FORT ANN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Family Handbook

2026-2027

1 Catherine Street, Fort Ann, NY, 12827
518-639-5594 phone
518-639-8911 fax
www.fortannschool.org

WELCOME TO FORT ANN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!

In this handbook you will find information from daily schedules and attendance policies to dress code and ways for families to stay connected. We encourage you to read through it and keep it on hand for questions that come up along the way. Also be sure to check out the school website, our Facebook page, and your email for important information and updates. You may also call the elementary office with any questions.

ATTENDANCE

Excellent attendance promotes academic achievement. Research shows that missing just 10% or two days per month has a negative impact on academics. Please make an effort to get your child here on time consistently and to schedule appointments outside of the school day.

School Hours
School begins - 8:00 am
Dismissal - 2:31 pm

Pre-Kindergarten
Morning - 8:30 - 10:45 am
Afternoon - 11:45 am - 2:00 pm

After 8:10 am, students are considered tardy. New York State Education Law requires a written excuse, signed by the parent or guardian stating the reason for the child's absence or tardiness. Please send a written excuse on the day your child returns to school after an absence. Absences will be categorized as excused or unexcused. Excused absences include: illness, death in the family, unsafe roads, religious observance, and court appearances. Unexcused absences include: family vacation, babysitting, oversleeping, etc. Teachers will make an effort to provide make-up work upon a student's return to school, after an unexcused absence. Fort Ann elementary school staff will address attendance concerns through strategies such as: phone calls, conferences, letters, home visits, and referrals to outside agencies when necessary. For more detailed information, please refer to the Board of Education's Student Attendance Policy, found on the website.

BEHAVIOR AND CODE OF CONDUCT

We ask our elementary students to be safe, be respectful, and be kind to others. We also encourage students to be leaders. The full version of the Fort Ann Central School Code of Conduct can be found on the website. If you have a concern that your child is experiencing bullying or conflict with his peers, please contact the classroom teacher, school counselor, and/or principal. We will address all incidents promptly, as it is our goal to have a positive learning environment. Please call 518-639-5594 with any concerns.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Families often enjoy sending in a special treat on birthdays. Please contact your child's classroom teacher about this. Delivery of items such as flowers/balloons to classrooms are not permitted. Please save these items for your celebration at home. We appreciate your cooperation.

CALENDAR

There is a school calendar on the website that you will find very helpful. You can customize the view of your calendar to show just elementary events, if you prefer.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character education is woven throughout all that we do in the elementary school. The traits we focus on include: respect, compassion, self-control, and leadership. We have a read-aloud curriculum designed to help students develop empathy, kindness, and an appreciation for diversity.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES VISITS

We are committed to cooperating with law enforcement authorities to keep students safe from harm and fulfill our legal obligation to report to CPS any reason to suspect a child has been abused or maltreated. The district will cooperate with local CPS employees who wish to conduct interviews of students of students on school property relating to allegations of suspected child abuse, maltreatment, or neglect.

COMMUNICATION

We send notes home in students' folders or through our Rooms app. You will also want to check out our district website and Fort Ann school Facebook page.

DASA (DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT)

New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) seeks to provide the state's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function.

The DASA Incident Report Form can be found on the parent section of the website. The purpose of the form is to inform the district of an incident of discrimination or harassment (which includes bullying) so that we can properly investigate. You may also call the elementary office to request a form. You may also submit concerns related to The Dignity For All Students Act directly through dignityactcoordinator@fortannschool.org

DISMISSAL

Parent Pick-Up

At dismissal time, students may be signed out in the cafeteria, after buses have departed. Please make sure you have identification with you. While our regular staff may recognize you without ID, we sometimes have a substitute in place. We will always ask for identification if we are unsure and we appreciate your understanding in this matter.

Taking Bus Home

Teachers will walk students out to their buses. If you need to pick up a student at dismissal or any other time, please make sure you have identification with you.

Bus Passes

Occasionally, parents ask for their child to receive a bus pass to ride another bus, for the purpose of child care. Please make any requests for changes in transportation, before 1:00 pm, in writing, to our elementary school secretary. The best way to do this is to send a note into school with your child. Please call the office if you need clarification regarding this policy.

