



# FERNLEAF COMMUNITY HANDBOOK



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# ABOUT FERNLEAF

## MISSION

Fernleaf Community Charter School's mission is to foster a rich learning environment that embodies the essence of community, understanding, and the human spirit. Grounded in humble respect for our surroundings, the individual, and the world as a whole, we seek to engage the unique passions and aptitudes of our school community so that in addition to achieving academic fluency, students become thoughtful, compassionate, and engaged.

## FERNLEAF FUNDAMENTALS

Everything we do at FernLeaf is rooted in our mission and steeped with intention. See below for FernLeaf's mission and the four pillars of a FernLeaf education which we lovingly call the 'FernLeaf Fundamentals.' Our mission & these fundamentals guide all of our actions and create the beautiful school environment that is FernLeaf!

### **High Quality Academic Instruction**

FernLeaf's licensed teachers are skilled at delivering High Quality Academic Instruction and helping students master core academic content and skills. Did you know that FernLeaf outperforms the state average on standardized tests in every area and that many of our students rank in the highest percentiles in the state? Students are able to develop new skills and apply their learning through a robust Project Based Learning (PBL), Outdoor Education and [Experiential Learning](#) program. Learn more about FernLeaf academic instruction [here](#).

### **Rich Learning Environments**

FernLeaf's creative, licensed and experienced teachers work tirelessly to craft rich learning environments that bring learning to life, help students apply what they are learning in meaningful ways, and simply make school a special place for them to come to each day. [Project Based Learning](#), [8+ field work opportunities EVERY YEAR](#), an emphasis on [outdoor and environmental education](#), as well as a wide array of elective offerings allow students to take their learning to another level and discover their unique passions and aptitudes. FernLeaf also offers EVERY grade level an [overnight experience as well as multiple optional domestic and overseas travel opportunities](#) to students every year!

### **Social & Emotional Growth & Development**

The social and emotional growth & development of FernLeaf students is supported through an ongoing school-wide focus that helps them learn to regulate emotions, develop healthy identities, nurture supportive and meaningful relationships, and build skills for responsible

decision making. Daily class meetings, regular mindfulness practices, Counselor-led classes, & more just skim the surface of how we integrate social and emotional growth and development at FernLeaf!

## **Community & Culture**

FernLeaf nurtures a kind, compassionate, and thoughtful school culture while working to build a strong sense of community amongst our students, staff, and families. Our [creative and caring teachers](#) lead by example and help students to feel connected to something greater than themselves. Regular community events, unique school activities, multi-grade level learning, and more all work together to strengthen our core community.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FernLeaf is governed by an independent Board of Directors that is responsible for the legal and financial well-being of the school. Board members are not involved in the day to day operations of the school and should not be contacted directly by FernLeaf families. All ideas, questions, or concerns should be directed to the appropriate school staff.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Creek Campus  
58 Howard Gap Rd.  
Fletcher, NC 28732  
Phone: (828) 684-3645  
Fax: (828) 575-5402

Wilderness Campus  
249 Old Hendersonville Rd  
Fletcher, NC 28732  
Phone: (828) 630-1150  
Fax: (828) 630-1175

Website: [www.fernleafccs.org](http://www.fernleafccs.org)  
Email: [info@fernleafccs.org](mailto:info@fernleafccs.org)

## **FAMILY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

We are thrilled to be a part of your family's life and to partner with you to benefit all the students of FernLeaf. Everyone has something unique and valuable to offer and we believe that active participation in your student's learning community benefits everyone.

In order for FernLeaf to best serve your student, we ask that you/your student:

- Please be respectful of the teachers and other students by making sure students arrive on time and stay for the entire day.
- Support your student in getting to school on-time and avoiding excessive absences.
- Plan vacations around scheduled school breaks.
- Allow for adequate sleep and nutrition.
- Stay informed of current classroom projects and lessons.
- Show interest in what is being learned/completed at school.
- Offer encouragement and positive reinforcement when needed.
- Spend time with your student so that his/her emotional needs are met.
- Work with your student and your student's teacher to develop a plan to best meet your student's individual needs.
- Regularly participate in FernLeaf functions and activities.
- Embrace and adhere to school policies for the benefit of the entire FernLeaf community.

