

Welcome
Back Friends!



September 4, 2020

Dear Fort Meadow Families,

I am so excited to welcome you back, both remotely and in-person, to the 2020/2021 school year! It has been a heck of a year so far and I am so appreciative of the patience you have shown, as we continue to spend many hours getting everything set to safely welcome your little ones back to school. At first, the thought of bringing students back to school was quite overwhelming but with the support of our district administrators and the health department, I am feeling very positive about our re-opening plans. Please understand that as your principal, I strongly believe that in this difficult time, we must all work together to practice patience and tolerance of each other. Each of us has experienced life very differently over these last few months, which has helped to shape our own unique views on the life and the world we now live in. That is why Fort Meadow ECC's main goal for this school year is to support students and their caregivers through family partnerships.

We will begin by sharing the most current information about the practices we will follow to keep everyone healthy and safe. The school will keep you up to date through ongoing communication in a way that suits you best. Finally, all of us at Fort Meadow ECC understand the uncertainty that many parents are feeling right now about the decision of whether or not to send their child back to school. To make sure the COVID 19 virus does not continue to spread, the following changes have been made to our daily routines.

Change in Early Childhood Session Times

A.M. Session: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

P.M. Session: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Tuition:

Peer partners who choose to attend remote learning sessions will pay the same 10 month tuition as students who come to school.

- Pre-Kindergarten Tuition Fees - \$200/month, 5 days per week
- Preschool Tuition Fees - \$160/month, 4 days per week
- Tuition subsidies are available for those who qualify

Masks:

The following School Committee policy will be followed to help stop the spread of germs and Covid 19.

- A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation.
- We understand that wearing a mask may be challenging for some young children. The staff at Fort Meadow will work with students to teach them the proper way to handle and wear a mask, as well as building a tolerance to wearing a mask

Mask Breaks:

- Students will participate in a mask break at a minimum of one every hour, scheduled at the teacher's discretion.
- Breaks can take place outside or in the building following all social distancing protocols.

Before Coming to School:

- Families will need to check their children each morning for symptoms before coming to school or getting on the bus. Symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.
- If a student has any symptoms of COVID-19, they cannot attend school. Please notify the school of your child's absence and the reason for the absence by calling 572-6422. The school nurse will follow-up with families.
- All Westfield Public School staff members are expected to follow the same self-screening daily routine, before arriving at work.

Bus Safety:

- All students who enter the bus must wear a mask and keep it on for the duration of the bus ride.
- Each child will be assigned his/her own seat following social distancing protocols.
- Buses will be wiped down between runs and disinfected at the end of each day.

Arrival to School:

- **Drop Off:** For the safety of all, children will enter directly into their classroom through the side door located on the playground. Markers on the grass will show where to stand in line, while maintaining social distancing requirements. Please line up with your child outside of their classroom door at your designated time.
- **Bus Students:** Students who ride the bus will be supervised off of the bus by a staff member. Students will enter through the back entrance one at a time, maintaining social distancing. Staff members will assist students directing them to their classroom.

Dismissal from School:

- **Pick Up:** All children will be dismissed from their classroom door on the side of the building. Caregivers must wait for the playground gate to be opened by a staff member, before entering. Anyone on school grounds waiting to pick his/her student must wear a mask and line up on the markers outside of their child's classroom door, 6 feet apart. Small children must stay with their adult and cannot play on the playground.
- **Bus Students:** All students will be escorted to their appropriate bus at the end of the school session, following all safety protocols.

Hand Sanitizing/Washing:

- Children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures.
- Staff assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task. Children wash independently or with help.
- Children and adults wash their hands:
 - on arrival for the day
 - after diapering or using the toilet
 - after handling blowing or wiping a nose
 - prior to eating or drinking

Remote Learning:

- Google Classroom will be used to offer a fully remote schedule that will replicate the classroom as much as possible.
- A weekly schedule will include links to live events, like morning circle times using Google Meet, as well as other curriculum lessons that are themed-based.
- Some lessons may be prerecorded by various preschool teachers.
- Take-home kits will go home biweekly and will include hands-on projects to help develop motor skills, while teaching other standards.
- Teachers and the School Adjustment Counselor are available to meet with families to address learning/social emotional needs.

