

Frequently Asked Questions Flint Lake Elementary School

A.R. - What is A.R.? A.R. stands for Accelerated Reader. Accelerated Reader is a reading program used by many teachers at Flint Lake to promote reading at each child's individualized level. To learn more about how Accelerated Reader is used in your child's class, please contact your child's teacher.

ARRIVAL - How does arrival to school work? Our arrival to school each day is happy and action-packed. If you choose to drive your child to school, you can help make this a smooth and safe process by driving through the front car line and dropping your child at the curb. An adult will be outside to greet your child and monitor his or her safe entrance into the building. On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, please plan to drop-off your child at 8:30. On Wednesday, (late start), please plan to drop off your child at 9:00. If your child will be eating breakfast, they are welcome to arrive 10 minutes earlier.

ASSESSMENTS - What standardized assessments will my students take this year? We have several standardized tests that are taken by students during the school year. Several are required by the state of Indiana and others are part of the Valparaiso Community Schools assessment program. These tools give us great ongoing data so that we can develop a powerful educational plan for each child. Here is a list of the standardized assessments that students will take:

mCLASS Reading and Math - This achievement assessment is given to Kindergarten and 1st grade 3 times per year.

NWEA – This achievement assessment is given to 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders 3 times per year.

IREAD3 - This state reading assessment is given to 3rd grade once per year.

ISTEP+ - This state assessment is given to 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade once per year.

CoGAT- This ability assessment that is given to grades K, 2, and 5 once per year.

BACKGROUND CHECKS- All visitors for our school must have a Limited Criminal Background check. This is required for scheduled classroom volunteering, lunch visits, field trips and all other opportunities to spend time at Flint Lake. You can complete this requirement in the school office, and this should be done one week prior to a visit. If you are not notified of a concern after one week, you are welcome to visit our school, and we are happy to have you!

BEHAVIOR BOOSTS- At Flint Lake we value student behavior. Throughout the school year our staff will be doing behavior boosts with our students. During this time, school behavior expectations are reviewed and practiced. This is a great opportunity to build school community and a positive school culture.

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TOOL- This year at Flint Lake we will be using a newly developed Behavior Modification Tool. This behavior referral form helps us to identify the functions of a behavior and in turn implement strategies to make the student successful. Furthermore, the tool will be used to help communicate student behavior between the school and parents. If you receive a Behavior Modification

Tool referral form for your child, please read it, sign it and return it to your child's teacher. Of course if you have any questions about the form, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB - What is the Birthday Book Club? The Birthday Book Club is run by our school librarian and is a way to donate a book to our school media center in honor of your child's birthday. Information about the Birthday Book Club is sent home each year in the fall, but if you have any questions about this program, please call the school and ask to speak with our librarian.

BREAKFAST – Is breakfast served at school? Yes! Breakfast is served at school every morning, and all students are invited to eat with us. The cost of a student breakfast is \$1.40 and is debited from a student's account when he or she eats. If you do not choose to have your child eat breakfast at school, don't forget to leave time for them to eat at home. This will help your child avoid tummy aches and be energized to start learning!

BUS INFORMATION - Where can I find my child's bus information? Bus numbers, bus stops, pick-up times and drop off times are available on Skyward Parent Access approximately 2-3 days prior to starting school. If you need to contact the transportation department, please call 219-531-3121

First Day Arrival- We encourage families to follow what will be your child's arrival and drop-off routine from day one. So, if your child will generally ride the bus, we encourage you to use the bus starting on the first day. That being said, if you do place your child on the bus the first day of school, but would like to be present for their arrival, you are welcome to meet your child at school that morning. Simply park in the front parking lot, enter the school, and wait for your child in the main foyer. What an exciting day!

DISMISSAL - How does dismissal from school work? Our students leave school via numerous routes at the end of each day. Therefore we ask that you please consider planning a consistent dismissal routine and procedure for your child. This helps your student feel comfort and confidence in knowing what they are to do at 3:15. That being said, we know that changes in plans may occur. Therefore, we ask that you please send a note to school in the morning if your child will be following alternate plans. If you have an unexpected emergency, please call the school by 11:00 a.m. Anyone picking up your child from school should be listed as an emergency contact and should be prepared to provide a photo I.D. Please know that students are not dismissed from the office at the end of the day and that the car line should be utilized.

DISMISSAL – What are the procedures for picking up my child from school? (Please see the Parent Pick-Up section below.)

EXCEPTIONAL EXPLORERS – Exceptional Explorer Points are earned by our students for excellent bus behavior. Each day the bus riders can earn Exceptional Explorer points toward the goal for our entire school. Once a certain number of points has been met, the entire school will celebrate.

FORGOTTEN SKYWARD PASSWORD - What should I do if I've forgotten my SKYWARD password? If you ever forget your Skyward username or password, you may use the "forgotten password" option on

the website log-in. If you are still having difficulty, please call the school and we will assist you in resetting it.

GOTCHA – We love to catch students being good. If your child shares that they received a GOTCHA card, that is a good thing! Please help us to celebrate with him or her.

GRADES - How can I review and understand my student's grades? At Flint Lake, we promote a rigorous curriculum. A student's grades should be a true reflection of how that child is performing relative to that rigorous curriculum. As a parent, you can regularly check your student's grades on Skyward Parent Access. Grade postings in Skyward begin in 1st grade.

JUNIOR GREAT BOOKS- Junior Great Books are curricular materials used in the Valparaiso Community Schools to stretch the thinking of students in need of a challenge. This is just one of the many ways that we differentiate for students in order to best meet their individual needs.

