



Parent & Guardian Handbook 2020-2021

Last Updated 8/30/2020

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About Firs & Fiddleheads

Contact Information

- Preschool Phone Number: **(360) 410-4207**
- Preschool Director: Stacy Smith: (360) 223-3393, stacy@thefirs.org
- Preschool Manager & Lead Teacher: Liz Holte (Ahi Ahi): liz@thefirs.org
- Lead Teacher: Danielle Strasser (Javelina)
- Website: firsandfiddleheads.org
- Email Address: firsandfiddleheads@thefirs.org
- Instagram: @firsandfiddleheads
- Mailing Address: Firs & Fiddleheads • 4605 Cable Street • Bellingham, WA 98229
- Physical Address: 1150 Geneva Street • Bellingham, WA 98229

Mission/Philosophy

At Firs & Fiddleheads, we believe that children are intrinsically motivated to learn and that they do so by exploring the world around them. We aim to foster curiosity, to guide rather than compel, and to provide room for possibility and adventure rather than attempt to constrain children's interests to fit within a certain curriculum. Our goal is to provide each child with an inviting natural environment to encourage physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth, through a child-driven curriculum, small class sizes, nature immersion, and play-based experiential learning. We aim to convey relationships between all of God's creations - with each other and with the natural world that surrounds us.

Curriculum

- Child (led) driven learning.
- Throughout the school year, we will be using the Creation Story as a framework for our exploration ... "God created _____ and it was good!"
- Other resources used in creating our daily - weekly - monthly lessons is the *Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers*.
- Celebrations, Holidays
 - Our classrooms will focus on seasonal changes and events in the natural world rather than commercial holidays.
- Field Trips
 - Field trips will not be a part of our programs until further notice.
- Guest Teachers
 - Currently we are not able to but hoping in the future to occasionally invite guest teachers to join us in our classroom who will bring special topics to share. Upcoming guest visitor information will be included in our monthly newsletter.

- 11:50 am - Book & Pick-up

Play School - PM

- 12 pm - Lunch & Arrival
 - 12:30 - transition
- 12:40pm - Nap & Rest Time
 - 1:10pm - wake up & transition
 - 1:15pm - Free Play
- 2:20 pm - Snack Time
 - 2:45 - transition
- 3 pm - Circle Time
- 3:15 pm - Work Time
- 3:30 pm - Free Play & Pick-Up at 4pm
- 4 - 5:45 pm - Extended Pickup * Fee of \$4

Drop Off/Pick Up

- Morning Forest School
 - Drop Off - Drop off is at 8am and is located outside of our indoor classroom. Your child will need to be screened and signed in at the main office when you arrive, then walked down to our forest classroom. We will move into our forest classroom at 9:10am - if you arrive later than 9:10am, you will need to call your child's respective teacher, and a staff will come retrieve them
 - Pick Up - Children will be picked up in the same area as drop off. You will need to sign your child out on the laptop at the sign-out table. Pick up is at 12pm.
 - Early Drop Off - 7:30-8am with a fee of \$2.
- Afternoon Play School
 - Drop Off - Drop off is located at our indoor classroom. You will need to sign in your child on the laptop at the sign-in table when you arrive. If your child will be transitioning from Morning Forest School to Afternoon Play School, a teacher will sign them out of Forest School and into Play School.
 - Pick Up - Children will be picked up in the same area as drop off. You will need to sign your child out on the laptop at the sign-out table. Pick-up is at 4pm.
 - Extended Pick Up - 4-5:45pm with a fee or \$4.
- Late Pick Up Fee
 - If you are late to pick up your child more than once, you will be charged a late fee of \$5 each following time that your child is picked up late.
 - If there is an emergency that requires you to be late, please call **(360) 410-4207**, so that we may reassure your child that all is okay.

Parent & Guardian Information

Communication

- If your child will be absent or late on their scheduled day, please notify us by calling or texting the Forest School **(360) 410-4207**. If there is a future day where you know your child will be absent or late, please email us at firsandfiddleheads@thefirs.org.
- Newsletter
 - A monthly newsletter will be emailed out to parents and guardians for communication that will include important upcoming class information, special events, and a brief summary of the month, with photos of our adventures!
- Email
 - If you have specific questions or would like to discuss topics concerning your child, we are there to listen and help! However, we ask that you email us to set up a scheduled time to meet via phone or in person, during non-instruction times, as discussions during drop off or pick up can be difficult for staff to provide their full attention to you and to our preschoolers.