### WAYS FOR PARENTS TO GET INVOLVED AT FERNLEAF

There are numerous ways for families to get involved at FernLeaf. Examples include:

- Volunteering in classrooms
- Chaperoning Fieldwork
- Volunteering at FrondFest
- Helping out with Stone Soup
- Attending Community Events
- Participating in Career Day (High School/Middle School)
- Helping with Popcorn Day
- Organizing/taking care of Lost and Found
- Donating your skills

You can find specific ways to get involved by contacting your student's teacher and monitoring school and classroom newsletters.

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

## SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

- The school day begins at 8:00am and ends at 3:00pm. Every Friday is an early dismissal at 12:00pm.

- Students may arrive at school at 7:30am. All students who are not enrolled in after school activities must be picked up by 3:30pm Monday - Thursday and by 12:30pm on Fridays.
- To help avoid traffic congestion and delaying the start and end of the school day, families should utilize the established procedures for morning dropoff and afternoon pickup. Specific pickup and drop-off procedures will be regularly communicated to families and are subject to change.

### K - 8 PERSONAL DEVICES AT SCHOOL

Cellphones, smartwatches, and other personal electronic devices are strictly prohibited before, during, or after school unless at the direct request of a teacher for instructional use. The only exception is for Kindles or eReaders which are to be used during designated or otherwise approved reading times. When a device is brought to school with permission, the parent or guardian of the student accepts all responsibility for damaged or lost items. This policy includes all electronic devices such as cellphones, tablets, and handheld game systems. Any devices brought to school without the request of a teacher will be kept in the front office until a parent/guardian picks them up. Repeated instances of violations to this policy will result in disciplinary action.

Special permission for students and families in unique circumstances may be provided with Administrative approval. Please contact the front office for additional guidance.

### HIGH SCHOOL CELL PHONE AND PERSONAL DEVICES POLICY

**Cell Phones:** FernLeaf High School students are permitted to bring cellphones to school, but **are not permitted to use them at any time while on campus or while engaged in school sponsored activities.** This includes before and after school and during school sponsored events or activities unless their use is explicitly permitted by a staff member. Any incident of a student using their cellphone while on campus or during a school sponsored activity will result in the phone being held in the front office for parent/guardian pick up. Repeated instances of violations to this policy will result in disciplinary action.

**Personal Devices:** Smartwatches, earbuds/headphones, and other personal electronic devices are strictly prohibited before, during, or after school unless at the direct request of a teacher for instructional use. Kindles and eReaders are permitted at school, but all other personal electronic devices are prohibited including earbuds or headphones. Any devices brought to school without the request of a teacher will be kept in the front office until a parent/guardian picks them up. Ongoing or continued instances of violation of this rule will result in additional disciplinary action.

## TOYS AT SCHOOL

Toys from home are not permitted at school unless requested from your student's teacher for a special event. Toys include all non-academic, non-educational materials. As a general rule, please check with your student's teacher before sending in any items from home. Please understand that personal items from home are frequently damaged or lost. Your student's teacher and the school are not responsible for personal items brought to school.

## SUPPLY CONTRIBUTION

Each year FernLeaf asks families to pay a suggested Supply Contribution amount for each student instead of sending people out to purchase individual school supplies. This lowers the overall cost of supplies for families and provides teachers with the flexibility to better meet changing needs over the course of the school year. The Supply Contribution is a suggested amount and can be increased or decreased per a family's unique situation.

## LUNCH

FernLeaf students have two options for their healthy lunch each day. They can bring their lunch from home, or they may order lunch from school from the FernLeaf Food Truck through our online ordering platform - [My PaymentsPlus](#). You can see our current school menu and learn more about our lunch program [here](#):

*NOTE: Food for lunches is ordered and paid for in advance based on the number of orders. Therefore, FernLeaf will not provide refunds for lunches that are missed due to conflicts with fieldwork, absences, or other circumstances resulting in a missed lunch.*

Nutritious meals are an important factor in a student's ability to be successful. Therefore, we ask that students bring healthy snacks and lunch to school each day. Lunches & snacks brought to school should follow the nutrition guidelines outlined below.

