

First Steps Elementary Academy

Parent Handbook Policies and Procedures 2024 - 2025



We are proud to offer the following grades and programs!

Kinders Plus - 5-year-olds Grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 Optional before/after school care program Tutoring Tutoring services are available for students ages 5 and up. Our tutors are qualified to assist your child in Reading, Math, Writing and Spelling. Homework support, for higher grades, is also provided. The program runs Monday through Thursday from 4:00 - 8:00 PM. All programs are designed to meet and address your student's learning requirements. The program FITS your child.



Contact Us
Call: 403-347-0022

Email: firststepsandbeyond@gmail.com (Mrs. Harris)

mrs.k.fsea@gmail.com (Mrs. Krushelniski)

mrs.t.fsea@gmail.com (Mrs. Turnbull)

ms.r.fsea@gmail.com (Ms. Rutledge)

ms.p.fsea@gmail.com (Ms. Poirier)

mrs.e.fsab@gmail.com (Mrs. Emanuel)

mrs.s.fsab@gmail.com (Mrs. Sharma)

mrs.sa.fsab@gmail.com (Mrs. Santos)

iattendfsab@gmail.com (report absences/lates)

Tuition Payment Policy

- All tuition payments, either in full or the first installment by post-dated cheque or Etransfer MUST be received prior to the start of the school year
- Students will not be permitted to begin school until the account is up to date
- All NSF cheques will be charged out at a \$50.00 penalty fee.
- Money orders are acceptable when paying the tuition in full only
- Upon withdrawal of a child for any reason, 50% of the remaining tuition will be withheld.

Section 13.2 Education Act

We have spent the previous 8 years establishing our reputation as a loving, caring, and supportive learning environment for all gender identities and ethnicities. We will continue to welcome and support all children and their families. Our school has non-designated washrooms and all children are invited and encouraged to participate in all school activities. We do not practice preferential treatment, but instead promote compassion, understanding, and acceptance for all children.

This policy is reviewed and updated annually by the Board of Directors in April of each school year.

School Policies

1.0 Attendance Policy

Please note <u>arrival times</u> class start times

KindersPlus: 8:50 am 9:00 am Grades 1-6 8:30-8:40 am 8:45 am

- It is in your child's/student's best interest to be at school consistently
- When absent or late please email intendfsab@gmail.com by 9:15 am
- · If we have not heard from you by this time admin will call to verify the absence

2.0 Arrival and Departure

NO PARKING in fire lanes beside or in front of the school when dropping off or picking up

Arrival Procedures

- . Each child must be brought into the school. Please do not drop them off at the outside door.
- · Please remove outdoor footwear at the entrance
- · Each entrance has a boot rack or carpeted area for outdoor shoes
- · You are welcome to escort your child/student to their classroom
- · Doors are locked immediately after the last parent leaves the premises
- · Should you arrive late, you will need to enter via the front entrance and ring doorbell for entry

Departure Procedures

- Please arrive promptly for pick up at either 3:00 pm for KindersPlus or 3:15 pm for Grades 1-8
- · Teachers will bring the children/students outside to be met by parents
- We understand that from time to time circumstances arise that cause delays in pick-up; however, if this occurs more than 2 times per month a \$40.00 late fee per time will be billed unless prior arrangements have been made
- NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO WAIT AT THE DOOR FOR THEIR RIDE.
- The <u>Authorized Transportation Form</u> found at the back of this handbook must be completed and returned to school
- We require written permission if someone other than the parent is transporting your child/student to and from school if that person is not included on the form.
- · We will check photo identification for all persons we are not familiar with.

Early Departure

- · Whenever possible please inform the teacher ahead of time to minimize disruptions
- . In the case of an emergency situation, please call the school to let us know what arrangements have been made for your child/student
- · If your child/student will be picked up immediately, we will prepare them for their early departure

3.0 Home and School Communication

You will receive monthly emails with the current month's class calendars and newsletter- In The Loop

Please let us know if you do not receive our emails so that we can confirm your email address

Calendars and Newsletters are posted on our website and in each entranceway

Students will have an agenda that we ask you to read daily for reminders, notes from a teacher, etc.