Parent & Guardian Involvement

Unfortunately, at this time, we will not have the opportunity for parents and guardians to volunteer in the forest. If circumstances change, we will send out information regarding any updates.

What to Bring Daily

Morning and Afternoon Forest School

- Lunch & Snacks
 - If your child is only attending the morning sessions, they will need just snacks and a water bottle.
 - If your child is attending afternoon sessions they will need lunch, snacks for morning **and** afternoon, and a water bottle.
 - Lunch & snacks will not be provided for your child. Plan to bring items that do not require refrigeration or heating or that create excess garbage. We encourage using reusable containers to keep our forest clean! Extra snacks are always a good idea, as your child will be exerting tons of energy playing outdoors for 4 hours! On cold days, we recommend sending your child with warm soup and/or tea in a thermos.
 - In cases of severe allergies, parents may be asked to exclude certain foods from their child's lunch. If your child has an allergy or food restriction, documentation must be on file.
 - Please no almonds at this time.
- Gear

- Please bring a small backpack, labeled with your child's name. This should be small enough for them to comfortably carry, but large enough to fit their lunch, water bottle, and extra gloves and/or hats.. A backpack with a chest strap is recommended.
- Clothing
 - During Morning Forest School and Afternoon Play School Forest Excursions, it is very likely that your child will get dirty, muddy and wet! However, appropriate clothes will help your child to remain happy, healthy and able to learn. We suggest the following:
 - A warm hat (wool or fleece) and waterproof/insulated mittens
 - Top and bottom long underwear made of fleece, wool, or polypropylene (these materials will stay warm when wet!)
 - A top and bottom layer (fleece, a wool/blend, or a poly-blend)
 - Waterproof rain or snow coat (dependent on weather)
 - Waterproof rain or snow pants (dependent on weather)
 - Wool socks
 - Waterproof rain/insulated snow boots (i.e. Bogs, Muck Boots, Merrell, Keen)
 - Layers, layers and more layers! (Your child can always remove a layer if needed)
 - Just remember, "cotton is rotten"! Cotton wicks moisture, which not only makes us cold and uncomfortable, but can be a safety hazard for hypothermia in temperatures lower than 60 degrees. (Thrift stores are a great option for many of the clothing items listed! Many are stocked with fleece and wool.)
 - **Please bring the following on your 1st day**, in a Ziploc bag, labeled with your child's name (we will keep these, and any extra gear in child specified cubbies that families can access and check regularly):
 - 2 extra pairs of underwear
 - 2 pairs of warm socks
 - 1 cozy pants
 - 1 long sleeve shirt

Afternoon Forest School

- Rest Gear
 - On your first day, please bring a sleeping bag or a heavy blanket, and if your child would like, a stuffed animal that can stay at school.
 - We will be resting in our outdoor cabins for 15-30 min a day.

Policies & Procedures

Registration & Enrollment

Our class sizes are kept to 12 students, to best maximize their learning experience. If a day is already full, students will be put onto a waitlist; when space becomes available, students may take open slots. Registration Forms are available online (firsandfiddleheads.org). Space is secured when Registration Forms and fees are submitted.

Tuition Payment Schedule

- Payments can be made by check, money order, Visa or MasterCard, or direct withdrawal. If paying by direct withdrawal, we will need an authorization form on file with the registrar. Email firsandfiddleheads@thefirs.org to get a form.
- Tuition is due the first of each month. We offer a 10-day grace period. If payment is not received by the 10th of each month, a \$25 late fee is added to the bill. If you choose to mail a check, please send to:

Firs & Fiddleheads • 4605 Cable Street • Bellingham, WA 98229

Attendance

- ***Regular attendance is an important element of your child's success. If your child will be missing class for any reason, please text or call (360) 410-4207.***
- If attendance is interrupted due to illness longer than 8 days, tuition can be adjusted.

