

Fort Garrison Elementary School

3310 Woodvalley Drive
Baltimore, Maryland 21208

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

The Fort Garrison Elementary School doors open for children at 8:50 a.m. each morning. Supervision of students is not provided before this time. Students arriving to school before 8:50 a.m. must wait outside without adult supervision. Please have your children arrive at school no earlier than 8:50 a.m. If you need daycare coverage for your children before school, you may consider enrolling them in Play Keepers, the private daycare facility housed in the school cafeteria. For further information regarding Play Keepers, please call 410-484-6220.

Carpool Riders

Last summer, improvements were made to the carpool loop, adding a drop off area at the top of the loop near the baseball backstop. An additional lane was added beside the existing parking lot to provide parents with an exit lane. The improvements should improve the carpool drop-off and pick-up efficiency and safety. Parents driving their children to school may drop them off each morning on the left side of the school building, at the top of the carpool loop. Adult supervision is provided between 8:50 and 9:10 a.m. Drivers should not arrive before 8:50 a.m., as their cars will block parking spaces used by staff members. After entering the parking lot, drivers should pull up to the curb outside of the fifth grade wing on the left side of the school building and drop the children off by the sidewalk in front of the baseball backstop. Children should exit the car on the passenger side to avoid stepping out into traffic. Drivers are asked to pull forward to allow three cars to access the sidewalk, as there may be a line of cars waiting to drop off children. Drivers may not make left hand turns to enter the carpool parking lot, as this causes dangerous traffic problems on Woodvalley Drive. Drivers coming from Stevenson Road will need to drive past the carpool area, turn their cars around, and join the carpool line at the end. Children should be ready to exit their cars when the drivers pull up to the curb, after final good-bye hugs, of course. It is important that drivers follow these guidelines and drive in a slow, safe, and considerate manner.

Parents who drive their children to school are encouraged to use the carpool loop, not drop their children off at the sidewalk near the entrance to the bus loop. This area is a busy traffic area close to the street, and is it dangerous for cars to stop near or to block the entrance to the bus loop. Children walking to the front door from the street often walk too close to the curb despite being reminded to stay to the right of the yellow caution line.

Bus Riders

The driveway in the front of the building is reserved for use by buses only. Children arriving in cars may not be dropped off in the bus loop until after all buses have arrived. The time varies according to the weather and traffic congestion. Students transported to school on buses usually begin arriving at approximately 8:50 a.m. The buses drop off students in front of the school building, near the front door. Staff members carefully monitor the arrival of students transported by buses.

Walkers

Parents who walk their children to school are asked to leave their children in front of the school each morning. Allowing children to walk to class independently, with the help of our safeties and staff, will enhance the children's confidence and independence. This independent arrival also enables teachers to focus their attention on your children as soon as they arrive at the classroom doors.

Instructional Day

The instructional day at Fort Garrison Elementary School begins when the children arrive in their classrooms, no later than 9:10 a.m. A homeroom period has been planned to provide for an instructional period at the beginning of every school day. Teachers will be preparing the children for a successful school day as soon as they enter their classrooms. Children arriving in their classrooms after 9:10 a.m. will be marked tardy. Students arriving late to class on a consistent basis will be unable to fully benefit from this important transitional period.

Kindergarten

For the first several weeks of school, the kindergarten teachers will meet their classes in the gym and walk them to the classrooms. Once the kindergarten children become familiar with the school, they will be able to walk to their classrooms after 8:55.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Carpool Riders

The instructional day at Fort Garrison Elementary School ends at approximately 3:30 p.m., following afternoon announcements. Car riders will be dismissed immediately following afternoon announcements. These students will leave their classrooms and walk down the halls to the side door near the fifth grade classrooms. They will exit through these doors to reach the carpool loop. Safeties and staff members will monitor their movement through the halls. A staff member will accompany the kindergarten students to the carpool line to ensure their safety. Staff members carefully supervise the car rider pick-up area at all times. Car riders will meet their rides at the carpool loop on the side of the school, in front of the baseball backstop. Pick-up procedures are similar to those explained above for morning drop-off. To expedite carpool dismissal, drivers are requested to create a small sign for the windshield listing the names of the riders. A paper plate works well for this purpose. As each driver enters the parking lot on the left side of the school building, a staff member uses a megaphone to announce the list of riders. Cars continue through the line and pull up in by the sidewalk. Students will wait on the sidewalk until their cars arrive and will enter the cars only after they come to a complete stop. Drivers are asked to arrange for children to enter their cars on the passenger side. This avoids the need for children to walk into traffic. Once again, drivers are reminded to drive in a slow, cautious manner while on school grounds. Parents collecting their children in the carpool line may not leave their cars while waiting in line. Students may not leave the carpool waiting area to meet drivers who have parked cars in parking spaces in the parking lot or on the street. Any changes in drivers must be communicated to the school in writing. The goal is to have all carpoolers safely loaded in their cars and on their way within 5 to 7 minutes. Drivers may not make left hand turns to enter the carpool parking lot as this causes dangerous traffic problems on Woodvalley drive. Please enter the carpool line at the end of the line and be considerate of others waiting in the line.