- Whole foods, foods that are not processed or refined, having zero to no additives, are strongly encouraged.
- Processed foods (foods packaged in boxes, cans, or bags) should be avoided as much as possible.
- Students are encouraged to bring water to school and are permitted to bring juice, tea, or sparkling water. Candy, soda, coffee, milk shakes, and energy drinks are not permitted at school.
- Please provide any necessary utensils, napkins, or other items your student may need to enjoy their lunch.

## CELEBRATIONS/HOLIDAYS

FernLeaf does not *celebrate* holidays. Since the exploration of cultures and traditions is a natural part of a student's education, holidays may be acknowledged and discussed in a

thoughtful way, but parties and activities surrounding holidays are not part of our educational programming. Classroom community activities recognizing and celebrating a student's birthday are encouraged and are used to promote student connections. *Staff recognize student birthdays in a manner that does not involve special snacks provided by families.*

## DRESS GUIDELINES

FernLeaf embraces hands-on, experiential learning, which means students will be engaged in outdoor physical activity daily, such as field experiences, active play, adventure activities, and more. For this reason, students should dress appropriately for these activities at all times. In addition, please ensure your student is dressed appropriately for current weather conditions each day and that they always have extra clothes, including socks, at school. When a change of clothing is worn home, please replace it the next day. We don't want anyone to be uncomfortable if they get wet or muddy so we really need your help with staying on top of this. If students require a change of clothes and do not have a backup at school, parents/guardians will be contacted to bring additional clothing.

### Indoor/Outdoor Shoe Policy

At FernLeaf we work hard to balance the need for students to learn and grow through time outside with the challenges of dealing with the mess this can create. All K-4 students should follow these indoor/outdoor shoe guidelines to help support this effort. The use of Indoor and outdoor shoes is optional for students in grades 5 and above.

- Indoor footwear: Students should have a pair of comfortable indoor shoes that are easily taken off and put on. Crocs or slip on tennis shoes work well, no slippers. These will remain at school.
- Outdoor footwear: Outdoor footwear will need to be selected each day based upon current weather conditions and the forecast for the day. Hiking shoes/boots, sturdy tennis shoes, and sport sandals work well. During wet weather students must have a pair of waterproof boots (rubber boots work well).

### Exposure to the Elements

Outdoor activity and the ability to interact with our environment in all weather conditions is an important part of a student's growth and development. Students may be exposed at any time to current weather conditions and so should come to school prepared with:

- Water bottle
- Sunscreen
- Appropriate outerwear for weather conditions including jackets, hats, gloves, etc.

## **Dress Code Policy**

### Goals of FernLeaf's Student Dress Code Policy

- Maintain a safe learning environment in classes where protective or supportive clothing is needed such as science laboratory (eye protection), Physical Education (athletic supportive clothing or shoes), etc.
- Allow students to wear clothing of their choice that is comfortable.
- Allow students to wear clothing that promotes self expression.
- Allow students to wear religious attire without fear of discipline or discrimination.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing with offensive images or language, including profanity, hate speech and/or pornography.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing with images or language depicting or advocating violence or the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Ensure that all students are treated equitably.

The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and parents/guardians. FernLeaf holds the responsibility of seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, and that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating environment for any student.

Students at FernLeaf are given the most choice possible in how they dress for school. Boundaries & restrictions are necessary to support the overall educational goals of the school and must be explained within the following dress code policy.

1. BASIC PRINCIPLE: CERTAIN BODY PARTS MUST BE COVERED FOR ALL STUDENTS
  - a. Clothing must be worn in a way such that genitals, buttocks and nipples are covered with opaque material. All items listed in the "must wear" and "may wear" categories below must meet this basic principle.
2. STUDENTS MUST WEAR...\*
  - a. Shirt
  - b. Bottom: pants/sweatpants/shorts/skirt/dress/leggings
  - c. Shoes

\*School courses that include attire as part of the curriculum (for example, professionalism, public speaking and job readiness) may include assignment specific dress.

3. STUDENTS MAY WEAR...
  - a. Hats, including religious headwear
  - b. Hoodie sweatshirts
  - c. Midriff baring shirts
  - d. Pajamas
  - e. Ripped Jeans - as long as underwear is not showing
  - f. Tank tops - including halter tops, spaghetti straps and strapless "tube" tops
  - g. Athletic attire
  - h. Clothing with commercial or athletic logos provided they do not violate the goals listed above.
4. STUDENTS CANNOT WEAR...

