



# **Forest Avenue School**

## Parent Information Guide

# Forest Avenue School

118 Forest Avenue  
Verona, NJ 07044

School Phone Number..... (973) 571-6754  
Attendance Line.....Press 2  
Main Office.....Press 3  
School Nurse.....Press 4  
Child Study Team Office.....Press 5  
Fax..... (973) 571-6770

Dear Parent,

The purpose of this guide is to share information about the offerings, procedures and organization of Forest Avenue School. In doing so, we hope that you will better understand our school and thereby be able to use our services more effectively.

No written communication can answer all questions, so we invite you to contact our school office if you have any questions. We look forward to sharing in a partnership for your child's education.

Sincerely,

The Forest Avenue School Staff

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# VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Dedicated to Developing Healthy Habits of Mind, Body and Heart*

## **Verona Public Schools Mission Statement:**

In partnership with a supportive community, we inspire our students to be creative, critical thinkers and compassionate global citizens through dynamic teaching, meaningful curricula, and enriching experiences.

## **Verona Schools Website**

[www.veronaschools.org](http://www.veronaschools.org)

**Board of Education**

121 Fairview Avenue  
Verona, NJ 07044

Superintendent’s Office/Business Office..... (973) 571-2029  
Fax.....  
(973) 571-6779

The Verona Board of Education normally holds its regular public meetings on the second and last Tuesday of each month at 7:00PM in the Verona High School Learning Commons. The Board of Education is an elected, five-member board of Verona citizens.

**School Hours**

**Grades K-4**

*Full Day*.....8:30 a.m. – 2:45 pm

*Early Dismissal/Half Day*.....8:30 a.m. - 12:30 pm (no lunch is served)

Students should **not** report to school before 8:15 am. Supervision is not provided before this time.

*Delayed Opening*.....10:00 a.m. - 2:45 pm

Students should **not** report to school before 9:45 am. Supervision is not provided before this time.

**Extended Care Program**

Extended care services are provided by the Montclair YMCA for the students until 6:00 p.m. Please contact the Montclair YMCA (973-744-3400) or check their website (<https://www.montclairymca.org>) for additional information and registration.

**District Calendar**

The district calendar is available online on the Verona Public Schools’ website ([www.veronaschools.org](http://www.veronaschools.org)). Any changes made to the calendar during the course of the school year will be reflected on that calendar.

**Forest Avenue School Calendar**

Forest Avenue School maintains a detailed calendar on the school website. All events, vacations, trips, etc. are included.

**Forest Avenue School SCA Family Phone Book and Program/Calendar Booklet**

Early in the school year, all families will receive access to this booklet. This booklet includes the school staff directory, school and SCA calendar of events as well as a list of SCA committees, committee membership and contact information.

## **Student Drop-Off / Pick-Up Procedures**

The following procedures are in place for the orderly and safe drop-off/pick-up of the students of Forest Avenue School. **It is very important that each family review and agree to adhere to these procedures which will ensure the safety of the children.**

### *DROP-OFF*

The school building will open daily at 8:15 AM to receive students. Students will enter the building and proceed directly to their classrooms. All students should arrive by the school start time of 8:30 AM. Kindergarten and first grade children should enter through the front doors. Second, third and fourth grade students should enter through the back doors off of the blacktop. The yellow curb area in front of the school is for drop off only in the morning. This area is a no parking/no standing zone. You should pull up to the curb, drop your child(ren) off and pull away. Do not park at the yellow curb and walk your child(ren) up the driveway. Parents who choose to walk their child(ren) up the driveway should park in a legal location before walking them up.

### *PICK-UP*

School dismissal for all students will be 2:45 p.m. Dismissal procedures will be as follows:

- K will dismiss from the right side of the school. Parents can stand along the "up driveway" to meet their child(ren).
- 1st grade will dismiss out the front door. Parents can stand along the front driveway.
- 3rd grade will dismiss out the side door on the left side of the school. Parents can stand along the "down driveway".
- 2nd and 4th graders will dismiss to the blacktop in the back of the school.