Please sign the agenda daily

Feel free to write to your child's/student/s teacher in the agenda

3 scheduled Parent/ Teacher conferences (dates TBA)

You are welcome to book a meeting with a teacher at any time throughout the year

4.0 Appropriate Clothing

- · We ask that you dress your child appropriately for class each day
- Please dress your child appropriately for the weather; we are outside daily
- · Children/students need indoor and outdoor footwear they can put on independently
- Flipflop-style sandals are not safe on playground equipment (note we walk to the local park frequently for lunch recess)
- Children/students are using a variety of art supplies throughout their days; please leave the special clothing items at home (paint spills, markers mark!)

5.0 Inclement Weather

- In cases of bad weather, please listen to BIG 105 for current updates regarding school closure
- · You will be contacted by your child's teacher via telephone regarding any unexpected school closure
- If weather/road conditions are not good in your area, please use good judgment in your decision to attend classes that day you and your child's safety is our first priority
- If you decide to not bring your child to school due to inclement weather please email intendfsab@gmail.com or call 403-347-0022.

6.0 Student Code of Conduct

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, students at First Steps Elementary Academy are expected to:

- * Demonstrate their commitment to maintaining a safe and caring school.
 - First Steps Elementary Academy Board is committed to a welcoming, safe, caring and respectful learning and teaching environment for its students and staff that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. If one or more students attending the school requests a staff member employed by the Board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and foster o sense of belonging, the principal shall review the request and approve all activities that promote the school as a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment. After consultation with the principal, the students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization. Student organizations must align with the mission, vision and care values of the school. The principal shall approve all content, materials or external participants for all school clubs, organizations, events and activities. The principal shall designate a staff member to act as staff liaison for the requested activity. If no staff member is available, the Board and Minister will be informed and Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the students.
- Demonstrate desirable personal characteristics such as respect, responsibility, fairness, honesty, caring, loyalty and commitment to democratic ideals.
- * Be diligent in pursuing their studies.
- * Attend school regularly and punctually.
- * Cooperate fully with everyone authorized by the school to provide education programs and other services
- * Comply with the rules of the school
- * Account to their teachers for their conduct
- * Respect the rights of others
- * Hold themselves accountable/responsible for all class assignments and projects. Zeros will be issued for incomplete/missed assignments. No appeal process will be available.
- * Refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying behavior directed to others in the school whether or not it occurs within the school building during, during the school day or by electronic means.

In so doing, students are expected to promote and maintain a climate that is free of:

Cellphones

Alberta Education mandated on June 20, 2024 that all students will not be allowed to use cellphones and other personal devices in the classroom. Our school will adopt the following policy.

Should a student be on their cellphone or other personal device during class time, the device will be confiscated by the teacher and returned at the end of the school day. Upon the second infraction, the principal will confiscate the device. The device will be held in the principal's office until the end of the day and returned. On the third infraction, the cell phone or device will be confiscated by the principal. The parent will be called to come immediately to collect the device. The student will no longer to be permitted to bring a cell phone or personal device into the school.

- · Cheating
- Harassment/Bullying
- Illegal Substances
- Intimidation
- Lying
- · Obscene or profane language
- · Prejudicial behavior
- · Theft
- Violence
- Weapons

Student conduct that violates the expectations listed above, or that adversely affects the school's climate or operation, including disruption of the learning environment, shall be considered a breach of the Student Code of Conduct, warranting appropriate forms of intervention that may include:

- In-school suspension
- · Out-of-school suspension
- Exclusion from a school instructional program, school activity or transportation service
- Interventions such as positive behavior supports, contracts, counselling, restorative practices
- Expulsion In this situation the school will be responsible for supplying the work until the student has been enrolled in a different school
 Students will be expelled based on the following behaviors: firearm possession, repeated bullying, fighting, sexual misconduct, weapons
 on school grounds, possession of drugs or alcohol and will full disobedience.

The school must ensure that support is provided for students who are impacted by inappropriate behavior, as well as for students who engage in inappropriate behavior. This Code of Conduct is available on the school website and is provided to all parents and students. This Code of Conduct Policy is reviewed by the school on an annual basis.