Walking Home

Only students in fourth grade and above will be allowed to walk home from school and they must have a signed permission slip on file in the office. Students walking home will be escorted to the parent turn-around exit by an adult. Once they exit the door, they will no longer be under the supervision of school personnel. The school reserves the right to revoke the walking privilege from any student not behaving responsibly.

Signing-Out Siblings

Only students in fourth grade and above will be allowed to sign their siblings out in the cafeteria and escort them to the parent turn-around area. We must have a written note from a parent before allowing this to happen.

Biking Home

NYS Law requires children under the age of 14 to wear a safety helmet when biking. Therefore, students may be asked to walk home if they are riding a bicycle on school property, without a helmet. If you need to obtain a low cost bike helmet for your child, please call Washington County Public Health at 518-746-2400.

DRESS CODE

Parental guidance is necessary to help children make appropriate choices about their school attire. Students are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate for our school environment. Students may not wear items that: are offensive, express insults of any nature, promote the use of drugs, alcohol, violence, or contain objectionable language. Please avoid clothing that is too revealing and make sure students wear safe footwear. If a student isdressed inappropriately, he/she may be asked to change into extra clothing available in the nurse's office.

EARLY ARRIVAL

Students may be dropped off at 7:45 am to wait with supervision, until school begins at 8:00 am. Please use the parent turn-around.

FOOD SERVICE

We offer breakfast and lunch on all full school days. Information is posted on the website, and so are monthly menus. Breakfast and lunch are free to all students in 2026-27, but additional items can be purchased using MySchoolBucks from your phone or computer. Contact our Food Service Director, Mrs. Howerton, with questions or concerns related to the cafeteria, 518-639-5594 x52055.

MEALS FROM HOME

If you send in a breakfast or lunch from home for your child, please focus on healthy, nutritious foods as much as possible. We certainly do understand parents make their own choices about what to serve their children and that some children may eat a limited variety of foods.

Students are not allowed to drink soda during the school day. They are also not allowed to have any takeout (Dunkin' Donuts, McDonalds, Cumberland Farms) foods or beverages after the 8:00 am bell sounds for the day. We appreciate your cooperation.

REPORT CARDS

Elementary report cards are issued three times per year. Please refer to the school calendar on the webpage.

SNACKS

Many elementary classes make time for a daily snack, to provide nutrition and energy. Please ensure that any snacks sent in from home are healthy. We do offer a daily snack at school that is free to all students.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

In grades PK-12, we utilize a classroom-based, social-emotional learning curriculum for our students that nurtures children's social-emotional competence and foundational learning skills. The program builds a foundation for a positive, inclusive culture through developing social-emotional competencies built around ten character traits that build effective communication, empathy, and positive relationships.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

We are fortunate to have a Family Outreach Center that provides support to parents. The FOC offers a Weekend Backpack Program which provides a backpack full of food every Friday to students whose

families could use additional assistance. This program is funded through donations. Visit our website to learn how to donate. You may send an email to hgadway@fortannschool.org for more information on how to apply.

TECHNOLOGY

Elementary students are not allowed to have personal devices (cell phones, smart watches, portable game systems, ipads, etc.) in school. If a child has a cell phone or smart watch for use after school, he/she is expected to keep it in his/her backpack and have it turned off during the school day.

TRANSPORTATION

Safety is our top priority! Therefore, we expect excellent behavior on school buses. Students must stay in their seats, and cooperate with the driver. All buses are equipped with video cameras to observe student behavior. Students may receive a written bus conduct report, if their behavior is unacceptable. This may result in a corrective action such as: discussion with the principal, phone call to parent, detention, suspension from transportation, or other appropriate response. Administrators will use their professional discretion. Unfortunately, Fort Ann CSD does not provide transportation for students living in the village and/or for students attending the pre-kindergarten program.

After-School Transportation

There is after school bus transportation available on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. These bus runs are different from the regular after school routes. Please check with Mr. Larrow in the transportation department, regarding the details such as the bus number and drop off location. When elementary students stay after school for a club or other activity, a parent must write a note giving permission and communicating whether the child will be picked up or ride the bus home.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

We ask that you schedule an appointment ahead of time, whenever possible. All visitors must report to the elementary office upon arrival, and sign in. This helps us keep a safe environment for our students. If you need to pick up a student at any time, please make sure you have identification with you. While our regular staff may recognize you without ID, we sometimes have a substitute in place. We will always ask for your identification if we are unsure and we appreciate your understanding in this matter.