



# New Garden FRIENDS SCHOOL

## A Child's Garden

(Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten)

## Handbook

# 2024-25

Guided by Quaker values, New Garden Friends School is committed to being an inclusive, educational community that honors and develops each person's gifts.

## 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 with class groupings of Preschool (Crocus) and Pre-Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten (Iris). 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.

### Contact Info

Crocus teacher: Lindley Laws (she, her): [llaws@ngfs.org](mailto:llaws@ngfs.org)

Crocus teacher: Maddie Campbell (they/them, she/her): [mcampbell@ngfs.org](mailto:mcampbell@ngfs.org)

Iris teacher: Ashlee Adams (she, her): [aadams@ngfs.org](mailto:aadams@ngfs.org)

Iris teacher: Ben Lancaster (he, him): [blancaster@ngfs.org](mailto:blancaster@ngfs.org)

Lower School Division Head: Genny Smith (she, her): [gsmith@ngfs.org](mailto:gsmith@ngfs.org)

ACG students also have regular interactions with the Resource teachers (Art, Music, P.E. Spanish), and Extended Care staff (for those who attend before and/or after school care).

### Arrival and Dismissal

ACG Door Opens	Class Begins	Dismiss	Pickup	Pickup Location	<a href="#">Extended Care</a>
7:45 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	2:30-2:45 p.m.	ACG playground	begins at 2:45 p.m

### Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

- You will be given a name card to display on your car visor. Please be sure to display the tag 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 7:45 a.m. for the regular school day. The school day begins at 8 a.m.
- Please pull around and park behind the ACG classrooms. 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.
- If your child arrives late, parents/guardians must bring their child to the office to sign in. The student will be escorted by staff to their classroom.

- **A Child's Garden dismisses at 2:30 p.m.** Students are picked up from the ACG playground.
- If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up, please make sure the person is on your authorized pick-up list in ParentsWeb (FACTS Family Portal). Instruct them to have identification with them; staff will check the ID of anyone unknown to them. (Please note that changes in ParentsWeb may take up to 48 hours to update.)
- *Extended Care Note:* Extended Care for ACG students starts in the classrooms then combines with K-6th Extended Care, 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 that they know to pick up their ACG student at the front gate rather than the ACG classroom.
- If you must pick your child up before dismissal, please go to the office to sign your child out. If 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 is on your authorized pick-up list in ParentsWeb.
- Please email your child's teachers if your child will be absent. Please also include Renee Gaunt, Lower School receptionist, at [rgaunt@ngfs.org](mailto:rgaunt@ngfs.org).

## 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, **do not use a handheld or hands-free phone**. Phone use, even hands-free, can distract drivers and make accidents more likely.
- Drive slowly and slow down for speed bumps.
- Use caution when backing out of parking spaces.
- Be mindful of adults and our 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.
- Follow directions from staff during 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." 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.

In 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. For example:

- 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.

**A Child's Garden is a nut-free level.** Please do not send your child in with peanut or nut butter, nuts, or foods, such as granola bars, containing nuts. Sun Butter is a great alternative to peanut butter.

Due to an **egg allergy** in the classroom, please do not send hard boiled eggs for lunch or snack.

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](mailto: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). Please label the clothing and send them in a labeled ziplock bag. 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 backpacks, 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 (no taller than 12 inches) for rest time. We ask that students take the blanket and stuffed animal home each weekend to be washed and bring 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 classroom to be part of the birthday celebration.
- Please be mindful of the food allergies in our classroom (tree nuts, cashews, pistachios, shrimp, eggs, coconut, and soy) when selecting treats to send in for class celebrations.
- Due to a food allergy, we ask that all birthday treats be nut-free.
- 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.

## 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 return the visitor badge and sign out.

## Guilford Campus Outdoor Play Guidelines

We welcome our families to use the **Upper Playground** (playground that has the structure, located behind the parking lot fence) 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 and to be consistent with the expectations that students have during the school day, please follow these guidelines and help your child(ren) with reminders when needed.

Our Lower School classes have staggered dismissal times. ACG dismisses at 2:30, followed by Sunrise at 2:45, Rainbow at 3:00 and Horizon and Galaxy at 3:10. Consequently, older classes are still going on while younger students have been dismissed. Additionally, dismissal for Horizon and Galaxy takes place in the playground area (Horizon on the sidewalk to the left and Galaxy by the fence gate); therefore, we ask that children who have been dismissed stay on the lower side of the Upper Playground structure area (away from the parking lot). Please be aware that later in the afternoon, Extended Care may bring a group of students onto the upper playground.

When parents/guardians remain after school to visit with other families and let their children enjoy the playground, it is imperative that they carefully supervise their children and ensure they are following our outdoor play guidelines as follows:

### Boundaries and Manners

- All activities should be inclusive and played in the spirit of caring.
- All children should be actively supervised and within sight of the adult responsible for them 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 by the covered walkway. Leave items in place; do not move the big rocks or stepping stones by the landscaped areas.
- Picnic tables are for sitting, not standing or jumping.
- Students are not permitted to climb or hang from trees on campus.

### **Play Structure**

- Climbing should only be done on the inside of the play structure.
- There should be no climbing on the outside areas of the structure, including on top of the tunnel.
- Do not jump off the top level of the play structure.
- Slide down slides only, feet first. Do not walk up the slides.

### **Materials/Toys**

- If building or playing with sticks, make sure they are not larger than your pinky finger.
- Keep flying objects (balls, frisbees) under control. Do not randomly toss or kick objects.
- 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 (preschool, pre-K) students during the school day and after school for ACG Extended Care.

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

### **Questions and Communications**

Please read email communications from NGFS as they contain important information. Families should read the Community Newsletter which is emailed weekly. The newsletter includes a link to the [ACG Class News page](#), which includes weekly class news, upcoming events, class resources, and class emails and announcements. Parents/guardians access this page using the same login information as is used for [ParentsWeb](#) (FACTS Family Portal). The newsletter also provides whole school news. The school calendar is posted on the [NGFS Calendar page](#) and on the NGFS mobile App. Please use the App and subscribe to the ACG Crocus or Iris group. Be sure you have notifications enabled; we will send reminders through the App about class events.

**On Tuesday, Sept. 10, from 6-7:30 p.m.,** we will have Lower School Parent Night. The evening will begin in the gym where administrators will share whole school information, followed by classroom information presented by teachers in the classrooms.

### **Opportunities to Conference with Teachers**

Hopes and Dreams Conference: Friday, Aug. 30

End of 1st Trimester Conference: Friday, Dec. 13

End of 2nd Trimester Conference: Thursday, Feb. 27 and Friday, Feb. 28

### **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.