7.0 Discipline

At First Steps Elementary Academy (FSEA) we would like to stress the importance of our discipline policy. The students are learning so many new things. Their school community is a safe place to practice academic and social skills. We recognize school can be very different from home. The expectations at FSEA are in place to assist your student in being successful as a well-rounded community member.

When correction is needed:

- · Staff will intervene with verbal instruction and or redirection instructions
- If behaviour persists staff will remove the child/student to a quiet place to address his or her choices and school expectations
- . When the child/student is ready, he/she will be welcomed back into the learning activities
- · If a situation is of a more serious nature the parent will be contacted to discuss further support needed
- Staff will not physically restrain but relocate students who are being physically aggressive towards others before dealing with the student;
 parents will be notified
- · Parents may be asked to pick up their child/student from school for the remainder of the day
- · An Incident Report will be completed by staff for all serious incidents and will be reviewed with parents and school principal
- · If the behaviour continues we will require a parent/teacher conference to discuss further actions.
- At no time will physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, or emotional deprivation be used in the school.
- · Any disciplinary action taken will be reasonable and will be undertaken to help the child/student learn from their mistake
- · Parents are encouraged to speak with their child's/student's teacher and or principal regarding any concerns
- NOTE: We will never "diagnose" a child. This is not our area of expertise. However, as part of your child's/student's team if we are concerned about certain behaviors we will need your help to find the appropriate solution for your child.

8.0 Homework Policy

Homework or Home Practice is assigned to students to help them lock in and demonstrate their learning. As in any activity we participate in, practice makes us better. Since education is a child's major daily commitment, it makes sense that practicing a variety of skills throughout the year will solidify understanding and ability.

We define homework/home practice as

- · Daily Home Reading (being read to and or independent reading are equally valid and important for all grades)
- Any incomplete classwork
- · Assigned specific practice materials related to current learning
- · School/Home project
- · Missed work due to absence
- Incomplete homework/class assignments may result in the child/student being unable to participate in extension activities such as field trips, website skills practice (e.g.Prodigy), special day projects, etc. (This is up to the discretion of the teacher)

Time Guidelines

- 10 minutes per grade for assigned home practice (not including incomplete classwork) as well as independent reading
- · Grade 1 10 minutes home practice plus reading
- . Grade 2 20 minutes home practice plus reading
- · Grade 3 30 minutes home practice plus reading
- · Grade 4 40 minutes home practice plus reading
- · Grade 5 50 minutes home practice plus reading
- · Grade 6 60 minutes home practice plus reading

Student Wellness Policies

1.0 Accident/Illness

- In case of a child being injured or involved in an accident or becoming ill while at school, the parent or emergency contact person for
 the child will be contacted immediately.
- Medical attention, if required, will be administered immediately.
- · In case of a serious injury, 911 will be called
- An <u>Incident/Illness Report</u> will be completed, reviewed and signed by the parent and school principal.
- The Incident reports will be used to analyze and initiate changes in the case of repetitive accidents/illnesses.

2.0 Potential Health Risks

It is required by Alberta Children & Youth Services that if your child/student is vomiting, has a fever greater than 38c, has diarrhea and/or an unexplained rash or cough you must keep your child/student at home to avoid the spreading of illnesses.

- · We are also required to contact you immediately if your child/student starts to display any of the above symptoms while at school.
- · He/she must be picked up as soon as possible
- An ill child/student will be kept as far away as possible from the other children./students and will be supervised by a staff member.
 Note: We do not have a sick room available
- Prior to returning to school, your child must be symptom-free for 24 hours (if he or she leaves at any time after school starts, they may not return the next day.
- The school keeps a record of your child's/student's name, date of Illness, your child's symptoms, time you were contacted, the
 time that the child was removed from the program, the date the child returned to school and the name of the staff member
 that contacted the parent.
- We understand that due to extenuating circumstances i.e. work, immediate pick-up is not always possible. In this case please
 call your emergency contact person.
- If the indicated emergency contact is not available to act immediately, please notify the school of who will be doing the pickup. Note they must bring picture ID

3.0 Health Care

- · Staff members may provide or allow the provision of health care to a child only if:
 - ~written consent of the child's parent has been obtained
 - ~or the health care provided is in the nature of first aid
- Please complete and sign the Medical Treatment and Authorization Consent Form. Return it to the appropriate teacher or the school pricipal ASAP

