



New Garden
FRIENDS SCHOOL

A Child's Garden

(Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten,

Transitional Kindergarten)

Handbook

2023-24

A Child's Garden Handbook

Welcome to A Child's Garden Preschool. This class has children ranging in age from three to five years old. Class groupings include Preschool (Crocus), Pre-Kindergarten (Iris), and combination Pre-Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten (Sunflower). We believe that school should be a place where children feel safe and nurtured and are able to learn at their own pace. We also believe that education is a partnership between families and school; we welcome your involvement, interest, and support.

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Arrival and Dismissal

ACG Door Opens*	Arrive by	Class Begins	Dismiss**	Pickup	Pickup Location	Extended Care
8:00 a.m.	8:25 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	12:45 p.m. 2:30 p.m.	2:30-2:45 p.m.	Crocus & Iris - playground gate Sunflower - classroom door	begins at 2:45 p.m.

*Morning Extended Care (7:30-8 a.m.) is held in the ACG Iris classroom.

**Students attending ACG for half-days dismiss at 12:45 p.m.

Students attending ACG for full days dismiss at 2:30 p.m.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

- You will be given a name card to display on your car window visor. Please be sure to clearly display this card on the visor in the morning and afternoon; we appreciate your assistance in helping drop-off and pick-up run smoothly and efficiently.
- Drop-off begins at 7:30 a.m. for Extended Care and 8 a.m. for the regular school day and continues until 8:25 a.m. Please plan to arrive during this window of time.

- *Crocus and Iris parents:* Please pull around and park behind Guilford Hall. Parents/guardians can walk their child over to the playground gate where children will be greeted and escorted to the classroom by school staff. Parents/guardians can take a minute at this transition point for a quick goodbye hug.
- *Sunflower parents:* Please pull around and park in the spaces behind the Sunflower building (Parker Young). Parents/guardians can walk their child to the sidewalk near the Parker Young building and take a minute at this transition point for a quick goodbye hug. A staff member will be present to escort your child to class. If you choose to walk your child to the classroom door, that is fine with us.
- If your child arrives late, parents/guardians must bring their child to the office to sign in. An adult needs to accompany your child to the office. The student will be escorted by staff to their classroom.
- **Half-Day Dismissal at 12:45 p.m.:** Parents/guardians can park in the spaces near the ACG classrooms. Parents/guardians can pick up their child at the gate.
- **Full-Day Dismissal (2:30 p.m.) and Extended Care Dismissal (up to 6 p.m.):** Crocus and Iris parents/guardians should pick up their child at the playground gate. Sunflower parents/guardians should pick up their child at the classroom door. If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up, please make sure the person you send is on your authorized pick-up list in ParentsWeb (for regular dismissal) or in CampSite (for Extended Care dismissal). Instruct them to have identification with them; staff will check the ID of anyone unknown to them.

Extended Care Note: ACG Extended Care combines with K-6th Extended Care in the afternoons, typically between 4:15 and 5:15 p.m. At that time, a sign is placed in the driveway, at the top of the breezeway, to notify families so they know to pick up their ACG student at the front gate rather than the classroom playground gate.

- If you must pick your child up before school is over, please come to the office to sign your child out. If this early pick-up is for a scheduled appointment, please coordinate with your student's teachers in advance so they will have their belongings packed and ready to go at the designated time of pick-up. If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up early, please make sure the person you send is on your authorized pick-up list in ParentsWeb.
- Please email your student's teachers if they will be absent.

Parking Lot Safety

Please help us keep everyone safe by observing the parking lot rules and following the directions of staff who assist with arrival and dismissal.

- When driving in our driveway or parking lot, **please do not use a handheld or hands-free phone.** Phone use, even hands-free, can distract drivers and make accidents more likely.
- Please drive slowly and slow down for speed bumps.
- Please use caution when backing out of parking spaces.
- Please be mindful of adults and our younger students going to and from their classrooms in the morning and afternoon. Please do not let your students run ahead of you when leaving or going to their vehicle.
- Please look for directions from staff during busy dismissal times. When a car is coming out, or when the car line is full, we will hold cars at the stop sign.

Social Curriculum

The social curriculum at NGFS is guided by a book written by Ruth Sidney Charney called “Teaching Children to Care: Management in the Responsive Classroom”. For more information, please ask a teacher to help you locate a copy. This curriculum helps students become empathetic, ethical thinkers as they learn to interact successfully in the school environment.