- a. Violent language or images.
- b. Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity) or the use of the same.
- c. Hate speech, pornography, profanity.
- d. Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class.
- e. Visible underwear. Visible waistbands or straps on undergarments worn under other clothing are not a violation.
- f. Bathing suits.
- g. Helmets, masks, or headgear that obscures the face (except as a religious observance).

### BULLYING DEFINITION

Bullying means different things to different people and with *bully behaviors* being exhibited in a variety of ways, we feel it is helpful to share a common definition for our FernLeaf Community. It is important to understand that many challenging interactions with other students, including meanness, name calling, etc. are a typical part of a student's development. While challenging for students and parents, these situations often represent an important learning opportunity and do not constitute bullying. FernLeaf does not use the word bullying lightly. All concerning incidents should be reported to your student's teacher immediately.

FernLeaf's definition of bullying at school is an act of repeated verbal or physical aggression which takes place when there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. In more student friendly terms we would say that bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person with their words or body on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending themselves. Usually, bullying happens over and over.

### PARTICIPATION IN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES

In order to participate in afterschool programs and activities on or off campus, students must be in attendance at school the day of the program and meet the after school program behavior expectations. Additional requirements may vary depending on the program and include, but are not limited to: tryouts, the completion of a sports physical, etc.

After school program behavior expectations are the same as daily school expectations. These programs include Extended Care, after school class/programs, athletic activities, classes, and games, as well as social events. In order to support the enjoyment and participation of program activities by all attendees, students who violate the Code of Conduct or engage in unsafe or disrespectful behaviors may be dismissed from the program for a period of time to

be determined based on the nature of the problematic behavior. Refunds will not be offered for students who are dismissed from after school programs due to behavioral challenges.

### EXTENDED CARE

FernLeaf offers a fee-based after school program for enrolled students to provide families with a safe and nurturing environment for times when students cannot be picked up at the regular dismissal time. This program is located on our Creek Campus at 58 Howard Gap Rd., Fletcher, NC.

Hours of operation:

|                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Regular School Days (Mon - Thu): | 3:00pm - 6:00pm  |
| Early Dismissal Days (Fri):      | 12:00pm - 6:00pm |

Students in 5th grade and up must be registered for the Extended Care program to participate. Registered students are shuttled from the Wilderness Campus to the Creek Campus at dismissal. Extended Care is provided for K-4 students who are not picked up timely in the car rider line. Extended Care is not provided for 5-12 students who are not picked up as the shuttle for this program leaves at 3:00 pm.

Fees, policies and additional information related to Extended Care are available on our [website](#).

*NOTE: The costs of extended care including staffing, snacks, resources, and activities are shared by the enrolled students. As a result, FernLeaf will not provide refunds for extended care days that are missed due to absence, loss of privileges, suspension, opt-out, or other circumstances that result in a student not participating.*

### FIELDWORK AT FERNLEAF

We believe in the importance of enriching a student's learning through off-site learning opportunities which FernLeaf calls fieldwork. Students will participate in approximately eight fieldwork experiences each year, typically about once each month. Fieldwork is an integral part of the FernLeaf experience and our educational approach. These trips provide opportunities to build school community, make connections within our greater community, and provide students with access to rich and meaningful experiences that support their education and enrich their lives.

Your student's teaching team will keep you informed of all fieldwork plans. Please be sure to read all fieldwork communications carefully and send your student to school prepared for the day. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that lunch is not ordered on days when fieldwork is scheduled.

It is critical that we provide a safe and productive fieldwork experience for all students on every trip while also building constructive and enduring relationships with our community partners. Respectful, safe, and cooperative behaviors are necessary to ensure safety and the

overall integrity of our fieldwork program. Students who violate the FernLeaf Code of Conduct while on fieldwork or receive a suspension during the school day will not be eligible to participate in their class or grade level's next fieldwork trip.