The yellow curb area in the front of the school in the afternoon is a no parking/no standing zone. **No cars should be in the front of the school at dismissal time.** Orange cones will be placed along the curb in the street to make sure that the area stays clear of vehicles.

Children and parents must use the crosswalks to cross Forest Avenue during arrival and dismissal. Crossing guards are located at both Morningside Road and Marion Road for the safety of the children. No one should cross in the middle of the street.

**Under no circumstances should anyone be driving up the driveway to drop off or pick up a child. Please note that dogs are not permitted on school property during drop-off in the morning or at dismissal in the afternoon.**

It is also important to remind anyone who may be dropping off or picking up your child(ren) of these policies.

## **School Security**

All visitors to the Verona Public Schools are required to have their driver license scanned and checked against the sex offender database in order to enter the buildings. A visitor can enter the premises of the school only if he/she is cleared by the system. Anyone coming to the buildings without ID will be denied entry. Once you are cleared a photo will be taken and a badge with the photo will be printed. Visitor badges must be worn at all times.

### **Monthly School Drills**

Each month the school is required to hold one fire drill and one emergency drill. On the day that a drill occurs, parents will receive an email informing them that a drill was held.

### **Emergency Closing**

If it becomes necessary to close, delay the opening or shorten the day of the Verona Public Schools because of extreme weather or other emergency conditions, parents will be notified by Parentsquare, the district communications system via phone, text message and email. Messages will also be posted on the district website.

### **Annual Forms**

Each summer prior to the start of school, parents will be requested to complete the Verona Public Schools Family Contact Form and other pertinent forms online through the Genesis Parent Portal. These forms must be completed in order to receive classroom teacher assignments at the end of August.

### **Code of Conduct**

The elementary schools focus on academic achievement but recognize the importance of growth and development of the whole student as part of the larger community. Student actions contribute to the school's environment and go a long way in creating a positive atmosphere for learning and socializing. Therefore, the Verona elementary schools have established a Code of Conduct for all students to promote appropriate behavior as well as support for each other. The document posted on the Forest Avenue School page on the district website ([www.veronaschools.org](http://www.veronaschools.org)) expresses our values through behavioral expectations and responsibilities. Through the combined efforts of students, staff, parents and administration, it is our goal to prepare students to be contributing and supportive members of the school and community.

### **Instructional Program**

The Verona School District has established a philosophy of education, a set of goals, a detailed elementary curriculum and a scope and sequence which is published and available for review on the district website within the "Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment" tab menu under the "District Overview" link.

The Board of Education has final approval in determining curriculum. The professional staff regularly evaluates existing curriculum and makes recommendations to the Board on revisions and improvements reflecting current trends in education and the instructional needs of Verona students.

### **Kindergarten Registration/Program**

A child must be 5 years old on or before October 1<sup>st</sup> for admission to kindergarten. January is designated for kindergarten registration. Specific dates are published in the local newspaper and announcements are distributed through the schools. Parents are requested to complete and return an enrollment form and present the child's birth certificate and proof of residency during the month of January.

A kindergarten orientation for parents will be held after registration. At this meeting, an overview of the school with an emphasis on the kindergarten program will be presented.

The SCA will hold workshops for incoming kindergartners to help with the acclimation of the students to their new school. Scheduling of these workshops will be determined.

The kindergarten program reflects a balance between formal and informal activity. The daily schedule allows the child to participate in individual, small group and total class activities. The program involves self-directed activity, group discussion and teacher directed activities in language arts, reading readiness, mathematics readiness, social studies, science, artistic expression, environmental and affective education. Special subject instruction in the areas of music, art, physical education, health and safety and library are provided by special teachers to all kindergarten pupils.

### **Grades 1-4 Instructional Program**

The elementary curriculum includes instruction in the areas of listening, reading, speaking, writing, spelling, handwriting, and in the disciplines of mathematics, social studies and science. There are uniform standards and requirements for curriculum and materials at each grade level. All curricula meet the requirements of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Special subject instruction in the areas of vocal music, art, physical education, health and safety, library and Mandarin, are provided to all students by subject matter specialists. Fourth grade students who are interested may choose to participate in instrumental music.