4.0 Medications

- All medical forms must be completed and turned into your child's teacher or school director on or before the first day of class
- We will only administer medication to a child when written consent has been given by the parent or guardian
- · All medication must be in its original labeled container
- Medication will only be administered according to the labeled directions
- When medication is administered, the staff member will ensure that the name of the medication, the time of the administration, the amount administered and the initials of the person who has administered the medication is documented.
- · All student medications will be kept in a locked container that is inaccessible to the children.
- Emergency first-aid medications are stored in a cupboard that is inaccessible to the children.

5.0 Life Threatening Allergies Policy

In our school, we may have children who are at risk for potentially life-threatening allergies. Some children are at risk for insect sting allergy while others are allergic to certain foods. Food-allergic individuals con experience a life-threatening reaction from ingesting a very small amount of their allergen. Exposure through skin contact or inhalation can also cause allergic reactions. Anaphylaxis (pronounced anno-fill-axis) is a severe allergic reaction that can be caused by foods, insect stings, medications, latex, or other substances. While anaphylaxis can lead to death if untreated, anaphylactic reactions and fatalities can be avoided. Our school anaphylaxis plan is designed to ensure that our children at risk are identified, strategies are in place to minimize the potential for accidental exposure and staff are trained to respond in an emergency situation.

5.1 Identification of Children at Risk

- · At the time of registration, parents are asked to advise of any medical conditions, allergies, asthma, and risk of Anaphylaxis
- Medical conditions and allergens are recorded in the appropriate area on the <u>Medical Treatment</u>, <u>History</u>, and <u>Authorization Consent</u>
 <u>Form</u>. Also requested in this area is the Emergency Contact name and phone number, as well as the Fomily Doctor and contact number.
- · All staff members are aware of these children.

5.2 Availability and Location of Epinephrine Auto-Injectors

The parent will supply the school with an Epi-Pen for their child

Epi-Pen is labeled with the child's name and kept in the Emergency First Aid Kit in the child's classroom.

The school will also have an Epi-Pen stored in the drug box in the fridge.

Posters of signs/symptoms and procedures for administration will be placed in the applicable classroom and staff room.

5.3 Emergency Procedure

- A copy of the Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan will be placed in the child's classroom, as well as the staff room.
- · Staff will listen to the child's concerns as a reaction may be underway prior to any outward visible signs
- . When giving epinephrine, it is recommended to have the child lie down or sit
- · It is helpful to support the leg to reduce movement.
- · After giving epinephrine, place the child on their back with legs raised.
- If the child feels sick or is vomiting place the child on their side to keep the airway clear.
- It is important that the child not sit up immediately after receiving the epinephrine as a person can experience changes in blood pressure, and symptoms can become worse leading to potential death.
- · Note the time all doses were administered

5.3 Emergency Procedure Continued

- During an emergency, the child's teacher will administer the epinephrine and an assigned student will be sent to notify the principal
 who will in turn assist the child and teacher
- · In the case of an emergency, the following steps will be adhered to
 - · Give epinephrine auto-injector at the first sign of known or suspected anaphylactic reaction.
 - Call 9-1-1 explaining that we have a child experiencing a life-threatening allergic reaction.
 - Give a second dose of epinephrine as early as 5 minutes after the first dose if there is no improvement in symptoms.
 - · Go to the nearest hospital immediately by ambulance.
 - · The principal will accompany the child in ambulance
 - · Call emergency contact person(s). Call to be made by the classroom teacher.
- The school, following consultation with the pharmacist, will have emergency epinephrine auto-injectors on site to use in the case of an
 unsuspected allergic reaction. The same procedures will be followed as stated above. The epinephrine auto injectors will be stored as
 follows: junior auto-injector will be stored in the kitchen on the lower level. The auto-injector for the senior students will be stored in
 the staff room on the upper level.