*NOTE: Fieldwork is an integral part of FernLeaf's instructional programming which has costs that are shared evenly by all students in a class/grade level. As a result, families are expected to pay for fieldwork whether or not the student is in attendance. FernLeaf will not remove fieldwork fees or provide refunds for fieldwork that is missed due to absence, loss of privileges, suspension, opt-out, or other circumstances that result in a student not participating.*

## **OVERNIGHT FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES**

All students at FernLeaf have an overnight experience every year. An important part of FernLeaf's mission is to help students grow in numerous ways beyond just academics, and multi day overnight fieldwork experiences are an important part of this. Time away from families in a safe, structured, and fun environment allows students to develop self-confidence and build independence in ways that are just not possible in other settings. Because these opportunities are run by FernLeaf, a trusted partner in their student's education, parents are able to feel confident about their student's safety and the quality of the experience. These trips are chaperoned by the student's grade level teachers and other FernLeaf staff. Parents are not permitted to attend overnight trips. Participation in Overnight Experiences is a required component of the FernLeaf curriculum.

Overnight experiences also help students to develop stronger interpersonal skills along with deeper, more meaningful relationships with peers and teachers. In addition to all of these benefits, overnights simply help students to love school, and contribute to a rich and meaningful life.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

FernLeaf is committed to creating opportunities for all students to participate in school programs including but not limited to extended care, after school activities, school lunch, fieldwork, and annual overnights. Financial assistance is based on the Federal Poverty Guidelines. If you would like to apply for financial assistance for any program at FernLeaf or if you would like to learn more about financial assistance please email [assistance@fernleafccs.org](mailto:assistance@fernleafccs.org).

## **SIGNING IN AND OUT**

- Students may not leave the campus at any time during the regular school day unless they are signed out from the office.
- Students who return to campus after being signed out must be signed back in.

- Parents/Guardians should schedule student appointments outside the regular school day as much as possible. Friday after early dismissal is a great time to schedule non-emergency appointments.
- Parents are asked to limit late arrivals and early sign-outs as they cause a disruption to the school day and have a negative impact on the student leaving early, other students in the class, and the overall integrity of the educational program.
- *Students are not permitted to be signed out between 2:30 - 3:00 pm Monday - Thursday and 11:30 - 12:00 pm Fridays. Please plan accordingly.*

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance at school is not only an essential element to a successful school experience, it is also a state law for all students under the age of 16. Every effort should be made to attend school to gain the full benefit of the educational opportunity available. Absences are coded as either "excused" or "unexcused."

All absences should be reported by parents and guardians [through Infinite Campus](#). A link can also be found on the school website. It is helpful to let your student's teacher know when your student will be absent, but Infinite Campus is where absences are officially recorded.

### Excused Absences

- Injury or illness
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious observance
- Approved planned educational leave
- Court or administrative proceedings
- Medical or dental appointments

### Unexcused Absences

- Absences due to any reason other than those listed above are "unexcused" with no exceptions.
- State law requires the school to notify parents/guardians the parent in writing students reach certain absence milestones. If a student accumulates 7 unexcused absences, parents will be contacted by the appropriate school staff to discuss the reasons for absences, the history of attendance and make a recommendation to address the problem that they believe to be in the best interest of the student.
- After 10 unexcused absences, state law requires that school officials review the situation and determine if the student is truant. Truancy reporting is to be decided based on circumstances of the absences and history of school attendance. If it is determined that the student is truant, the FernLeaf is legally obligated to make a report to the Department of Juvenile Justice.

In Kindergarten through 12th Grade, attendance is required for a minimum of 90% of school days per year. A student who is absent 17 days or more may be retained.

Students arriving after 11:30 am or leaving before 11:30 am will be marked absent for the day, Monday - Thursday.

### Late Arrivals to School

The school day begins at 8:00 am. It is important that all students are in their classrooms and ready to start their day by 8:00 each day. Please understand that late arrival has an impact on other students and staff and sends the message to your own student that timeliness is not important. Students arriving late must be walked into the front office and signed in. Please plan on increased traffic at school beginning at 7:50 am and allow ample time for your student(s) to arrive on time to school daily.

