

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT



FAMILY HANDBOOK

Framingham Public Schools,
Community Resource Development
Explorers Before & After School Program
19 Flagg Drive, Framingham, MA 01702

Director of Community Resource Development: Tiffany Lillie
Manager of Elementary OST Programs: Kelley Ratcliffe

Mission Statement

The Department of Community Resource Development (CRD) serves as a facilitator for the Framingham Public Schools in providing multifaceted, comprehensive, and holistic learning opportunities to all students through programming that addresses social and emotional development and provides academic support that complements the school day.

Vision

- Expand access to high quality out of school time programming for all students.
- Increase partnerships with higher education institutions to expand college and career opportunities for all students.
- Develop world class community partnerships that enhance our student development and achievement.

What We Do

- After School Programs at the Elementary and Secondary Level
- Vacation, Summer and Early Release Day Programming
- Community Partnership Development
- Grant Making and Fundraising

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The Explorers Program does not discriminate in providing service to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, cultural heritage, political beliefs, ability, sexual orientation, and/or marital status.

Special Needs & Inclusion

Community Resource Development (CRD) supports inclusion and will make every effort to support all children and their needs. Families are allowed to submit a request in writing for special accommodations, the requests will be processed by CRD leadership and the family will be notified in writing with the stated reasons for decisions made. Parents may contact the Director of Community Resources Development or the Manager of Elementary OST Programs to review any decisions.

Community School Philosophy

A community school is created through a shared vision of parents, children, school, staff, and the greater community. Framingham Public Schools are educational and recreational centers that offer programs and activities that reflect the needs, respects and honors the cultural values, and generally supports all members of the community.

Brain Time (Homework Support)

There is allotted time for homework help daily; students are not mandated to complete their homework. If a student does not have any homework, they will be offered a 'brain time' activity such as puzzles, reading, etc. Site Coordinators will work with parents to determine if parents have a preference as to whether their student completes/works on homework during Explorers. An effort will be made by the Explorers staff to accommodate this request.

After School Snack

A nutritious snack will be provided for enrolled students in the After School program. **Children are asked not to bring their own snack, as this can create challenges with other students, including allergy concerns.** Students with documented allergies sitting at the required allergy table may bring their own after school snack from home. Prior written notification to the Program Coordinator is required.

Outdoor Play

Children who attend the After School Program can expect to spend a minimum of 30 minutes outside (weather permitting) each day. Outdoor play will be cancelled due to precipitation, icy ground conditions, temperatures below the school day allowance, or excessive wind or heat. In case of inclement weather, children will still be able to have indoor play in the gym or other large gross motor areas. To maintain safe and required staff to student ratios, all children are expected to go outside with their group unless they have a doctor's note excusing them from outdoor activities.

Clothing Requirements

Children can expect to play outside year-round. Warm clothing, sweaters, jackets, hats, gloves, and waterproof boots are necessary for the winter months and should be labeled with your child's name. Children without boots and snow pants will be asked to stay on dry and shoveled areas.

For younger students, it is recommended that they are sent to school and Explorers with a spare set of clothes in the event of a bathrooming accident.

Registration Procedure

Families wishing to tour the program should contact the Site Coordinator. The program is open for touring during normal before and after school hours. Student enrollment is open to all students at their Elementary School; however, availability is based on a first come, first serve basis. Please note, there is no bus service to and from this program. The completed annual registration and the annual \$50.00 registration fee per child is required to enroll. Monthly tuition fees are applied based on your child's selected schedule.

Program Hours

Before School Care:

Operates from 7:00 A.M. - until the bell rings.

All children must be accompanied by a parent/adult, walked into the building, and signed-in.

After School Care :

Operates from when the end of school day bell rings.- until 6:00pm*

*Early Release days run from dismissal until 6:00pm and Half Days run from dismissal **until 3:00pm.**

Little Explorers at Juniper Hill has two pick up times of 4pm and 5:30pm. Little Explorers does not run programming on half days.

Parents/authorized adults may pick up their children any time before 6:00 PM (3:00 PM on Half Days). Students must be **signed out** by an authorized parent/adult at the sign-out table. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute per student will be applied if picked up after the program closing time.

Drop off & Pick Up Policy

Parents must park their cars and come in to drop off or pick up their children. Only adults (16 years of age or older) **who have been authorized by the student's parents/guardians** are allowed to sign out children from the program. A written note must be received if anyone other than parents or authorized emergency contacts listed in a student's registration is to pick up a child. Photo identification is required. If there are any legal restrictions of a parent picking up their child, the Program Coordinator must be notified of any legal documents, i.e. restraining order or custody decree which are on file in the main office at the Elementary School. Parents/designees must provide a copy of all orders/decrees to the coordinator.

Please be aware if staff suspects that an authorized adult has been **consuming alcohol or drugs**, you will be asked to have someone else pick up your child.

Late fees of \$1.00 per minute per student will be applied if a student is picked up after the program ends.

