

# **ARLINGTON SCIENCE FOCUS SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024**

**Arlington Science Focus School  
1501 North Lincoln Street  
Arlington, VA 22201**



**Phone Number: 703-228-7670**

**Attendance Line: 703-228-7672**

Office Hours:  
8:00-5:00pm  
Monday-Friday

## **ATTENDANCE**

Daily attendance is required by Virginia State Law and is taken by the teacher. ASFS students are expected to attend school every day that school is in session unless they are sick or have a family emergency, such as a death in the family. Family vacations should be planned for times when school is not in session.

Excused absences include the following:

- Illness, quarantine, or injury;
- Doctor or dentist appointments;
- Death in the family;
- Observance of a religious holiday;
- Or other absences approved in advance.

School Hours: School runs from 8:50am-3:50pm. On an early release day, students are dismissed at 1:30pm. Students must not be dropped off before 8:40am.

Absences: If your child is going to be absent, please notify the attendance office in one of the following ways:

- Attendance line—703-228-7672
- Attendance email at [asf.attendance@apsva.us](mailto:asf.attendance@apsva.us)
- ParentVue—click “report absence” button

Please include your child’s name and why they are missing that day.

Late Arrivals: Children arriving late must be escorted by their parents to the main office to check in.

Leaving Early: Students may sometimes need to be picked up during the school day. To do this, parents should come to the main office to sign their child out. The office staff will call for the child only once the parent has arrived in the office. Children returning after an appointment should be signed in at the office by their parent.

Closings/Delays/Early Dismissals: In the event that conditions exist that require the delay, closing, and/or early dismissal of school, news about these decisions is communicated as soon as the decision is made by APS. Methods of communication include:

- Arlington Public Schools webpage [apsva.us](http://apsva.us)
  - Messages sent via ParentSquare
  - Local radio & television stations
  - Social media posts
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- ❖ School(s) Closed - All school buildings are closed for the announced school or for the entire county. Extended Day is also closed. All school activities are canceled unless otherwise announced.
  - ❖ Delayed Opening - School(s) will open later than usual. The morning transportation will be delayed the same number of hours as the announced delay. Field trips are canceled. Breakfast is served. The Extended Day program

will also open late.

- ❖ Delayed Opening (Early Release Day) - If a delayed opening is announced on any early release day, the early release is canceled, and students remain until the regular daily dismissal time.
- ❖ Early Dismissal - School(s) will follow the early release schedule unless announced otherwise. Extended Day will close at the announced time and extracurricular activities, interscholastic contests, team practices, field trips, adult and community education classes, and recreation programs in schools and on school grounds are canceled.

## **BEHAVIOR**

ASFS students are expected to behave in a respectful and responsible manner in school, on the playground, on the bus, on school field trips, and at bus stops. Students are expected to follow the directions of their teachers and not interfere in the learning of other students.

Dress code: Students should be dressed appropriately for a learning environment. Clothes should be seasonally appropriate, and shoes should be appropriate for recess and PE. Jackets and/or coats should be appropriate for the weather and should have the students' names inside.

Snack Policy: Gum, candy, and soda are not allowed in school or on the bus.

Valuables: Children are not allowed to bring toys, cell phone devices, collectible cards, electronic games, skateboards, or any other valuables to school. We cannot safeguard valuables and are not responsible for them. No weapons, or anything looking like a weapon, is ever permitted. Students are not allowed to bring any computer technology to school, including personal iPads, kindle or e-readers, computers, or any other personal technology. ASFS is not responsible for the loss or damage of valuables.

## **BUS REGULATIONS**

Each school bus is monitored by two safety patrols. Children are asked to remain in their seats and talk quietly. Bus transportation is a privilege that students can lose due to misbehavior. Any child who persists in behavior that represents a threat to the safety of others will be denied bus transportation. Parents are responsible for the transportation of students who have lost bus privileges. For more information about bus routes and schedules, call the Arlington County Transportation Office at 703-228-6640.

## **CLINIC (703-228-7676)**

Health services are provided by Arlington Department of Human Services, Public Health Division, School Health Bureau. ASFS has one health clinic, staffed by a full-time clinic aide and a part-time registered nurse. Clinic aides are specially trained to provide first aid, dispense routine medicines, and provide basic care for ill students. The nurse supervises these daily activities and provides support for children with special health

needs. The nurse also provides consultation to parents and students, response in emergency situations in the schools, and collaborates with teachers and school leadership to provide education and support for the health of the entire student body. Nurses also participate in community health assessment and education.

School Health Services include:

- First aid and emergency care.
- Routine medication administration
- Referrals - Health and social services
- Communicable disease surveillance and control
- Individual student consultation
- Resources for students, parents and staff
- Health program planning and management
- Health screening (e.g. vision and hearing)

No medication should be administered by a teacher if the clinic aide or nurse is available. Teachers care for minor injuries (scrapes, scratches, small cuts) using the classroom first aid fanny pack. For more information see:

<https://health.arlingtonva.us/public-health/>.