### ILLNESS

The health and wellness of the school community should be balanced with the student's educational needs. We understand that balancing work with caring for sick students at home is a challenge, but when students attend school when they are sick it disrupts the educational experience of others and increases the likelihood that the illness will spread throughout the classroom and school. Students should stay home when they have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (student must be free of any fever over 100° without the use of medication for 24 hours before returning to school)
- Vomiting or diarrhea (24 hours must pass since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea)
- Unidentified rash
- Chicken Pox
- Strep throat: until treated by a physician
- Conjunctivitis ("pink eye"): until student has been on medication for 24 hours

Classroom teachers, the school nurse, and administration are authorized to send a student home from school if their condition warrants this. The student will be released to parents; if parents are not available, they will be released to an individual designated by parents on the Student Information Form.

### Head Lice & Active Nits

- Parents of students with lice and/or nits will be notified and referred for treatment.
- Students may return to school once treatment has occurred and all nits have been removed. The parent is asked to bring the student to the front office and have the student's head checked again for lice/nits.
- If no live lice or nits are present, the student may remain at school. Otherwise, the parent will be asked to take the student home and continue treatment.

## K - 8 PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Promotion to the next grade level at FernLeaf is based on multiple factors including but not limited to:

- School based assessments
- Student work samples
- Progress reports
- Standardized assessments
- Attendance for a minimum of 157 days per school year

When deciding promotion or retention, the Promotion and Retention Committee will review the above components concerning a student's academic, social, and personal growth and development. The School Director will make the final determination for all students' promotion or retention.

When the possibility of retention for any student arises, teachers and/or administrators will communicate with parents or guardians as early as possible and on an ongoing basis through conferences, phone and/or email correspondence. The goal of all communication will be to inform parents and students of the risk of retention and to develop appropriate strategies for determining the best course of action that serves the student's best interest.

## High School Promotion Requirements:

For students enrolled in FernLeaf's High School program, specific credits must be earned in order to progress to the next grade level.

- **To be promoted to the 10th Grade:** A student must have earned 5 or more credits, including English I and a Math credit.
- **To be promoted to 11th Grade:** A student must have earned 11 or more credits, including English I & II, two Math, one Social Studies, and one Science credit.
- **To be promoted to 12th Grade:** A student must have earned 16 or more credits, including English I, II, & III, three Math, two Social Studies, and two Science credits including Biology. Students must be in a position to complete a minimum of 22 units required for graduation by the end 12th Grade.

*Please note:*

*High school credits earned in middle school do not count towards credits that must be earned each year in order to be promoted to the next grade. However, credits earned in middle school do count towards the total number of credits necessary to satisfy graduation requirements.*

## TRANSPORTATION

- Parents will be asked to provide FernLeaf with written instructions whenever regular transportation plans change or when a student is to be released to someone other than parents, a legal guardian, or person designated on the Student Information Form.
- During morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up students should only be unloaded in the designated loading area while staff is present.
- FernLeaf offers bus service to students based on a lottery and waitlist system. If you would like to sign up for school transportation for your student or learn more about our program [please visit the school website for more information](#).
- If your student is registered for the bus they will be placed on the bus at afternoon dismissal unless enrolled in an afterschool activity/extended care or the [DO NOT RIDE BUS HOME Form](#) is submitted before 2:00 PM (11:00 AM on Fridays) on the day of transportation.

## STUDENT DRIVERS

FernLeaf students wishing to park on campus must obtain a parking permit. Students may purchase a parking permit through [MyPaymentsPlus](#) once they reach 10th grade at FernLeaf. As part of the registration process, [both the student and the parent/guardian must review the parking pass requirements noted here](#).

Parking pass application and fee must be completed using [MyPaymentsPlus](#). No refunds will be given for suspended or revoked parking passes or for a student who decides they no longer want to park on campus. In the event that a student loses parking privileges, the parking pass must be returned immediately to the front office.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER PLANS

The safety of our school community as a whole is our primary concern when inclement weather presents itself. We understand the inconvenience, stress, and difficulty associated with school closings, delays, and early dismissals. We will always err on the side of caution to protect our students, families, teachers, and the community. FernLeaf does not always follow the inclement weather decisions of the surrounding counties.

When there are changes in FernLeaf's schedule due to inclement weather:

- Announcements will be made on WLOS TV and wlos.com
- The school website and Social Media will be updated
- You will receive a phone call, text, and/or email message communicating details regarding closure, delay, virtual day, etc.