- We value the social curriculum as an integral part of our overall program.
- Positive social interactions and a strong sense of community enhance cognitive growth.
- There is a set of social skills that students need in order to be successful academically and socially: cooperation, self-advocacy, responsibility, empathy, perseverance, self-control, and peaceful conflict resolution skills.
- Knowing the students we teach individually, culturally, and developmentally is essential to students’ education and to developing community.
- Knowing the families of the students we teach and inviting their participation is essential to students’ education and to developing community.
- Adults model the above skills through positive interactions with each other and with students.

At A Child’s Garden, play is the most valuable activity our students engage in during their time with us. We spend a concentrated part of our day playing. Play provides children with a myriad of opportunities to develop emotional, social, intellectual, and physical skills. Teachers foster independence through numerous activities: children take turns leading their peers in songs, greetings, calendar work, and the practice of silence. Children choose where they would like to play from a wide variety of areas in the classroom. They are also encouraged to share their own ideas for activities, and teachers make necessary supplies available to carry out their work. When conflicts occur, teachers calmly encourage students to talk about what is happening (or has happened); they listen to all involved and offer appropriate responses to bring about peaceful solutions. A peaceful solution might be an apology, a picture drawn to express their concern, or an offer to rebuild or recreate.

A student who is having difficulty following the classroom guidelines may talk with the Division Head about the exhibited behavior and make a plan for improvement upon transition back to the classroom. Using the restorative practices model, we focus on finding solutions, applying logical

consequences, and providing opportunities for reflection. The aim of restorative practices is to develop community and manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and restoring relationships. Natural consequences for serious behavior may include missing a school activity or field trip. Depending on the severity of the behavior, students may be sent home for the remainder of the day. A student demonstrating disruptive behavior may be asked by the Division Head or Head of School to remain at home until a plan can be put in place to help the student safely transition back to the classroom. If necessary, Student Threat Assessment Procedures (STAP) will be initiated (see Appendix, All School Handbook).

Snack and Lunch

Each child needs to bring both lunch and snack. For snacks, healthy items such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, and crackers are appropriate. We ask that you do not send desserts, chips, or candy. Please send a refillable water bottle with fresh water with your child daily as we will be spending a great deal of time outside.

Soft drinks and glass containers are not safe and therefore not permitted. Be sure to label your child's lunch box and any plastic containers so that we can return them to you if they are lost. We suggest sending a small ice pack in the lunch box to keep items cold.

Families have the option to order hot lunches through My Hot Lunchbox, which partners with local restaurants to deliver nutritious meals to schools. Visit the [Back to School page](#) for more information and directions for creating an account and placing orders. If you have questions, please contact My Hot Lunchbox at 888-894-8295 or info@myhotlunchbox.com.

Clothing

We ask that you dress your child in play clothes and comfortable shoes with good soles that protect them and stay on their feet (e.g., tennis shoes). When you choose clothes for school, please keep in mind that our activities include painting and outdoor play. During preschool, many situations occur that could cause a child to need a change of clothes. In order to diminish discomfort and potential embarrassment, each child should have a complete, seasonally appropriate change of clothes at school (including top, bottom, underwear, and socks) in a ziplock bag. Both the clothes and bag should be labeled. When the clothes are used, please be sure to replenish the supply.

We do go outside in all kinds of weather, even for just a few minutes. Please be sure your child has the necessary mittens, gloves, boots, hat, and a warm coat.

Cubbies

Students will keep their tote bags, lunch boxes, jackets, and other personal items in their cubbies and on their hooks.

Personal Possessions at School

We ask that children leave toys at home. ACG students are allowed to bring a personal blanket and/or small stuffed animal for rest time. We will ask that students take the blanket or stuffed animal home each weekend, have it washed, and then bring it back to the classroom each week.

Rest Time

Rest time is scheduled after lunch and lasts approximately 55 minutes. Children are not expected to fall asleep, but some do nap, especially at the beginning of the year. During this time we listen to relaxing music or look at a book. Children often enjoy having a small stuffed animal (no taller than 12 inches) and a small blanket for rest time.

Birthdays

- Parents/guardians may send in birthday treats for the class and are welcome to visit the classrooms to be part of the birthday celebration.
- Due to a food allergy, we ask that all birthday treats in the Crocus class be egg-free. Please see the teachers for suggestions of egg-free treats.
- Balloons, party favors, etc. should be kept at home for the child's at-home celebration. At school the children will make a card to present to the birthday child.
- Because we want to give students with summer birthdays equal attention, we will celebrate "half-birthdays" for students with birthdays between June 1 and the start of the next school year. For example, if your child's birthday is July 23, please check in with your child's contact teacher before January 23.
- We know that it is difficult and often impossible to have at-home birthday celebrations that include the whole class. Please be advised that not being invited to a birthday celebration can be devastating to children at this developmental level. Please send invitations through the mail or outside of school and ask your child not to discuss preparations/plans at school in order to protect classmates' feelings. Please refrain from bringing in gifts for parties or sending in thank you notes that are only for party guests. Gifts and thank you notes can be taken care of outside of school.