5.4 Type 1 Diabetes

Type I diabetes is a disease in which the immune system attacks and destroys cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. Type I diabetes is not caused by and cannot be managed by lifestyle changes. It is controlled through regular, daily doses of insulin along with other steps to control blood sugar levels. Children/students with Type I diabetes will need to monitor their blood sugar levels regularly during the school day via a finger prick and a blood glucose meter and/or a continuous glucose monitor and depending on the blood sugar number, respond accordingly. Low blood sugar (less than 4.0 mmol/L) must be treated immediately with a source of fast-acting sugar. If mild low blood sugar is not treated, it can quickly become severe (very low) resulting in a medical emergency.

The care of a child/student with Type 1 diabetes at school is a shared responsibility that involves the child/student, parents/guardians, community health and service providers and the school and school authority staff. As supports beyond the education system are required, collaboration with all appropriate partners and providers is necessary to ensure that the required needs of the individual child/student are met while maintaining the child's/student's right of access to education and to be integrated within the school community.

Each student with diabetes must have a completed care plan at school. Typically, parents complete the plan, with help from a member of their child's diabetes care team if needed.

The Canadian Paediatric Society, Canadian Pediatric Endocrine Group, and Diabetes Canada all recommend that each student with diabetes have a completed care plan at school. The ICP should clearly outline roles and responsibilities of school personnel, parents and the child with diabetes.

Before the start of each school year (or right after a student is diagnosed), parents should review the plan with the principal (or designate), the child's teachers, and the school staff who have been designated to provide care or support throughout the school year.

Individual Care Plans

An individual care plan (ICP) for supporting children and students with medical conditions in schools contains personalized information regarding a child's/student's medical need(s) to enable them to be safe and cared for while at school or on a school activity (e.g., field trips, athletic events, etc.). The purpose of an ICPs is to provide clarity and direction on what needs to be done to support a child's/student's medical needs, when it must be done, by whom, and what to do during an emergency. When a school is informed of a child's/student's medical need(s) the appropriate staff member should initiate the development of an ICP by involving the child/student, where appropriate, parent/guardian, healthcare professionals, service

The ICP should have two components: a daily management plan and an emergency plan. This document will be housed in the Principal's office as well as shared on the school's Google Docs. ICPs will be posted in the respective classroom in a nonconspicous location.

6.0 Nutrition

- All lunch food and snacks (am/pm) are provided by parents for school and for after-school care
- Kinders-Plus and Grades 1 through 8 have 2 breaks as well as their lunch break
- Lunchtime is at 11:30 a.m. for KindersPlus and Grades from 12:00 12:30 pm
- · Children/students are not permitted to share their snacks or lunches
- · Parents are made aware of any food allergies within their child/student's grade
- · There is no microwave for student use
- · There is no fridge for student use
- Please send water bottles daily (pop/soda/high sugar drinks not allowed)
- · Students will take home all food-generated daily

Safety Policies

1.0 Supervision

- All staff members are aware that they are responsible for supervision during program hours
- . The staff ensures that all children are kept safe when on and off the premises during school hours.
- Children may not leave an instructional area without staff permission: classroom teacher or principal
- · At the school, no child is permitted to wait at the door or outside for their parent
- · All children remain in the school under supervision until the parent arrives
- Our supervision practices allow for age-appropriate conduct and developmental needs. Inappropriate behavior will be corrected in a
 positive, meaningful manner.
- During all off-site activities, the practice of "head count" will be utilized, along with a "buddy system."

2.0 Off-Site Activities

- . A Consent Form will be sent home for parent/quardian signature prior to all trips
- The form must be returned prior to the day of the field trip for the child/student to participate (no exceptions)
- · Volunteers will be required to accompany the teacher and children/students
- . This will help prevent any unforeseen situations from occurring as well as, provide additional supervision in an unfamiliar setting
- ALL parent volunteers including parent drivers must complete a Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector check through the City of Red Deer RCMP

https://www.reddeer.ca/city-services/police-rcmp/police-information--vulnerable-sector-checks

There is a \$10.00 for each of the checks

2.1 Field Trips

Throughout the school year students are given opportunities to participate in extension activities designed to allow them to enhance their learning, practice problem-solving, spur creativity, and think outside and inside the box. These activities are based on learning objectives which can come from multiple or individual subject areas.