## **COMMUNICATION**

ParentVue: This interactive online tool is used by APS to share and receive secure information about your child. Report cards, test results, bus information, and other student-specific information will be posted there for a parent's secure account only. Parents update their students' information in ParentVue each fall, and they can edit demographic and emergency information throughout the year. For help opening or accessing a ParentVue account, please contact the main office at 703-228-7670.

ParentSquare: APS uses ParentSquare much as a social media-type tool. Communications from both ASFS and Arlington Public Schools will come through to your email and text. Parents can also receive direct messages from their child's teacher.

Backpack "Mail": Notices from the school, the teachers, and the PTA are sent home in your child's backpack on Wednesday. Please be sure to check it. Look for your child's folder every Wednesday.

The Electric News: This weekly e-newsletter is sent via email to the ASFS community on Wednesday mornings during the school year, containing upcoming key dates, PTA updates, and the latest school news and events.

Back-to-School Night: This is a time for parents to meet in their child's classroom to learn about the expectations and curriculum of that grade level.

Conferences: Parent teacher conferences are held twice a year, in October and March. School is closed while teachers meet with parents to discuss their children's progress in school. Teachers will send home notices at least a week in advance to schedule conferences. Teachers make their best effort to accommodate everyone's needs, within the obvious limitations. Parent teacher conferences will only be available the specified days and times.

Leadership: If you have concerns during the school year, please share them with your child's teacher and/or Ms. Miller, Mr. Sokolove, Ms. Proietti or Ms. Hickmott. Parents are encouraged to be open and discuss their concerns with teachers. We believe this approach will ensure more effective and positive communications.

Teachers: All teachers have voicemail and email. Emails are responded to within 48 hours. This is the most rapid way to communicate with your child's teacher(s). All emails are on the ASFS website. Please remember to be respectful during your communications. We all want to work together in a collegial and collaborative manner.

Report Cards: Reports cards are issued for grades 1-5 at the end of each of the four marking periods. Kindergarten report cards are issued twice a year. ASFS uses standard-based reporting. Report cards will be posted to ParentVue accounts only.

## **DROP OFF, PICKUP, AND PARKING PROCEDURES**

Children who do not ride the school bus should be dropped off no earlier than 8:40 AM. and no later than 8:50 AM. Children are permitted to go to their classroom starting at 8:40 AM when the doors open. School starts promptly at 8:50 a.m.

Carpool Lane: Drop off for car riders is on Lincoln Street. Parents should obey all traffic rules and pull into the drop off lane. A staff member will be there to greet your child. Parents should remain in the car.

Parent Walk-Up: Parents who park and then walk students up to the door should park in designated spots on Lincoln Street or Kirkwood Road. To ensure safety, use designated cross walks and sidewalks. The circle in front of the school is for school buses only.

## **EXTENDED DAY (703-228-7677)**

The ASFS Extended Day Program offers before and after school childcare (grades preK-5). Sessions operate from 7:00–8:50 a.m, and 3:50–6:00 p.m. Extended Day is an accountability program. Parents must notify Extended Day when their child's schedule changes and they will not be attending the program. Parents should also inform teachers of these changes. All children must be picked-up by the 6:00 p.m. closing time.

## **FOOD SERVICE**

APS is committed to providing nutritious meals for all students. Students are also welcome to bring their lunch from home.

- Breakfast. Each morning breakfast is served to students who wish to participate. The cost of breakfast is \$1.80. Students participating in the free lunch program may also receive free breakfast. Students may not bring breakfast from home to eat during the school breakfast program.
- Lunch. A hot lunch is served daily. Lunch menus can be printed from <http://www.apsva.us/page/22528>. The cost of a regular lunch (milk, entree, and fruit or vegetable) is \$3.25. Milk alone is \$.90.

Free & Reduced-Fee Lunch: Applications are available for free and reduced price meals on the APS website, with eligibility based on family income. These applications must be completed at the beginning of every school year and approved by Food Services.

Myschoolbucks.com: It is very important to establish an online account. In the absence of money on account, students will receive fruit and milk per APS policy. You can register for an online account by going to <https://www.myschoolbucks.com>.

Cafeteria Standards: Children, whether they buy lunch or bring it, are supervised during the lunch period. Children have 20-25 minutes for lunch per day. Your cooperation in stressing good manners with your children and respect for our lunchroom supervisors will help us in achieving good lunchroom behavior at school.

- Students are seated at tables assigned by grade and remain seated until they are excused to throw trash away or to line up for recess.
- Students clear table areas before they are excused to recess.
- Students practice good table manners and talk quietly.

## **HOMEWORK**

Our philosophy towards homework is consistent with the the Arlington Public Schools policy:

- Homework should relate to and enhance learning in the classroom by offering the student opportunities to
  - Extend learning begun in the class;
  - Work on projects individually;
  - Prepare for classroom work; and
  - Reinforce skills or review material.
- Homework should encourage a student's sense of responsibility, promote learning, and improve study habits.
- Homework should offer the student opportunities to
  - Learn to budget time and energies, especially in terms of long-range assignments;
  - Develop a sense of personal accountability; and
  - Develop an ability to appraise progress in learning.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Please label all clothing and belongings! All found articles are placed in the Lost and Found in the multipurpose room. At the end of each grading period all unclaimed articles are donated. Please do not send money with your child to school, unless it is for lunch. We are not responsible for money lost at school.