KINDERGARTEN PLAY DATES - What are kindergarten play dates? Kindergarten play dates take place prior to the start of school on our Flint Lake playground. This is a chance for kindergartners to become acclimated to Flint Lake, our play equipment and their new peer group. Information about kindergarten play dates is shared at Kindergarten Round Up and via phone messages.

LUNCH VISITS - May I eat lunch with my child at school? Yes! We would love to have you join us for lunch at school! When you visit for lunch, plan to eat a school lunch or a packed lunch from home. Fast food is not permitted in our lunch room. If you would like to eat a school lunch, call the office by 9:00 a.m. to place your order. An adult school lunch costs \$3.45. (Please bring exact change if possible.) Once you arrive for lunch, please check in at the school office to sign in and get a visitor's pass. NOTE: All visitors must have a completed criminal background check on file with the school. You should complete this background check requirement in our school office one week prior to a visit.

MEDICATIONS - What should I do if my child needs to take medications at school? If your child needs to take prescription medications OR over-the-counter medications at school, a doctor order is needed along with a parent signature. Medications must also be in their original container and/or a prescription box. This includes pain relievers, topical creams, cough drops and more. All medications must be stored in the nurse's office. Please contact our school nurse with further questions.

MIND UP – Mind Up is a program that instills mindful awareness in all of us. Mind Up teaches about the brain, how it works, and how we can take control of our thinking to attain positive results. Your students may come home talking about the Prefrontal Cortex, the Amygdala, the Hippocampus and relaxation techniques. Please engage with them in this exciting, healthy new learning.

NIGHT OWL -At Flint Lake we use an after school program called Night Owls as a consequence for behavior of concern. If a child is referred to a Night Owl detention, he or she will be asked to stay at school until 4:00 pm, and must be picked up by an adult at that time. Pick up is in the front of the school. Scheduling a Night Owl visit will be collaborative between the parent and the appropriate staff

member. While the student is at Night Owls, the student and teacher will work together to build a plan promoting positive behaviors moving forward.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES - When will parent/teacher conferences be held? Parent teacher conferences are available upon request and can be done via phone or in person. Please call the school at any time with questions about your child's progress or to schedule a conference with your child's teacher.

PICK-UP - What are the procedures for picking up my child from school? If you wish to pick up your child from school, this should be your normal dismissal plan. Please arrive at Flint Lake by 3:15 and enter the pick-up line at the front of the school. From there, you should be prepared to show a photo I.D. Once you are established as a parent who provides transportation for your child, you will be issued a car tag that you should place in the front windshield of your vehicle. If someone other than a parent is picking up your child, please be sure that individual is on your child's emergency card and has a photo I.D. If you need to unexpectedly pick up your child from school, please send a note to the school in the morning. If an emergency arises and a dismissal change is needed, please call the school. Please know that students are not dismissed from the office at the end of the day and that the car line should be utilized.

PRECAUTIONARY DRILLS – We regularly practice precautionary drills for your child's safety. This includes a fire drill, a storm drill and a red alert (lock-down) drill. Feel free to take the time to discuss these with your child. Also, if you have any questions about these drills, do not hesitate to call the school.

PTO - What is the PTO? The PTO is the Parent Teacher Organization. Being a part of this group is a great way to become involved in our school. For more information about our PTO visit the Flint Lake PTO Facebook page.

Skyward - What is Skyward? At registration, you created a Skyward Parent Access account. That account should be accessed to look at your child's bus information, class assignments, grades, report cards and more. Please keep your Skyward username and password handy in order to access important information throughout the school year.

RECESS- What are the guidelines for recess? We love sunshine! We love snow! In the Valparaiso Community Schools, we go outside for recess each day unless it is raining or the wind chill is below 0 degrees Fahrenheit. That being said, it is imperative that you send your child appropriately dressed for outdoor play. That means that students should wear sneakers during warm weather and complete snow gear (coat, snow pants, boots, hat, gloves) in the winter months. With your help, your child can enjoy some healthy physical activity each day.

REPORT CARDS - How will I review my child's report card? Valparaiso Community Schools no longer issue paper copies of report cards. When report cards are ready at the end of each quarter, you can view your child's card through your Skyward Parent Access account.

SCHOOL MESSENGER - What is School Messenger? School Messenger is the vehicle we use to send you e-mail, phone and text messages. We reserve this message system for important reminders. If you ever fail to receive clear messages or are having difficulty receiving messages, please contact the school.

SNACKS AND SPECIAL TREATS - What are the guidelines for sending snacks for my child or special treats for the class? In support of our Valparaiso Community Schools Wellness Committee and in compliance with our Elementary Student Handbook, all food items brought into our school must be a healthy choice. Fast food meals and soft drinks are not permitted in our lunchroom. Snacks should only be provided at the teacher's request. If you would like to celebrate special days (such as a birthday) for your child, only non-food items are permitted.

TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS - How can I find out my child's teacher assignment? Teacher assignments are finalized the week after registration. Once class assignments are made, you will receive a phone message that assignments have been posted on Skyward.

TEACHER CONTACT - What is the best way to contact my child's teacher? The best way to contact your child's teacher is via e-mail. Also, feel free to call the school at any time.

VALPARAISO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FOUNDATION – Our Valparaiso Schools Foundation is another strong supporter of Valparaiso Schools and another great way to become involved. If you are interested in learning more about the Foundation or its events, please call the administration building at 219-531-3000.