

# Francis Scott Key Elementary School Handbook

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## Welcome to Francis Scott Key Elementary School

Dear Parents, Students and Friends:

It is a pleasure to welcome you to our school. At Key School, we are committed to ensuring that every student is offered the opportunity to grow and learn in a positive, safe, and caring environment. To achieve this objective, communication between the school and the home is essential. We know that each of you has a special contribution to make. It is our hope that you will work with us in the development and achievement of our goals.

You are invited to join the PTA and to work with us on activities planned by parents and teachers. We also encourage you to volunteer. Parent and community members who volunteer at Key help in all areas of the school, including classrooms, the library and the computer lab.

This handbook has been developed to place pertinent information at your fingertips. Feel free to call or send a note about any concerns or questions you may have. Conferences may be arranged by calling the office.

Sincerely,

David Landeryou  
Principal

## MISSION AND GOALS

Francis Scott Key Elementary School is a District of Columbia Public School that is widely known for its diverse student body, energetic and innovative teachers and engaged, highly supportive parents.

Our mission is to develop knowledgeable, well-rounded, self-respecting children who are excited about learning and ready to become contributing citizens of the District of Columbia and the world.

Key School has set four main goals to help us achieve our mission:

1. Educate each student to master critical learning skills.
2. Encourage each student to discover his or her own uniqueness while cultivating an appreciation of others.
3. Create a healthy physical environment that promotes each student's education and development.
4. Provide the leadership, planning and resources necessary to achieve our mission.

## SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Enrollment

General Enrollment: Students who live within the Key School boundary are guaranteed placement for grades kindergarten through five. Enrollment in pre-kindergarten begins on February 1st and is on a first come, first-served basis until enrollment reaches approximately 40 students.

Out of Boundary Enrollment: Out of Boundary request for enrollment may be made between October 1st and January 29th for the upcoming school year.

### Proof of Residency

(A) One (1) of the following suffices to establish DC residency:

- 1) A pay stub, with an issue date within the past forty-five days, that contains the name of the person enrolling the student, shows his/her current DC home address, and withholding of DC personal income tax for the current year; or
- 2) Current documentation of financial assistance from the District of Columbia; or
- 3) Supplemental Security Income Annual Benefits notification issued to the person enrolling the student within the past (12) months and indicating his/her current DC

home address; or

3) A tax information authorization waiver form certified by the DC Office of Tax and Revenue, with the name of the person enrolling the student, and evidence of payment of DC taxes for the previous tax year; or

4) Unexpired official military housing orders showing the student's name, the name of the person enrolling the student, and their current DC home address; or

5) Proof that the child is a ward of the District of Columbia, in the form of either (a) a letter from a placement agency or a social worker acting on behalf of the Child and Family Services Agency, or (b) a court order; or

6) Embassy letter, with an issue date after July 1 of the current year showing the name of the person enrolling the student, a statement indicating that the person enrolling the student and the student live on embassy property in the District of Columbia, and an official embassy seal.

(B) Or, in the absence of items listed above, two (2) of the items listed below will suffice as proof of residency in DC. The address and name on each of below must be the same.

1) Unexpired DC motor vehicle registration showing the name of the person enrolling the student and his or her current DC home address: or

2) An unexpired lease or rental agreement with receipts for payment or canceled checks for payment of rent for a period within (2) months immediately preceding consideration of residency, for the current DC address at which the student actually resides;

3) An unexpired DC motor vehicle operator's permit or official government issued non-driver identification in the name of the person enrolling the student showing his or her current DC home address: or

4) One utility bill (only gas, electric, and water bills are acceptable) with the name of the person enrolling the student, current DC home address, and with the receipt of payment or canceled check for payment of the bill. The receipt of payment or canceled check must be from a period within the (2) two months immediately preceding consideration of residency.

### Health Requirements

D.C. Law 6-66 "The Student Health Care Act of 1985", provides that each child in public and private schools in the District of Columbia must have a physical and dental examination as verified by a school health certificate and dental certificate before entry into pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, first, third, and fifth grades. An immunization form must also be completed before a student may attend school. The registered nurse assigned to Key School is responsible for verifying that all student health requirements are met.

Children should be kept home from school whenever they have a fever or any

communicable illness. Children should not return to school for at least 24 hours after their illness has cleared. Parents will be called to pick up their children who become ill at school.

**If there is reason to keep your child indoors during recess please write a note informing his/her teacher.**

### Textbooks, Library Books, & Other Equipment

Textbooks in all subject areas are provided by DCPS. They are issued for students' use free of charge. While a book or equipment is assigned to a student, he/she is responsible for that item. It must be replaced at cost to the parent if lost or damaged.