Virtual Day Activities for School Closings Related to Inclement Weather:

When a Virtual Day is called you will receive an email from your student's Home Crew teacher containing assigned activities, a variety of choice activities, and an online form to confirm that your student has completed the work (used for attendance purposes). These tasks are meant to be meaningful and engaging and are a good way to connect with your student and see what they are learning at school.

## CONTINUUM OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RELATED SERVICES

Special education refers to a range of services that can be provided in different ways and in different settings. There's no "one size fits all" approach to special education. Special Education is tailored to meet the individual needs of a student with disabilities.

FernLeaf Community Charter School offers a full continuum of special education and related services to students who have been determined eligible for special education services by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Referral, evaluation, identification, and special education services are provided as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act and the North Carolina Procedures Governing Programs and Services for Children with Disabilities.

Eligibility is based on meeting specific criteria, through a multi-tiered system of support as well as individualized assessments and evaluations, for one or more areas of disabilities. The disability must have an adverse effect on the student's educational performance and to the extent that specially designed instruction is needed. The IEP team will determine if a student meets the criteria for eligibility and develop an individualized education program for any eligible student. IEPs are implemented using research-based instructional practices and strategies. Special education teachers work in collaboration with general education teachers and parents to ensure all students with IEPs receive a Free, Appropriate Public Education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepares them for further education, employment and independent living.

FernLeaf provides services in the least restrictive environment appropriate for each student. All decisions regarding the least restrictive environment are determined by the IEP team based on the unique and individual needs of each eligible student.

## CHILD FIND

[Child Find](#) is a legal requirement that schools find all children who have disabilities and who may be entitled to special education services. This requirement covers every child from birth through age 21 and mandates that a school must evaluate any child that it knows or suspects may have a disability. Questions regarding Child Find or concerns regarding a student with a disability may be directed to the school EC Director.

## TITLE I INFORMATION

Read FernLeaf's Parents Rights to Know Letter [HERE](#).

In Espanol: [DERECHO DE LOS PADRES A SABER](#)

Learn more on FernLeaf's Title I webpage [HERE](#).

## SCHOOL COUNSELING SUPPORTS

Our school counselors are available to help support all students and their families meet their social, emotional and academic goals. As a part of the educational team, the school counselor collaborates with all community stake-holders to address barriers to learning and academic success. School counseling supports are provided to all FernLeaf students through classroom lessons and special programs. Supplemental supports are provided through small group meetings and individual visits.

Individual counseling services are accessed by student requests and referrals from teachers, administrators, or parents free of charge. All students have time-limited access to individual counseling with the school counselor unless the student's guardian opts out of this free resource. Guardians wishing to opt out of individual counseling services may email one of our leadership team members. The opt out request must be renewed within the first week of each new school year. Please keep in mind that the school counselor will only break confidentiality if the student poses a risk to self or others.

## SAFETY AND SUPERVISION

FernLeaf embraces hands-on, experiential learning. Students will be engaged in physical activity frequently, such as field experiences, active play, adventure activities, and more. During the course of these normal activities for our school, accidents may occur. Supervision of students when they are on campus or when they are participating in a school-related field trip is provided by our staff, many of whom are trained in basic first-aid techniques and CPR. In the event of an accident or injury our goal is to provide immediate and appropriate care for the student by:

- Preventing further harm to the student or other students (which may include moving the student).
- Providing comfort care and urgent care in situations involving breathing or bleeding.
- Referring immediately to the parent and/or medical professionals.

When an accident happens at school which results in serious injury, school staff will use the provided Emergency Contact Information to contact parents or designated emergency

contacts. If necessary, 911 will be called while the school attempts to reach a parent. Every effort will be made to contact parents as soon as possible to involve them in the decision-making process, unless time and urgency dictate otherwise. In the event of a minor injury the supervising staff member will exercise judgment in making a decision to contact the parent. In most cases, parents will be alerted so they will have the option of viewing the injury themselves. Staff will complete an Injury/Accident report to keep on file.

Families can assist the school in ensuring their student's safety and wellbeing:

- Make sure the FernLeaf front office has up-to-date contact information as well as additional emergency contacts. It is imperative that we are able to reach a responsible adult at all times when a student is involved in school activities.
- Please use Infinite Campus to update emergency contact information.