## **RECESS**

Recess is thirty minutes a day typically outdoors, weather permitting. Given the value of recess in a student's physical and social development and the need for periodic breaks from classroom instruction, withholding recess will be a rare occurrence, and only used as a last resort. Students will be given periodic breaks during activities that require them to be seated for long periods of time.

Playground rules - Students will:

- play safely and will observe ASFS behavior standards at all times.
- play in view of supervisors.
- include all who wish to participate in games.
- show respect for themselves, peers, adults, and school property.
- not fight or engage in other potentially dangerous activities.
- not tackle, push, nor grab clothing.
- not bring personal sports equipment nor electronic devices.
- leave sand, rocks, sticks, and other objects on the ground.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Birthday Observances: Please do not send in food for your child's class to celebrate their birthdays; many students have dietary restrictions and significant allergies. Students may bring in "goody bags" to distribute to celebrate their birthdays.

Class Parties: Classes celebrate parties at various times during the year. PTA Room Parents generally organize these and may collect funds to cover the parties.

Family STEM Night : This school-wide event is held in the winter. All family members are encouraged to attend this event and engage in building and constructing activities.

Field Trips: Permission slips and accompanied forms must be signed by a parent/guardian for each child taking a field trip. All field trip forms must have an emergency contact person's cell phone number within Arlington in order to participate in any field trip. Each class generally takes two to four field trips per year. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to chaperone their child's field trips. Siblings may not attend field trips. If you wish to chaperone a field trip, you must have completed your online volunteer application and received approval.

Global Holiday Celebration: This event invites all families to share their cultures through an International Day of Celebration and is on the last day before winter break.

Halloween Expectations: Halloween is celebrated with a costumed parade and classroom parties. If you do not want your child to participate, please inform his/her classroom teacher one week in advance and alternate activities will be provided. If your child participates and chooses to wear a costume, he/she must bring all components of the costume in a separate bag. NO part of the costume is to be worn to school. All parts of the costume must be able to be put on by the student. Make-up, hair gel, swords, knives, lasers, sharp objects, artificial nails, high heels, or scary costumes are not permitted.

Instrumental Music: Students in grades 4 and 5 may attend classes for band or orchestra instruments during the school day, with a commitment of one year. Some instruments can be rented from the county. Parents should contact our music teachers for more information.

Library: The ASFS library is designed to encourage children to develop the lifetime skills and habits associated with library use, research, and reading for pleasure. Children are allowed to check out books to take home, and they are expected to return books within a reasonable length of time. If a book is lost, the student must pay for it.

Musical Performances: Arlington Science Focus School students perform a number of daytime and evening performances each year to which parents are invited. We ask that younger siblings not be brought to daytime performances.

Outside the Box Day: Outside the Box Day provides parents and community members an opportunity to see what our children are working on in science. Ideas for experiments derive from their studies in science, mathematics, language arts, social studies, music, art, health, and/or physical education. Individual and group experiments are demonstrated and explained by students to their parents. This activity utilizes the design brief model used in the Investigation Station.

Safety Patrols: Fourth and fifth grade students who are trained to encourage safe crossing of streets and good bus behavior are chosen to be safety patrols. Patrols assist with drop-off and dismissal both at the school and on the buses.

School Store: ASFS has a cash-only school store inside the atrium twice a week. Fourth and fifth grade students run the store, with parental supervision. Typical items include paper, pencils, erasers, crayons, and colored pencils, all sold at very low prices.

Student Council: The Student Council Association (SCA) is an organization designed to build and promote student leadership. It consists of an elected representative and alternate from each class. Officers are elected from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in a school-wide election. SCA designs special events and spirit weeks throughout the year.

## **TECHNOLOGY**



At ASFS our goal is to produce students who are confident and competent in the use of technology as it relates to their production of authentic classroom products and daily use in an academic setting.

Accessibility of Devices: All grade levels have iPads available for daily student use in each classroom. All students will be assigned individual iPads for school use. Students and parents must sign the Technology Parent/Student Usage agreement the first week of school. Parents are fully responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen devices.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

Parent volunteers are extremely active at Arlington Science Focus School. Parents can volunteer to help in the classroom, to participate in fundraising activities, to help maintain and improve the grounds, and many other activities. Many activities can be fit into the schedule of working parents. All parents are encouraged to complete the annual ASFS PTA Volunteer Form to share their volunteering interests. In addition to supporting our school, volunteering is a great way to connect with fellow ASFS parents.

Volunteers and Chaperones must be approved through the online APS application process, which can be found on the APS website. For more information, contact the main office at 703-228-7670.

All parents entering the school building past the office need to sign in with their drivers' licenses at the kiosk in the front office. Non-ASFS siblings are not permitted to accompany parents who are volunteering.