### **Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation**

Elementary students in Verona are taught the Conflict Resolution approach to assist with problem solving any type of controversy or disagreement. Using the New Jersey State Bar Foundation (NJSBF) materials as a starting point, students apply the Win-Win Guidelines when they face any type of opposition. Students are taught that there are various forms of conflict and the necessary tools needed to resolve them. They are also taught how to solve a problem. In order to reach resolution, we work with students to improve their communication skills. Home-school connections are assigned throughout the school year. Home-school connections require students to review and apply various conflict resolution skills at home. Each classroom including specialists, related services and special education have set up a Peace Place where students can meet to discuss a conflict. The Win-Win guidelines help our students deal with conflicts in such a way that all disputants feel comfortable with the outcome. Various tools such as cooling off techniques, breathing for calmness tips, alternatives to hitting, I-Message scripts and feelings vocabulary are available to all students as resources.

Each elementary school offers a Peer Mediation program. Research has proven that peer mediation is an effective tool that can be used by elementary students to help resolve conflicts. It empowers students to resolve their disputes creatively and cooperatively, while infusing critical thinking skills. Students in grades 3 and 4 may apply to be a trained peer mediator. Peer mediators are required to attend training sessions prior to taking their post. The peer mediator serves as a “third party” that assists the disputants with problem solving. Brainstorming as many possible solutions to a problem is key to the peer mediation process. Our peer mediators work in pairs to assist the disputants as they discuss and solve their problem with the goal of



reaching a solution that works for both parties. Peer mediators reference the Win-Win Guidelines while working with disputants. The role of the peer mediator is one of a facilitator encouraging disputants to discuss the problem in a non-judgmental manner while applying active listening skills. Conflict resolution and peer mediation have proven to reduce disputes. Verona elementary students are taught a specific skill set when approaching a disagreement. It also fosters a culture where students develop and apply real life skills that evolve throughout their development. Students recognize that a course of action is possible to solve a conflict. Conflict resolution and peer mediation fosters cooperation where students work together for a common purpose. We take pride in training our students to be peacemakers in our beloved Verona community.

### **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

Social and emotional learning (SEL) helps students learn and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals. Lessons focus on NJDOE SEL competencies which include social awareness, self management, self-awareness, responsible decision making and relationship skills. Mindfulness is incorporated into lessons to develop awareness of thoughts and emotions, improve attention span, and learn the signals our body gives us when we need to self regulate. Lessons run on a rotating schedule from September through January and are provided to students by our elementary social worker.

### **Field Trips**

Field Trips are scheduled to enrich and extend the school's curriculum. In September all parents/guardians will fill out a local field trip permission slip online. This permission applies to visits to in-town sites of interest by walking or school bus. Parents are informed of other field trips by a notice. Transportation is provided by the school. All school buses are fitted with seat belts. A parent's signature on a trip permission slip is required before the child is allowed to board the bus. At times, an admission charge is required for an activity.

### **Report Cards/Conferences**

The school year is divided into trimesters. In order that home and school may work more effectively for the education and training of children, a parent/teacher conference is scheduled right after the end of the first trimester. Report cards are issued three times a year and parents can access a child's report card through the online Parent Portal.

The dates of the fall parent/teacher conferences are found on the district calendar. Prior to the fall conference dates, parents will receive notification from the school and correspondence from the classroom teachers regarding scheduling the meeting during a mutually convenient time.

### **Attendance Regulations**

Children are expected to be in school every day for all sessions unless ill or excused for State approved religious holidays. A youngster who has any indications of fever, chills, sore throat, etc. should not be sent to school since such symptoms may indicate the beginning of a contagious illness, and it would be neither fair to the child who is ill nor to the children with whom he/she has contact.

Parents are required to contact the school by phone at 973-571-6754 ext 2 before 8:30 a.m. to report the absence of their child from school. If a child is absent and the parent has not called the school, a call to the home will be made by the school office.

Each year, the Verona Public Schools publishes a school calendar indicating school vacations, testing and other important dates. This calendar is available on the district website. Parents are requested to schedule family vacations during district vacations. If students are taken out while school is in-session, please do not ask teachers to provide missed work in advance of the absence. Work will be made up upon return to school.