### ASBESTOS STATEMENT AND NOTIFICATION

The US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires all schools to inspect building materials for the presence of asbestos. AHERA excludes schools from the inspection requirement if the school was constructed after October 12, 1988, and has a signed statement from the architect or project engineer responsible for constructing the school stating that no asbestos-containing building materials were specified for use in the construction of the school. Our school has been provided such a statement, and is, therefore, exempt from the requirement to conduct an asbestos inspection.

The EPA requires us to annually notify you that we are aware of the AHERA regulation, and that we are in compliance. The Management Plan is available for you to review at any time during normal school hours.

## COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLICATIONS

### PARENT/GUARDIAN AND TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Communication with parents is important and a critical piece of the FernLeaf partnership. Regular and ongoing communication will take place throughout the school year and email will be one of the primary communication tools. Teachers will keep parents informed about their curriculum, class meeting topics, group initiatives, field trips and special projects, and most importantly, about students' school experience, and academic progress.

### WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

#### 1. 'THE FROND & FIDDLEHEAD' NEWSLETTER

Another way communication happens is through a schoolwide newsletter. This newsletter is intended to keep families informed about on and off campus events, school activities and other

interesting things happening in our community. Please be sure to whitelist [info@fernleafccs.org](mailto:info@fernleafccs.org) to ensure you're receiving your school newsletter!

## 2. EVENTS CALENDAR

FernLeaf families can find a live and up to date events calendar on our website here: <https://www.fernleafccs.org/events> This calendar includes staff birthdays, after school activities, whole school events, grade specific events, field trips and all school related activities.

## 3. PHONE, EMAIL, AND TEXT MESSAGES

FernLeaf utilizes a mass communication system to communicate timely and important information to the entire school community including delays, important reminders, and more. Please contact the front office if you are not receiving regular communications this way.

# ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

## HOMEWORK

FernLeaf promotes an academically challenging curriculum, but also recognizes that at the elementary level homework can be detrimental to a student's relationship with school and family. We believe time invested in out-of-school interests and time with family are both important for healthy development. Families are encouraged to engage their student(s) in conversation about what is happening at school and to read together each night. At the early elementary level, work to be completed at home will only be assigned when it supports a project or when it is used to engage families in a learning experience. Beginning in late elementary grades, homework will be assigned in developmentally appropriate ways to support academic progress, independent work habits, and organizational skills.

## CONFERENCES

Teachers will schedule conferences on an as-needed basis and at parents/guardians request. Conference days are scheduled following the end of each progress reporting period. Your student's teacher will communicate with you as-needed about scheduling conferences during this time.

## FERNLEAF INTERVENTION PROGRAM

In the event that a FernLeaf staff observes that a student's needs over time—whether social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and/or behavioral— require attention and interventions beyond the scope of everyday classroom practices, the FernLeaf Intervention Program will be initiated. This process includes a screening system designed to support the identification of individualized learning needs.

## ASSESSMENTS, STANDARDIZED TESTING, AND PROGRESS REPORTS

A variety of teacher-developed assessments and established diagnostic tools are used throughout the school year to assess student learning. These assessment results are used along with observational data to monitor student growth and to guide instructional planning.

FernLeaf progress reports are shared with families and students each trimester. These reports include feedback related to educational progress in addition to social and emotional skills.

Federal legislation and North Carolina's Accountability Program require all public schools to participate in the state's testing and accountability program. Standardized testing represents one of many measures of student progress. Regularly administered tests include the North Carolina beginning-of-grade test in English Language Arts and Reading in third grade, end-of-grade tests in reading and math given once per year in third through eighth grade, and the end-of-grade science test administered in fifth and eighth grade. High school students are required to take end-of-course tests at the completion of specific courses. Some of FernLeaf's students with identified exceptionalities will take alternative assessments as documented in the student's IEP.

## ACCEPTABLE USE POLICIES FOR THE INTERNET & TECHNOLOGY

[FernLeaf Acceptable Use Policies for the Internet and Technology](#)

## PARENTS GUIDE TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

## FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) NOTICE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION

This notice provides information regarding disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. [See notice here.](#)

## CRISIS SUPPORT

- To reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, call 988 or text HOME to 741741
- To reach the NC Peer Warmline, call 855-733-7762

## DIABETES INFORMATION