Student participation in these activities is based on meeting the following criteria

- · Appropriate completion of classwork based on student ability
- · Completion of homework
- · Consistent attendance
- · Completion of any work missed due to absences prior to an activity or event
- · Meeting appropriate classroom expectations and in-school behaviour

We recognize that parents make the decisions as to what out-of-school activities their children participate in. However, it is reasonable to assume students will miss learning and practice time when absent. Teachers will provide missed work for students to complete but students may have to miss extension activities to complete missed work.

3.0 Lockdown

- . The Lockdown procedure will only be used when there is a major incident or threat of violence in or close to the school.
- We will initiate the "Hold and Secure" procedure where the outside school doors are locked in the event of a situation not related to
 the school but that is in close proximity
- · Please note that our inside doors are locked 24 hours.
- . Entrance can only be gained by the doorbell at the front doors

Procedure:

- Notifications of violence will be handled by the school administrator.
- The school administrator will notify all staff using "Code Red" to initiate the lockdown of their respective classrooms

Classroom Lockdown Procedure:

- 1. Gather all children inside the classroom.
- 2. Take attendance.
- 3. Be aware of sight lines.
- 4. Lock classroom doors.
- 5 Turn out lights.
- 6. Close blinds.
- 7. Remain quiet.
- 8. Take cover behind a solid piece of furniture.
- 9. Stay away from windows and doors.
- 10. No cell phone usage unless to communicate internally regarding the incident.
- 11. Administrator will advise "All Clear" to end lock down

4.0 Emergency Evacuation Procedures

- In the case of an emergency evacuation, the teacher will have in her possession all emergency contact information for each child.
- · Fire drills will be practiced on a monthly basis.
- · During these drills, the children will practice safe and orderly evacuation procedures.
- · For these drills, the children will be instructed to proceed to the muster area located in the outdoor play area in front of the building.
- In the case of an emergency where we cannot return to the building, we will move to Maxwell Realty to use their office as an offsite temporary location to facilitate pick-up of your child/student
- · Parents will be contacted from this site
- Parents will be informed as to the type of emergency and instructed to pick up their child at the Maxwell Realty office located at the
 west end of our building.
- Their phone number is 403 346 7755.
- · Please make yourself familiar with this location

5.0 General Liability Insurance

First Steps Elementary Academy carries general liability insurance coverage

6.0 Parental Responsibilities

We are thrilled you chose to have your child/student at First Steps Elementary Academy for this school year. We welcome you to the team. Education is an activity of The Village!

Please feel welcome to be involved however you can. You have many talents valuable to our learners. Children/students love it when family comes to school too!

The following are needed from you to help make the school year a success for all stakeholders:

- Please return all paperwork ASAP: see the attachments (we want to start taking pictures and going for walks, and going the the
 park right away)
- If you plan to bring in a special treat for your child's birthday, please consult with the teacher prior to that day so allergies can be handled appropriately
- Please put your child's name on all personal belongings shoes, jackets, mitts, lunch bags, backpacks, water bottles, etc.
- We ask that you bring all issues and concerns, to the principal before voicing them to other parents
- Research tells us Reading is the key to your child's educational success. Read with and/or to your child every day. You will be
 amazed at the difference it will make.
- · Limit screen time after school
- Please keep us informed of all changes such as address, phone number, medical concerns- anything involving the safety and wellbeing of your child/student
- We ask that you be an ambassador of our school. Positive comments regarding the school and its programs are the most effective avenue. Hit the 'like' icon an Facebook when perusing pictures
- You are the best advertising that we could ask for! Children can register anytime throughout the school year. Please continue to refer and assist us in building and expanding our school.
- · We ask that you be a positive influence on the school and its community.
- . We ask that you uphold and stand by all of the school's policies and guidelines.

7.0 Faculty Responsibilities

First Steps Elementary Academy holds its staff members to a high standard of ethical conduct. It is expected that staff members will behave in a manner which reflects common sense, good judgement and discretion and will adhere to all Board Policies, Administrative Regulations and Guidelines. Each staff member is required to sign a positional contract, adhere to the Alberta Education Teacher Code of Conduct and provide administration with a yearly growth plan.

Policies were reviewed and passed by the Board on Thursday, April 11, 2024
Policies are reviewed annually and approved by the board each April of the current school year.

John MacKenzie

Board Chair