### **Homework**

Homework is assigned to extend and reinforce the learning experience of school. It provides children practice in the mastery of skills and experience in data-gathering. Homework helps to develop independent work skills and recognizes the role of the parent to help a child carry out assigned responsibilities. Homework is clearly assigned and carefully evaluated. The amount of homework is based on students' needs and takes into account other activities which make a legitimate claim on students' time.

### **Cafeteria Facilities**

Students may bring in their own lunch and beverage. The SCA offers special lunches throughout the year at a minimum cost on Mondays. The district food service provider offers food options that may be pre purchased Tuesdays through Fridays. Students are under supervision of lunchroom aides during lunch/recess. Students eat for 20 minutes and have recess for 20 minutes. Every effort is made to have outside recess, weather permitting. Please be sure to send your child to school with appropriate clothing for outside play.

### **Home Instruction**

Home instruction is available, with the approval of the Board of Education, to any child who is absent from school a minimum of two continuous weeks due to illness subject to the receipt of a doctor's note indicating the diagnosis, the length of time out and that the child is well enough to receive instruction. A certified teacher will be sent to the student's home for up to five hours per week to continue the educational program the pupil was receiving at school. The child may return to school once the doctor has certified that the student is ready to return.

### **Verona Summer Enrichment Academy (V~SEA)**

V~SEA is a unique learning opportunity for students who are currently enrolled in grades pre-k through middle school. The purpose of the Verona Summer Enrichment Academy is to expand the students' knowledge base, build on their interest and encourage critical and creative thinking. Regardless of students' academic competencies, each child will be challenged through the curricular experience with stimulating and motivating activities. Information, along with a list of course offerings, is emailed home through the schools and is available on the district website found at [www.veronaschools.org](http://www.veronaschools.org).

## **Communications/Forest School SCA**

The School Community Association (SCA) publishes a weekly newsletter to provide parents with important information about current school activities. The newsletter is emailed to each family every Wednesday. The SCA also maintains a Facebook page in which they share activities, events and information related to the school. Only school families are permitted access to this page.

The SCA offers opportunities for effective cooperation of teachers and parents to attain the best possible education and training for our children. It is every parent's privilege and duty to become a member of the SCA and participate in its activities whenever possible. The parent, child and the school community will benefit.

## **Pupil Insurance**

Pupil accident insurance is offered to all parents at the beginning of the school year and is optional but encouraged.

## **Class Pictures**

Individual pupil photographs and class pictures are taken within the first two months of the school year. These are offered for sale to parents through the SCA.

## **Cultural Arts**

The SCA provides our school with numerous assembly programs. Science, dance, theater, history, music, character education and many other subjects are explored through these experiences.

## **Intervention and Referral Services Committee (I&RS)**

The Intervention and Referral Services Committee (I&RS) is a state-mandated, building-based, multidisciplinary, problem-solving team that addresses adult concerns regarding a student's learning, behavior and/or health needs. The committee meets monthly and provides direct assistance and support to staff members and/or parents who have concerns about a student, and the final outcome of interventions ought to result in student improvement. The I&RS committee can address concerns regarding general education and special education students. However, services for students identified as eligible for speech and language or special education services can only be considered in specific circumstances and must be coordinated with the student's IEP team case manager.

## **Child Study Team**

The Child Study Team consists of four members: a social worker, a psychologist, a learning disabilities teacher-consultant and a speech/language therapist. The primary role of the team is to evaluate children who may have a learning and/or an emotional difficulty and to secure supportive services when necessary. When it has been determined that a child needs the support of special services, the Child Study Team works closely with parents and staff in developing individualized programs. The support could take the form of a special class placement or Resource Center instructor while the child attends a regular class. The progress of each child is monitored regularly by the Child Study Team and programs are reviewed and updated annually. A re-evaluation is conducted every three years or earlier if warranted.

Forest Avenue School has an assigned learning disabilities teacher-consultant who maintains an office in the building. Other members of the Child-Study Team have their offices at the Special Services Department (973) 571-2029 ext. 7512.