Requesting Changes in Schedules

A two week written notice is required to change a child's schedule or to withdraw from the program. If appropriate notice is given, a prorated refund will be given to any child who leaves the program before the end of the month. If your child will not be attending the after school program on one of their normally scheduled days, please notify the main day school's office before 2:00pm. Students on vouchers must notify the Program Coordinator if their child will not be attending programming and the reason why, per voucher guidelines.

Inclement Weather & Snow Days

If school is closed for the day, or released early due to inclement weather, there will be **no** Before and After School Program. If school experiences a delayed start, there will be **no** Before School Program, but After School will be held. There will be no refund if the Program is forced to close.

Parent Communication & Program Input

The Before and After School Program maintains an open door policy. Please feel free to direct questions or concerns related to any facet of the Before and After School Program to the Program Coordinator at any time. Your feedback and input is greatly valued.

We welcome parental input and parents are invited to share special skills, hobbies, or cultural activities with the program as volunteers. An approved FPS CORI form is required to volunteer during the Before & After School programs. If you do wish to volunteer, please communicate and coordinate a schedule with the Program Coordinator.

Additional Parental Responsibilities

- Send a note to your child's homeroom school teacher informing him/her of your child's after school schedule before he/she begins and any schedule changes.

- Complete all information in the registration form, either electronically or on paper please keep it up to date (emergency contacts, health information, authorized pickups, etc.). Updating your child's records with the day school office does not translate into updating the Before & After School program records. Parents must inform their out-of-school time coordinator.
- Inform the school's main office before 2:00 P.M. if your child will not attend after school care.
- Send your child with appropriate clothing for activities and outdoor play.
- Please check lost & found for missing items as needed.
- **Label all personal belongings (clothing, hats, water bottles, lunch boxes, backpacks, etc.)**.
- **Please pick-up an ill child promptly.**
- Please communicate with the Program Coordinator any concerns, feedback, or problems.

Tuition Fees & Payments

A nonrefundable annual registration fee of \$50.00 per student is required at the time of enrollment along with a completed registration. **Tuition is due in full by the first day of each month.** Late fees of \$1.00 per minute per student will be applied if a student is picked up after the program end time.

Since the number of days in each month varies, the yearly tuition is divided into 10 equal monthly payments. August tuition will be prorated. The first month's fee may be prorated based on the student's enrollment start date. Snow days, emergency early closures, delayed openings, and school holidays do not affect the monthly fee. Note: a 10% price reduction for each sibling after the first child is applied. A 10% discount is applied to students of FPS staff members. Discounts and scholarships do not stack, only one applies. Cash payments will not be accepted. **Checks and/or money orders** must have payer's name, address, and be made **payable to: City of Framingham**. The **student's name should be identified in the bottom left** corner on the "For/Memo" line. Please note: checks returned by a bank due to insufficient funds will result in an additional \$25.00 fee, payable only with a money order. Payment is due on the first of the month. Late payments will result in a \$25 late fee added onto your account balance.

Vouchers & Scholarships

Current **approved vouchers** from Child Care Resources are accepted.

Families must adhere to CCRs requirements to maintain vouchers. Please check details at their website: <http://www.sevenhills.org/programs/child-care-resources>

Limited, first come/first serve **scholarships** from FPS CRD are available for families that meet eligibility requirements. Please speak with your Site Coordinator for more details, requirements, and forms.

Balance Policy

The Office of Community Resource Development(CRD) provides a variety of Out of School Time (OST) programs. Any CRD Program that requires a fee for participation provides participants with a monthly statement. CRD makes every effort to accommodate families facing special or difficult circumstances. In some cases payment plans are available. Failure by participating families to submit proper payment on time will lead to automatic student's dismissal from the program. If payment is not sent within the identified timeline, CRD reserves the right to hold or cancel enrollment for a child. A \$25 late fee will be administered for all payments made after the 1st of the month. Additionally, if payment is not received prior to the next monthly billing cycle, a student's continued enrollment will require that their account balance be 75% paid. If a family requires special payment accommodations, please communicate with the Program Coordinator as soon as possible and complete a Payment Plan Application.

Bank Returned Checks: \$25.00 Town of Framingham Fee Administered

If a bank returns a check due to non-sufficient funds (NSF), a NSF \$25.00 fee will be charged to your account by the Town of Framingham. Plus, the check amount for enrollment fees will be recharged since the payment was not received. Families will have to pay all NSF \$25.00 fees and enrollment fees due by bank cashier's checks or **money orders**. Personal bank checks will not be accepted going forward.

Refund Policy

We understand that needs and schedules can change. If you are not satisfied with your child's experience or if your situation has changed please reach out to us about requesting a refund. We process refunds on a case by case basis. Since the process to obtain a refund can be an extensive one, we also offer a credit option. Credits do not expire and can only be used for CRD programs such as: non-school days, clubs, vacation week as well as summer offerings. Credits can be shared with family members. In recognition of the difference between a refund and credit, should you choose the credit option we will add an additional ten dollars to your account.

