be given at least 2 days before the pesticide application.

Babysitting:

We appreciate your confidence in our staff. However, it states in our employment handbook that a staff member may not care for your child outside of First School. An exception can be made, if a staff member knew your child previous to enrollment.

Parking:

First School provides ample parent parking in the parking lot. Please do not park in front of the school at any time during operating hours. Obstruction of this area is a violation of the Mahomet Fire Department code and subject to fine. Thank you.

My child _____ is enrolled in _____ classroom.

Weekly tuition for my child is \$ _____.

Annual registration fee per child \$ _____, per multiple children \$ _____.

The signature below indicates that the signing person has read and agrees to follow and support the parent contract.

Parent's signature _____

Director/Assistant Director _____