### **Special Education Classes**

Occasionally the Child Study Team, in cooperation with the child's parents, determines that a placement in a special education class is the best setting for a child's education. Much consideration is given to the particular program and classroom location. If an appropriate special education classroom is not found within the Verona school district, an outside placement is sought. Parents are involved at each step of this decision making process.

Supplemental and/or replacement instruction is a form of academic assistance designed to reinforce basic skills of children classified by the Child Study Team. The curriculum is developed to coordinate closely with the subject matter being presented in the regular classroom. The Resource Center instructor works with individuals and/or small groups for supplemental instruction several periods each week, providing instruction appropriate to the children's needs. Full replacement daily instruction in math and/or English Language Arts may be provided for students who require this level of support. The Resource Center teacher maintains close contact with the team members, the classroom teacher and parents in providing an individualized program for each student.

### **Speech Therapy**

Therapy in the area of speech and language is offered to children who are experiencing difficulty in the articulation of sounds and/or in the reception or expression of language. The speech and language specialist will assess students to determine if they are eligible for services. The therapist provides instruction, individually or in small groups, up to several times a week depending on the needs of the students.

### **Verona Preschool Program**

The Verona Preschool Program has been in existence for over 30 years. Originally designed as a nursery school experience for children ages 3-5 with special needs, the program currently accepts both general education and special education students. Aligned with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards and incorporating the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, the preschool program is designed to meet the developmental needs of the individual child. The children are encouraged to explore materials, develop skills and interact in a social setting. The daily routine includes small/large group experiences, circle time, play time, snack, motor activities and language activities.

Located at the Laning Avenue School, the Verona Preschool Program is in operation five days per week and follows the Verona Public Schools calendar. Morning and afternoon classes are available. Morning classes meet from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and afternoon classes meet from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monthly meetings focusing on a variety of topics related to the preschool child are available to all parents.

General education enrollment is on a fee basis, limited to the number of available spaces and determined annually by lottery. Students who meet special education eligibility requirements may attend free of charge and are enrolled on their birthday. Children accepted into the three-year-old program may remain for the

four-year-old program. Children turning three years of age or four years of age by September 30th are eligible for the lottery that is held each year in February. Pre-School Office - 973-571-202- ext. 7520.

### **State and District Testing Programs**

In the fall, the New Jersey Start Strong test is administered to fourth grade students. In the spring of each school year, the third and fourth grade student population participates in the NJSLA test (New Jersey Student Learning Assessments).

In addition, students in Grades 1-4 will participate in the MAP® Growth™ test in the fall, winter and spring. These tests and scores help teachers check student performance by measuring achievement and growth. Teachers use results to tailor classroom lessons and set goals for students.

### **Health Services**

Health services are provided by registered nurses under the guidance of the school physician. The role of the school nurses is to support the process of education and the district's goal of maximal student success, achievement, and well being through the promotion and maintenance of optimal student health. This mission is accomplished through direct care, education, referrals, health counseling, and medical case management as needed to support the students.

**Communicable disease** prevention needs everyone's cooperation. The best way to control a disease from spreading throughout the school is to keep your child home when they feel ill. If your child is absent, we request that you report the absence and inform us of any communicable disease. Knowledge of the incidence of disease can help us in detection and prevention.

**Health Screenings-** The school nurse will screen the students on a yearly basis as required by the NJ Department of Education. The screenings include height, weight, blood pressure, vision and hearing. Parents/guardians will be notified if any abnormalities are detected and the student should be followed up by their healthcare provider.

It is recommended that all children have an ophthalmological exam prior to or upon entering school. This will ensure that your child does not have any visual problems that might hinder their academic performance.

**Immunization records:** A medical certificate of immunizations is required by the state of New Jersey and must be submitted before admission to school. Your pediatrician will have a record of these immunizations. Those excused for medical or religious reasons must submit an exemption form upon admission to school. Mantoux testing may be required in certain instances as directed by the state.

**Maintaining medical records:** In order to keep pupils' records up to date, it is incumbent upon parents to supply new medical information to the school as it occurs.