Field Trips

At New Garden Friends School field trips are a vital part of the school curriculum. Students are able to learn in much greater detail when they not only study a subject in class, but also visit a location that reinforces and enhances the subject matter.

Parents/guardians will be notified when students are going off campus. Travel between campuses and to New Garden Friends Meeting and Guilford College are not considered off-campus. We frequently walk in our nearby woods or over to the Guilford College farm for fun and to learn about birds, wildflowers, and trees.

Parents/guardians who plan to join us on field trips or volunteer in the classroom must have a background check on file. Please contact the division head to complete a background check.

Guilford Campus Outdoor Play Guidelines

At NGFS we welcome all members of our community to use the **Upper Playground** and equipment after school dismisses. In order to be truly welcoming to everyone, we need to remember that our community includes people with different abilities and interests. To keep everyone safe, please help us to be sure all visitors and students are following these guidelines when you are playing at the School.

During the afternoons from 2:30 until 3:20 p.m., we ask for your help by asking children who have been dismissed from class to stay on the lower side (away from the parking lot) of the play structure, so teachers can properly supervise students getting into cars or dismissing to other activities. Please be aware that later in the afternoon, Extended Care may bring a group of students onto the upper playground for outdoor play.

Boundaries and Manners:

- All activities should be inclusive and played in the spirit of caring.
- All children should be within sight of a responsible adult at all times.
- Shoes should be worn while outside and on the play structure.
- Children playing on the sidewalks should stop playing and move to allow people to pass.
- Please keep play activities out of the covered walkways and off the railing by the walkway ramp.
- Please ask children to stay out of the landscaped areas and off the brick wall beside the building.

Play Structure:

- Climbing should only be done on the inside of the play structure.
- If equipment goes under the structure, an adult should check for hazards (yellow jackets, spiders) before allowing a child to retrieve the item.
- Please use the picnic tables for sitting, not standing or jumping.

Materials/Toys:

- If building or playing with sticks, make sure they are not larger than your pinky finger.
- If using a ball, frisbee, or other object that can fly through the air, please make sure to keep the object under control (not randomly tossed or kicked) so it does not hit windows, buildings, or people.
- When you leave, please return the balls to the storage box located on the sidewalk above the back playground.
- Please keep the sand and sand toys inside the sandbox. If your family is the last group on the playground, please cover the sandbox at the end of use.

A Child's Garden Fenced Play Area: This area is only for A Child's Garden students being supervised by staff. It is used by A Child's Garden students during the school day and for A Child's Garden Extended Care from 2:30-6 p.m.

Lower Playground: Reserved for Extended Care only 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Visitors and Volunteers

All volunteers are required to have a background check done through NGFS. Please contact the division head to complete a background check. Please check in with teachers to learn more about volunteer opportunities. Classroom volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality.

Volunteers must sign in at the office and receive their visitor badge. At the end of their volunteer time, they must return to the office to sign out and return the visitor badge.

Questions and Communications

Please read email communications from NGFS as they contain important information. Families should read the Community Newsletter which is emailed weekly. In the newsletter, ACG teachers will provide a weekly update informing you about classroom learning, special events, field trips, and other announcements. The newsletter will also provide you with information on whole school events and calendar reminders. The NGFS website posts a whole school calendar and other whole school information. We will regularly share photos through Vidigami. Please subscribe to the NGFS mobile app and enable notifications. ACG teachers will periodically send reminders through the app about class events.

On Tuesday, Sept. 12, from 6-7:30 p.m., we will have Lower School Parent Night. Please join us for a session about the A Child's Garden program.

Opportunities to Conference with Contact Teachers:

Hopes and Dreams Conference: Friday, Sept. 1

End of 1st Trimester Conference: Friday, Dec. 8

End of 2nd Trimester Conference: Thursday, Feb. 29 and Friday, March 1

Technology

Families are asked to respect and guard the privacy of students and other community members by not posting names or photos on social media sites without specific permission. Some families do not allow their child's picture to be posted anywhere on the Internet. Please respect this.