Students may borrow a book when they come to the library class each week. The borrowing period is for one week. A student is not permitted to borrow another book until the book is returned. If a book is not returned by the end of the semester, the student is responsible for either replacing the title or paying for the purchase of a new copy.

### Attendance

The school day begins at 8:45 am and ends at 3:15 p.m. Students who arrive after 8:50 am are marked as tardy. Students arriving late are to report to the security guard to receive a tardy pass. Absence and tardy reports become part of a student's permanent school record.

Parents are encouraged to call the school if their child must be absent. Absences are excused for illness, religious holiday observance, or parent or family emergency approved upon a written request. Other absences with no communication to the school will be noted as unexcused absences.

All students are to be collected by their respective adults by 3:30 p.m. unless they are enrolled in the Key School Aftercare program.

### Arrival and Dismissal

Students should not arrive at school before 8:40 a.m. unless they are enrolled in the Before School Program. Pre-Kindergarten students should be escorted to their classrooms in the morning and picked up from their classrooms at 3:15 p.m. All other classes should line up by class groups on the playground. Classes are escorted to and from the playground by their classroom teachers. On inclement weather days the students will line up in the gymnasium instead of on the playground.

Children who do not walk home should be picked up promptly at the 3:15 p.m. dismissal. There is no supervision for children after 3:15 p.m. Please do not tell your child to play on the playground and wait for you after school. All students not collected by 3:30 p.m. will be taken to the office.

Parking is available on both sides of Eskridge Terrace as well as Dana Place. Please use the main entrance when escorting your children into the building. During drop off or pick up times, you may enter the building through the main entrance on Eskridge Terrace, through either of the entrances adjacent to the blacktop, or through the side entrance. The exterior door at the top of the steps from Hurst Terrace is kept locked at all times. Do NOT use the entrance from the staff parking lot. After drop-off, please enter the school through the main entrance only – all other doors are kept locked during the school

day.

When dropping off or picking up your children by car, the following school traffic pattern should be used: drive north along Hurst Terrace, turn right and head east on Garfield Street, turn right and continue south on Eskridge Terrace, and then turn right and head west on Dana Place.

**Parents may not use the staff parking lot or driveway for any reason. This includes turning around, dropping off, or parking. This rule is imposed for the safety of our students and applies to every parent.**

### Safety

Safety of our students is a high priority. Students are supervised at all times and are not permitted to leave the school premises without being accompanied by a parent or a designated adult. All traffic regulations such as crossing at corners, obeying traffic lights and school patrols, and walking on sidewalks should be emphasized. Please cooperate by obeying city regulations which forbid parking in front of school buildings, driving cars and bringing dogs on school grounds.

**To assist us in maintaining the safety of our students, please send a note to the school, every time, informing us if we are to dismiss your child to someone different.**

Following is a list of Playground Rules. These rules are enforced by the school staff during school hours. Before and after school parents and caregivers are responsible for the supervision of the children in their care and for adherence to the playground rules while on school property.

- No climbing on the walls, fences, or basketball hoops**
- No playing on handrails**
- No playing on or climbing trees**
- No shoes off at any time on the playground**
- No glass on the playground**
- One person on a swing at a time and no jumping off the swing**
- No climbing on the tunnel of slides**
- No fighting, wrestling or other pushing**
- Always respect and listen to duty personnel**
- No leaving the playground without permission**

### School Evacuation Procedures

Following are the procedures for teachers and staff in the event of an emergency.

#### On-Site Evacuation/Fire Drill Procedure

1. Bring Emergency Backpack
2. Lead class to pre-determined assembly area
3. Take roll/headcount
4. Display GREEN card to indicate that all are accounted for; display RED card if there is a problem

#### Off-Site Evacuation

1. Bring Emergency Backpack

2. Lead class to pre-determined assembly area
3. Take roll/headcount
4. Display GREEN card to indicate that all are accounted for; display RED card if there is a problem
5. Proceed to Palisades Park (5100 block of Sherier Place)

#### Lockdown

1. Remain inside
2. Carry on with normal school operations
3. Dismissal from classrooms

#### Shelter-in-Place

1. Classroom—Danger in or near school: Go to nearest classroom. Listen for “Lock your doors” signal, stay in room and lock classroom door
2. Hallway—Outside danger such as tornado/storm: stay in hallways away from windows. Bring Emergency Backpack.
3. Gymnasium—Danger requiring movement to lowest level: Bring Emergency Backpack.
4. See Emergency Plan once in shelter-in-place location (section 15.0)

#### Reverse Evacuation

1. Teachers/staff outside signal using whistles
2. All enter building using nearest door
3. Students proceed to auditorium and line up by grade level; if inside stay in place until further instructions
4. Account for all students

#### DCPS Threat Levels:

Code RED: imminent danger

Code BLUE: bomb threat

Code GREEN: return to normal operations

#### Visiting in the School/Classroom

All visitors are required to sign in at the security desk and check with the office before visiting any classroom. Teachers are not able to hold conferences during teaching time. Special arrangements can be made through the office if you need to see your child's teacher.