Special Education Services:

- The district will work diligently to provide appropriate special education services to students as reflected in their IEPs
- Special education and related services may be offered remotely to students through teletherapy sessions
- Face-to-face services will be available to those with the highest level of need or for those whom remote learning does not work
- IEP meetings will continue to be held remotely at this time. Evaluation team leaders will contact families via email and/or phone

In The Classroom:

- This year, class sizes have been reduced from 15 children in past years, now down to 9 children.
- The length of school sessions has been reduced from 2.5 hours to 2 hours in order to allow for advanced cleaning between class sessions.
- Rooms have been re-arranged to support social distancing requirements while still allowing children to play & learn.
- This year, children will not be permitted to bring a backpack to school. All notices will be available electronically, in your child's Google Classroom (more info and training will follow). Paper notices will be made available on a weekly basis to individuals by request.
- The school will provide all students with individual supply kits that will include items such as crayons, markers, scissors, etc.
- Classrooms will not be serving snack this year due to a shortened school schedule and the inability to allow for socialization while eating. Students who attend double sessions, as per their IEP, will eat a snack and lunch that is provided by their family.
- Water or milk will be served to students during mask breaks.
- Classroom tables, desks, and chairs will be disinfected daily by custodians who have been trained on deep cleaning procedures.
- The building temperature will fluctuate due to the fact that classroom windows may be open to provide more air circulation

Using the Bathroom:

- In order to follow social distancing protocols, staff will take a group of no more than three students to the bathroom at a time.
- Children who wear diapers will be toileted individually.
- Standard safety precautions will continue to be used.
- Students must wash hands for at least 20 seconds after using the bathroom.
- Bathrooms will be disinfected approximately every two hours and deep cleaned at the end of every day.

Outdoor Play:

- Students must wear masks while playing with one another outside, except for mask breaks when students will remain socially distanced.
- Outdoor play equipment will be used
- Handwashing and sanitizing will be done before and after use of playscape and swings.
- Staff will engage students in games that support social distancing (ie: Simon Says, Red Light/Green, calisthenics, etc.)

Visitors/Parents:

- There will be no visitors or parents allowed in the building.
- If you are picking your child up early, ring the front door buzzer and inform the office you are there to dismiss your child early.
- You will be asked to show your ID
- Please bring your own pen to sign-out your child.
- Your child will be delivered to you at the playground gate, on the side of your child's classroom.
- Parents are not allowed on the playground during school hours.

Nurse Visits:

- When a student needs to visit the nurse, the teacher will call the Nurse's office.
- The nurse will let the teacher know when she is able to see the student. The student will be escorted to the nurse's office.
- If a child is presenting symptoms of the COVID virus, the student will immediately be moved to a designated COVID room and protocols will be engaged.

COVID Room:

- There will be a designated COVID Room that is separate from the Nurse's office.
- If the nurse believes that a student has symptoms consistent with the Coronavirus, the parent will be called, and the student will be attended to by a staff member in the COVID Room.
- The COVID Room will be equipped with furniture to provide comfort for the child until a caregiver can get to school to pick them up and go directly to the doctor's office.

Attendance and Grades:

- Attendance will be taken every day remotely through Google Meet and at school through Powerschool
- All assignments will be graded using our current report card.

Sanitizing and Disinfecting:

- As an accredited early childhood program, Fort Meadow ECC has always followed a strict cleaning regimen as set by the National Association of Educating Young Children.
- This year, cleaning efforts will be intensified in order to keep our facility disinfected.
- Staff will *increase their frequency* of cleaning surfaces and classroom materials, including toys.
- Surfaces such as doorknobs, sink handles, and railings will be disinfected regularly.

We will continue to follow these and updated guidelines diligently to stop the spread of Covid-19.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us. We thank you for your partnership during this time and will continue to update you as we receive new information.

Warm Regards,

Joanne Hentnick, Principal

Fort Meadow Early Childhood Center