In order to process a refund, the person that made the payment either by check, money order, or credit card must become a vendor in our system. To do so requires the individual to complete a W9. Doing so does not impact your tax status in any way. Once the individual is a vendor, a requisition is opened. When that requisition converts to a purchase order, a request for refund is filled out and sent to business operations for processing. A refund is processed the same way an invoice is processed. First, the refund is included in an accounts payable warrant, then signed by business operations staff, then signed by the School Committee, and finally, sent to City Accounting for processing and payment. This is a lengthy process and can take up to 30 days from the initial request to be issued.

Medical & Health Policy

All Explorers Programs follow the medical policies and dismissal for illness policies of the Elementary School. Note: no medicine will be administered in the Before or After School Program (except epi-pens). **If your child is absent from school or dismissed for illness, your child may not attend Before or After Care.** If your child becomes ill while attending Before or After School Care, a parent/authorized adult will be notified and asked to pick up the sick child immediately. Children will go out to play each day. If your child is too ill to go outside, please do not send them to the program. Students with asthma or other medical concerns need a doctor's note to be excused from outside recess and/or physical activity.

Students with emergency medications (epi-pens, inhalers, etc.) will not be permitted to attend unless accompanied by their medication, a completed and signed authorization for medication form, and have submitted an individual health care plan (ex. Allergy action plan). All medications must be brought to school in its original container and include the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage, the number of times per and the number of days the medication is to be administered. This prescription label will be accepted as the written authorization of the physician. The Program will not administer any medication contrary to the directions on the label unless so authorized by written order of the child's physician.

All student injuries occurring during our program hours will be reported to parents. For minor injuries that only require cleaning the cut/abrasion and a simple band aid, our staff will notify parents either by phone or at the time of pick up. Staff will complete an injury/incident report and provide a copy to families. In the case of severe injury, parents will be notified and the child will be transported, accompanied by a staff member, to the **MetroWest Medical Center in Framingham, 115 Lincoln Street.**

Items/Toys from Home

Children are offered the use of and are taught to share a variety of safe and interesting games, materials, and equipment within the program; therefore, toys from home are strongly discouraged. Use of toys, electronic devices, and phones from home will **not** be allowed during program hours. On occasion, we may notify you and allow children to bring a special toy/item from home for a planned Show & Tell activity. The understanding is the toy will be shared with all children and the student will take full responsibility for the item.

Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect Policy

All Explorer staff are trained on Mandated Reporting annually. Massachusetts law requires certain professionals to file a report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) whenever they have “reasonable cause to believe” that a child has been abused or neglected. These professionals who are required to report are called mandated reporters. In addition, any other person may report suspected abuse or neglect. A report of abuse or neglect is called a 51A. It is named for the section of Massachusetts General Laws chapter 119 which defines reports of abuse and neglect of children. Mandated reporters include school officials, teachers, day care workers, health care professionals, social workers, counselors, probation officers, foster parents, and police officers. If such a professional reasonably believes that a child under the age of 18 is suffering serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect that professional must immediately file a report with DCF.

Behavior and Support Policy

The Explorers program is rooted in positive reinforcement practices and compliments school day culture and language. The staff at the Explorers Program are trained in effective classroom, youth development, and behavior management strategies and work closely with school day staff, families, and students to make sure that students are supported.

Initial Progression of Disciplinary Action

1	Students are reminded of expected behavior by Explorers Staff and can be referred to the calming/reflection area of the classroom. (3 reminders*) Students are offered a check-in with a staff member or the onsite Program Coordinator. *if the situation is unsafe this may be less than 3 reminders*
2	If the behavior is productively discussed with the staff or Program Coordinator, the student will return to the classroom for a chance to show expected behavior in the classroom.
3	If the unexpected behavior persists, the Program Coordinator is called to help facilitate the student's transition to the office and the parent/guardian is called for an immediate pick up.* Parents/Guardians are required to attend a brief meeting with their child and the Program Coordinator to discuss best support strategies for successful re-entry to the program.

Secondary Progression of Disciplinary Action

1	After 3 separate occasions of parent/guardian immediate pick-up, the student will take a 1 day break from the program. Again, Parents/Guardians are required to attend a re-entry meeting with the student prior to re-entry into Explorers.
2	Following three, 1 day breaks , there will be a 1 week suspension from the Explorers program.
3	If the behavior persists after 1 week suspension, a meeting will be made with parent and child to determine the child's continued enrollment in the program.

*Please note that any safety concerns such as physical altercations will be reviewed by the Director and Manager of CRD to determine if a break from the program is required.

Behavior Plans: If necessary, behavior plans will be implemented after the first day the student was picked up by the parent/guardian during the program. These plans will be developed and modified with input from both parent/guardian and student and utilized by Explorers staff.

Incident Reports: When behavior becomes significant enough to warrant an immediate parent pick-up, an incident report is filed with the Explorers program and reviewed and signed by the parent/guardian. Incident reports are kept with the student file.

Acknowledgement of Policies Above

By registering for CRD OST Programs, you are agreeing that you have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the Out-of-School Time Family Handbook.

If you have any questions, concerns, or feedback please contact your Explorers Site Coordinator or Kelley Ratcliffe, Manager of Elementary OST Programs, kratcliffe@framingham.k12.ma.us