All access doors to the building are locked once the school day begins. Please use the Main Entrance doors to enter the building during school hours. After 4:30 the only doors unlocked will be the doors closest to the playground/cafeteria area for use by the Key Extended Hours Program (KEHP).

#### Use of Outdoor Facilities

The playground is off limits to groups engaged in organized play from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm every weekday that school is in session. At all other times the playground is open to the public on a first-come first-serve basis.

### Dress Code

While Key School students do not wear uniforms, our regulations adhere to the DCPS dress code policy which states: "hair and dress that is sanitary, does not present any health hazard, and does not interfere with the learning process constitutes proper attire."

### School Lunch Program

A hot lunch is available for \$1.25. Milk alone is available for 35 cents. Each morning the cafeteria attendant comes to every classroom to take a count of how many students will be purchasing a hot lunch. Lunch may be purchased on a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis. The lunch menu is sent home with each student every month. Parents may also view the menu on the DCPS website at [www.k12.dc.us/dcps](http://www.k12.dc.us/dcps). Students who do not participate in the school lunch program may bring their lunch from home. Free and reduced priced breakfast and lunch are available for families that qualify based on income.

### Field Trips

Field trips are organized by teachers as a means of enhancing or culminating classroom instruction. A permission slip signed by a parent or guardian is required for a child to be taken on a field trip by the teacher. Parents are often invited to go on field trips to assist the teacher in supervision of students.

### Homework

Students usually have homework related to the work that has already been covered in class. The amount of homework assigned varies according to the age and grade of each child. Parents should ensure that students have a specific time and a quiet place to complete their homework since it is an important reinforcement.

### Student Discipline

Good citizenship is stressed and expected of all students. Each child has the right to work, learn and play in a cooperative school environment. Students also have the responsibility to respect others, adhere to school rules and to contribute to the maintenance of positive school atmosphere. If a child continually fails to follow school rules, he or she may be excluded from a class or activity as set forth in Chapter 25 (Student Discipline) of the Rules of the Board of Education. Parents are notified whenever a discipline problem occurs and a meeting with the parent(s), teacher and child is held to develop a plan to eliminate the problem. Additionally, in the beginning of the year a comprehensive list of rules will be sent home.

1st Offense: The student will have a time out and be removed from the group or activity.

2nd Offense: The teacher will call home or send a note home to be signed by the

- parent/guardian.
- 3rd Offense: The student will receive detention in the classroom; he or she will be assigned a writing assignment about their behavior.
- 4th Offense: There will be a conference with the teacher, the parents and the Principal.

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

### Instruction and Assessment

Key follows the standard DCPS curriculum for reading, writing, math, science, social studies, physical education and the arts. Expectations for student achievement are clearly defined and connected to specific content standards and objectives.

Teachers ensure that students are engaged in challenging learning activities that lead them to higher achievement. Parents are provided with detailed information about instruction, methods and materials at the school's Back to School Night early in each school year.

Each spring DCPS administers a standardized test, the DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DCCAS), to the students in grades 3 through 5. This test is used to verify mastery of the required grade level skills and objectives. Results are used to identify students who need additional instructional support. DCPS requires students who score in the Below Basic category to attend summer school. Students in that category may also be retained in the current grade.

### Progress Report and Conferences

Students are issued a progress report card four times during the school year at the end of each advisory. The report cards will provide the parents with information on how well their children are progressing instructionally as well as in citizenship.

The DCPS system sets aside three specific dates each year for parent-teacher conferences. If you wish to have a conference with your child's teacher or the principal at other times, please call the school's office to make an appointment.

### Resource Programs and Special Services

To enhance students' academic performance, a diverse group of content specialists provides resource enrichment programs to all school children and services to students who have special requirements:

#### Resource Enrichment Programs

Science

Library

Physical Education

Computer Education

Music

#### Special Services

English as a Second Language

Special Education  
Guidance and Counseling  
Hearing Impaired Program

### FILLMORE ARTS PROGRAM

Key School is one of six DC public elementary schools that participate in the Fillmore Arts Center program. As a student at Key School, your child will also be a student at Fillmore Arts Center. Once a week, each class – Kindergarten through Fifth Grade -- travels by school bus to the Fillmore campus located in nearby Georgetown to take two one-hour courses in the arts, returning to the Key campus afterwards.