Withdrawal Policy

- We ask for a month's notice, if your child will no longer be attending school with us.

Health & Safety

Boundaries

- As part of being outdoors, there is a lot of space to explore and discover, our staff encourages students to use all of the forest to look for new experiences. We use bright colored disc cones to mark the areas in which staff can see and hear all students. This allows the students to stay focused in one area and for staff to keep the class safe.

Inclement Weather

- Our forest classroom will be used daily as our main classroom for Morning Forest School and throughout the day during Afternoon Play School, unless the weather becomes unsafe. We will move into our indoor classroom, if there are:
 - High winds
 - Temperatures drop below 28 degrees
 - Other conditions that make the forest unsafe

- In the event of a natural disaster or fire, where the evacuation of the forest becomes necessary, the following will apply:
 - The staff and children will be removed from the forest and relocated to the Bellingham Fire Department across the street. Staff will maintain supervision of their group with attendance sheets in hand and proceed to notify parents by cell phone as to the whereabouts of their child or children.

Accidents and Injuries

- All accidents and incidents will be recorded and kept at school.
- Minor injuries like scrapes or cuts will be assessed by responding staff members, washed with soap and water when needed, and a band aid will be used to keep clean. Parents and carers of children will receive a small incident report if staff is not available to communicate directly.
- Any accidents involving a child's head and/or need professional medical attention will result in an immediate call to the parent or carer of the child. Staff will fill out a detailed accident report and have it ready for the parent or carer to sign.
- Per discretion of the teachers, parents and carers of children will be contacted for any other incidents.

Bathrooms

- Our preschool bathrooms are located inside of our indoor classroom (where drop off and pick up are located).
- Toilet trained is preferred, but we also understand that this happens for children at different times. If a bathroom accident happens, staff will help the child clean up and change into clean clothes. Soiled clothes will be sealed in a plastic bag and put in the child's cubby to be taken home.

Health Policy

- When to keep your child home:
 - If they have a fever of 100 degrees or more
 - Your child will need to be fever free for 72 hours before returning to school.
 - If they have thrown up or had diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
 - If they have thick green mucus coming out of the nose.
 - Any symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 (see **2020 COVID CARE** below)

Immunizations

- Please fill out and return your child's immunization records with your registration packet, found at firsandfiddleheads.org.

Food Allergies

- No Almonds.
- Food allergies and dietary restrictions need to be documented.

Medication Plan

- Written parental consent is required to administer any medication. All medication, including EpiPens and inhalers, must be in its original container and properly labeled with the child's name, date the prescription was filled or the medication's expiration date, and legible instructions for administration (such as manufacturer's instructions or prescription label). Children may not carry medication (of any kind) in their backpacks or administer medicine themselves.

Sunscreen & Insect Repellent

- We will carry both sunscreen and insect repellent on hand that we can help your child apply if needed; written permission must be given.

2020 COVID Care

We deeply care about the health and wellness of everyone, and to assure we are taking necessary precautions, the following procedures are in place:

Screening

- Every day all staff are screened upon arrival.
- Each morning at check-in, we will have staff screening students before they enter the forest. Any symptoms or signs of anyone who could be a carrier, or be at risk with the Coronavirus will be sent home.
- **If any person, staff or child has a temperature of 100 F or above they will be sent home.**
- **Children need to be fever free for 72 hours before returning to school.**
 - **If your child's COVID test returns as Negative, they will still need to follow the 72 hours safety rule.**

Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Adults and children wash and sanitize hands frequently throughout the day including:
 - Upon arrival
 - Before and after meal times
 - Any time entering a building
- Our dedicated staff is putting extensive effort into sanitizing and disinfecting our center - all touchable surfaces and toys each night.

Exposure

- All staff are required and will be wearing face coverings and/or masks at all times.

- It will be up to the parent or guardian to decide on whether their child will wear a mask during school hours.
- We provide plenty of space for small group sizes and lots of time to grow, learn, and discover among our towering Firs trees and fern gardens.
- To keep exposure as low as possible we will no longer allow parents or families to accompany children into the forest at drop off. We understand that new environments can be hard for some children and encourage you to use the space at the drop off to spend a couple more minutes with your child.