Bus Riders

Students traveling home on buses will be called by buses to the multi-purpose room beginning at 3:35 p.m. They will line up according to their buses and be escorted outside and onto the buses by staff members. A staff member will accompany kindergarten children to this area to ensure their safe arrival in the bus lines. The Department of Transportation will not permit children to ride on buses to which they are not assigned on a daily basis. If there is a change in dismissal plans and parents need to pull their children out of bus lines to take them home, it is critical that the parents sign their children out in the office.

Walkers

Walkers are students who are walking home or students whose parents will park their cars to meet their children at the school door. These students will be dismissed at 3:35 p.m. from the doors leading outside from the end of the third grade hall. Parents must meet their children outside to avoid any interruptions in the instructional day. A staff member will accompany kindergarten children to this area to ensure their safe arrival at the door. Parents are not permitted to greet their children in the front lobby after school. The safe and orderly dismissal of the children is a priority at our school.

Early Dismissal

Parents arriving before 3:30 p.m. to have their children dismissed early will need to report to the office, request that their children be pulled from class, and sign their children out in the *Early Dismissal* log book housed in the school office. Parents are requested to notify the school or teacher in written form if their children need to be dismissed before 3:30 p.m. Frequent classroom interruptions interfere with the children's end-of-the-day transition activities.

Important

Parents are asked to assist with dismissal procedures by making certain that children are clear about dismissal plans before they enter school each morning. Last minute changes in plans are often confusing to children. All changes in transportation plans must be put in writing and sent to the children's teachers. Adjustments in transportation will not be made without written approval from parents. End of the day phone calls to the office to change your children's dismissal plans create many problems for the school. These calls should be limited to emergencies only. When numerous calls are made to the office near the end of the school day, it is difficult for the office to honor these requests. Parents will be asked to fax a signed note or a copy of the *Dismissal Change Form* (see form at the end of this document) if the change is made at the end of the school day. All changes need to be completed by 3:20 in order for the office staff to reach the children affected by the changes before the end of the school day. A *Dismissal Change Form* is provided at the bottom of this packet. It is recommended that parents copy this form and send it to school with their children whenever there is a change in dismissal plans. Additional copies are available in the

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school office. Again, to ensure that your children arrive home safely, take time to carefully plan dismissal arrangements and communicate them clearly to your children and to the school.

Arrival and dismissal times at Fort Garrison are busy times. We are asking your help to ensure that all of our students arrive safely at school in the morning and at home in the afternoon. The school parking lots and roads in the surrounding neighborhood were not designed to accommodate a large number of cars. It is strongly recommended that bus riders ride home on their assigned buses and children riding home in cars use the carpool line. Parents are asked to avoid calling the school between 3:20 and 3:40 p.m. as the office staff is focused on dismissal. Once again, your assistance and cooperation is greatly appreciated as we work together to ensure the safety of the Fort Garrison Elementary School community.

Please review these arrival and dismissal procedures with your children. The procedures have been designed to ensure the safety of all students at our school. Your patience, courtesy, and willingness to work with the school will assist us in well-organized and safe dismissals. Please contact Mrs. Hershfeld or Mrs. Bekman at 410-887-1203 if you have any questions or concerns regarding these procedures.

VISITORS

All parents and other visitors entering the school must report to the office and sign in. Anyone needing to conference with a teacher or visit another area of the school will be given a "visitor" badge. Staff members, volunteers, and substitutes will also be given badges. Anyone in the school building without a badge should expect to be approached and questioned. These guidelines are designed to assist us in providing a safe and orderly school environment. Fort Garrison strongly encourages parent involvement and participation in the school and our program. These new measures are intended to ensure the safety and security of the school community, not to limit parent involvement in our school.

Staff members have requested that parents not visit classrooms in the morning after 8:55 a.m. Students begin working on transitional tasks upon arrival in the homerooms each morning, and teachers are needed to assist them in their morning activities. If a parent needs to speak with a teacher, it is important that the parent leave a note with one of the secretaries, and the message will be delivered to the teacher. Our teachers' first priority must be to their students.

Fort Garrison Elementary School Dismissal Change Form

Your Child's Name: _____

Your Child's Homeroom Teacher: _____

Date that the change will take place: _____

The means by which you want to have your child travel home today: (Circle one)

Carpool Walker Bus (# _____ Color _____)

If child is traveling by carpool, write the name of the driver in the space provided below. If child is leaving through the walker door, please provide the name of the adult who will meet your child.

Name: _____

Parent Signature/Date: _____