Fillmore offers multi-disciplinary curricula in the visual and performing arts: instead of one on-campus art or music teacher at Key, the Fillmore program provides the children with courses in dance, drama, ceramics, calligraphy, music, instruments, sculpture, painting, graphic arts, and more. In addition, because Fillmore is itself a DC public school, DCPS matches Key School's funding of Fillmore, dollar for dollar. DCPS also provides FREE busing for students and teachers to travel between the Fillmore campus and Key. Additionally, Fillmore pays for Key School to have a physical education teacher, on the Key campus. By pooling its arts budget dollars with those of five other elementary schools in this fashion, Key School is able to provide through the Fillmore program a more thorough and balanced arts education for its students, effectively more than doubling the arts budget and resources that Key could provide to the children on its own.

As a DC public school, Fillmore has its own PTA ("Friends of Fillmore"), of which you are invited and encouraged to be an active member, just as you would be involved with Key School's PTA. For more information about Fillmore's facilities, teachers, and programs (including after-school enrichment classes and summer camp), please visit its website at [www.fillmoreartscenter.org](http://www.fillmoreartscenter.org).

### PARENT/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

#### Parent-Teacher Association

The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is a non-profit service organization devoted to the improvement and enhancement of Key School. All Key School parents are welcome to participate in the activities of the PTA and encouraged to bring their talents and ideas to the PTA. Dues comprise a critical part of the PTA budget. The *suggested* dues contribution is \$100 per family plus \$75 per child enrolled. The PTA requires, however, a *minimum* dues contribution of \$5 to be a voting member.

The PTA works actively to keep all parents informed of school-related issues and to help parents raise their concerns to school staff. Through membership dues, an annual spring auction and other fundraising activities the PTA raises funds for a wide range of purposes including the purchase of classroom supplies, improvements to school building and grounds, and payment of salaries for supplemental staff. It also organizes community-building extracurricular events for families and students such as picnics, a harvest festival, science fair, World Family Day and book fair.

Key School PTA officers are elected for two-year terms. The PTA Executive Board meetings, which are open to all parents, are held monthly; the PTA general meetings are held four times a year to give all parents a chance to participate in decision-making.

Parents are encouraged to take advantage of Key's many volunteer opportunities, including helping in classrooms and the library. Information regarding the numerous PTA committees and volunteer opportunities is distributed before the school year starts and continuously throughout the year. Any parent who has the time and inclination can easily find a way to participate.

#### Local School Restructuring Team

Parents, teachers, support staff and the community are represented through the Local School Restructuring Team (LSRT). The Team is elected for two-year terms and its members agree on and provide recommendations and advice on resource allocation, administrative matters and school programs. Parents receive information, give advice and support to the school through the PTA.

#### World Family Committee

Key has a proud tradition of an internationally diverse student body. Accordingly, Key parents formed the World Family Committee to utilize the unique international resources of our multicultural community and to organize exciting educational activities. Some of the highlights are: the monthly "Passport Tuesday", which spotlights individual countries, and the end-of-year "World Family Day" during which students "travel" the world without leaving the Key campus. The exposure to different cultures helps the students to enhance their global awareness.

#### Key Extended Hours Program

KEHP offers before and after school care for students enrolled at Key. The program is coordinated by Ms. Ann Conway. Before care is from 7:45 am to 8:40 am and after care is from 3:15 pm to 6:00 pm. There is a nominal fee for this program with financial assistance available on a sliding scale basis. For information please contact Ms. Conway at 202-282-3800 or [fskehp@yahoo.com](mailto:fskehp@yahoo.com). Space is limited.

#### PTA After-School Enrichment Program

Each winter, the PTA sponsors an After-School Enrichment Program to enhance and enrich the school curriculum. Students participate in a wide range of activities, and classes are taught by Key School teachers. In past years, programs have included: sports training, foreign language, Hawaiian dance, literature with art, computer skills, and games.

#### Communication

Information for parents is sent home regularly in students' backpacks. Also, Key sends home a *Thursday Report* from the principal and teachers. Additionally, the PTA sends home *Next Week at Key* to remind parents of upcoming events. This notice is sent by email to all parents and by flyer only to parents who request it. Once a month, the PTA publishes *Keynotes*, a newsletter with more detailed information on school events. The PTA has also set up a website at [www.keyschooldc.org](http://www.keyschooldc.org) where most information about the PTA and the school's activities are posted. Please look for and read this information.

Good communication keeps the school running smoothly.

### DCPS Website

A good source of information for parents is the DCPS website. DCPS maintains an official website containing information on policies, curriculum, personnel and programs. Weather related announcements and the school lunch menu are also available. The web address is: [www.k12.dc.us/dcps](http://www.k12.dc.us/dcps).