**Physical examinations** are mandated by the state for all children upon entering kindergarten and when transferring into the Verona Public Schools. This examination must be done no more than 365 days prior to entry.

**First aid services** will be administered by a nurse, teacher, principal or administrative assistant. In case of an accident or sudden illness, parents will be notified. Contact information is required to be inputted into the student information system (Genesis) for parents, guardians and emergency contacts.

Please carefully consider the people you use for emergency contacts if the school is unable to reach you. The emergency contacts need to be available during the school day and be willing to pick up and care for the ill or injured child. Please notify the office immediately if you need assistance to change the emergency contact information.

#### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION GUIDELINES:**

The school will not provide students with any medication unless within district policy guidelines below:

-Children who are receiving medication for a temporary illness should be kept at home and their medication given at home until the child has recovered. No medication can be provided by the school and no medication for temporary illness is to be sent to school.

-When a student requires a prescribed or an over the counter medication to be given during school hours for an extended period of time; an authorization must be sent by the parent empowering the school nurse to administer medication. Medication orders are to be provided to the nurse from the student's healthcare provider detailing the diagnosis or type of illness involved, the name of the drug, dosage, time of administration and side effects. Medication forms can be accessed on the district website. Medication should be brought to the nurse in the original container, appropriately labeled by the pharmacy. Medication must be hand delivered by the parent to the school. The student should not deliver the medication to the nurse's office.

-Herbal remedies and nutritional supplements are not to be administered in school.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR ILLNESSES AND INJURIES**

**FEVER:** A fever of 100 degrees F (37.7 degrees C) or more signals an illness that is probably going to make a student uncomfortable and unable to function well in class. Your child should stay home until he/she is feeling better, and fever free without the use of fever-reducing medication (Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen) for 24 hours.

**INFECTIOUS DISEASE:** Diseases such as impetigo, mononucleosis and strep throat require a doctor's examination and prescription for medication. Contacting the doctor and using the medication as directed for the full recommended length of time are necessary. Once the medication has been started (at least 3 doses or 24 hours from the first dose) and the child is feeling well, he/she may return to school.

**INJURIES:** If a student has an injury that causes continuous discomfort, the student should not attend school until a doctor checks the condition, or it improves. Injuries that interfere with class participation need medical evaluation. If participation in physical education classes is not recommended, a note from the student's health care provider is required. Any pain medication (including over-the-counter) that is required **MUST** be brought in by a parent/guardian and accompanied by orders from the physician. No student, regardless of age or grade, may carry or self-administer any pain medication.

**ORTHOPEDIC INJURIES:** In the event of any orthopedic injury in which your child requires crutches or other orthopedic devices documentation from your health care provider is needed allowing entry back into school. Restrictions to activities should have a beginning and end date.

**RASHES:** Rashes and patches of broken, itchy skin need to be examined by a doctor if they appear to be spreading or not improving. We may require that a rash be covered while your child is in school.

**STITCHES/STAPLES:** Students who return to school with stitches should provide a written note from the doctor indicating that the child may return to school and includes any restrictions on physical activity.

**SURGICAL PROCEDURES:** Any student who returns to school after a surgical procedure requires a note from their health care provider stating that the student may return to school and list any restrictions on activity.

**VOMITING, DIARRHEA OR SEVERE NAUSEA:** These are symptoms that require a student to remain at home until a normal diet is tolerated the night before and the morning of school. Students should be free of vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.

### **Nutrition Procedures/Food in School**

#### *Class Parties*

Class parties held over the course of the school year are Halloween, holiday party just prior to the December break and Valentine's Day. Students will be able to enjoy a treat at these parties, but it will be a treat which their parents send in with them from home. Parties will center on games, crafts, or activities rather than food, although students will enjoy the snack provided by their parents.

#### *Birthday Celebrations*

A student's birthday may be recognized in some way by his/her classroom teacher. In keeping with our food procedures, food may not be sent in from home in celebration of the day.

#### *Nut Allergies*

Tables have been designated as "nut tables" in our cafeteria. If a child brings food that contains nuts, they must be seated at one of these tables during lunch.

**3/21/23**