August 26, 2016

Dear Kent Gardens Families:

On behalf of all of the staff at Kent Gardens Elementary School, it is our pleasure to welcome you to a new and exciting year! We have had a busy summer preparing for the new school year, and are anxious to be able to continue to work together with you. If you are new to Kent Gardens, we are thrilled to begin this journey with you.

At Kent Gardens, we believe academics and achievement are instrumental to a child’s education, but we believe that it is equally important to ensure that all students are happy socially and emotionally. We will continue with building a strong school culture that provides a common language and focus for our students and teachers. #kgpride embodies our goals for our students: For those who are new, at Kent Gardens, friendships flourish because we are:

P – Patient
R – Respectful
I – Inclusive
D – Doing our best
E – Excited to Learn

We use this format to provide common language for all of our teachers and to convey our behavior expectations. Please check out our beliefs by visiting the #kgpride link on our website. To keep this message fresh this year, we will focus on “Putting Kindness First”. We constantly strive to meet these goals and welcome your support, participation, and feedback. The PTA will have KG spirit wear for all to purchase. Note that we will have spirit days when all students and staff are encouraged to wear their t-shirts!

Open House: In the spirit of building community, we will kick off our school year on Thursday, September 1st with our annual Open House from 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. This event provides an opportunity to ease back into school by affording time to meet your child’s teacher and to see some familiar faces. **To help your child’s teacher know him or her better, we request that you bring a letter with you to the Open House describing your child.** In this letter, it would be helpful to let us know his/her interests (academics or otherwise), hopes, fears and the most successful approaches you have used to help him/her feel comfortable. You may desire to write this letter with your child, supporting him/her in writing the letter and expressing their needs, goals, and fears. If you are not able to attend the open house, but would like to share a letter, please feel free to email me the letter or send with your child on the first day. **Note that this day is BUSY and there is limited time to converse with teachers.** We do not open our doors until 3:30 p.m. and parking is limited.
**Icee Gathering** After visiting your child’s classroom and meeting his or her new teacher at Open House, please join us on the playground for ices and conversation until about 4:30 p.m. This time will give your family an opportunity to talk more with school staff, be re-acquainted with old friends, and make new friends, as we get ready to start the school year. *Parking can be extremely difficult at our Open House. We encourage you to carpool or walk. Please be mindful of our neighbors’ driveways and do not block them. This is the only occasion where all of our families come together at the same time – so patience is requested.*

**Health/Clinic** If your child has a severe medical need or a life threatening food allergy, please contact our public health nurse, Janessa Deal at jsdeal@fcps.edu. This will ensure that appropriate safety measures can be put in place. In addition, we ask that you drop off any medications with the appropriate forms during the Open House. The FCPS link is at [http://www.fcps.edu/parents/start/khealth.shtml](http://www.fcps.edu/parents/start/khealth.shtml).

**School Supplies** You are encouraged to bring your child’s school supplies to Open House. Supply listings are posted on our website. This year, each students in grades 3-6 will be provided with a daily agenda/planner. School supply lists can be found here: [http://www.fcps.edu/KentGardensES/supplylists.html](http://www.fcps.edu/KentGardensES/supplylists.html)

**School Day Start:** We will accept students to the school beginning at 8:25 a.m. We cannot accept students earlier than 8:25 a.m. as there will be no supervision. *Our school day will begin with morning work promptly at 8:40 a.m., which is when the last bus arrives.* A timely arrival ensures that they have the opportunity to focus on the school day ahead of them which ensures a productive school day. The tardy bell is at 8:50 a.m. but we are requesting that all students arrive in time to begin their day with the learning and preparation that begins at 8:40 a.m. Students who are not in their seat at 8:50 a.m. will be considered tardy. Our school day ends at 3:35 p.m.

**Classroom Assignments** Homeroom assignments will be shared electronically no later than August 31st and will be available during our Open House on the 1st of September. Our teacher teams are strong and all of our new teachers come with teaching experience. We are thrilled with our class sizes! We have rearranged many of our teams. You will receive team bios at Open House.

*Parents of Sixth Grade Students:* Students missing their TDAP immunizations will be omitted from the rosters until the documentation is provided to the school.

**Transportation** We have created a form for parents in order to inform us regarding your child(ren) transportation. *It is extremely important that we receive this information for kindergarten and first graders.* It would be very helpful to receive the information for all of our students. Access the form here: [https://goo.gl/forms/iVG0yckzAtY64ZX22](https://goo.gl/forms/iVG0yckzAtY64ZX22) Bus routes have been mailed to all parents.

**Student Bus Notes** Kent Gardens will NOT be coordinating ‘Bus’ notes during the month of September. Children will not be allowed to have friends ride the school bus home with them at the end of the school day during the month of September. This plan ensures that all students arrive home safely during the month of September and with the FCPS transportation office, we can determine which students use the bus, walk, or ride to school. Students also learn the appropriate routines. Safety is paramount for our students.

**Bus Riders** Hard copies of the bus routes and approximate pick up times for the morning runs will be available in the September 1st Open House. You will also receive a bus route in the back to school folders and also electronically. Please help your child learn his/her bus number. We will have staff members available to assist students. Please note that the first day and week in school is essential in
developing routines. It is desirable to have your child follow their usual routine on the first day of school for their safety. Kindergarten Parents- At the Open House, we will have an FCPS bus available by the main entrance of the school. If your child will be riding this bus, we encourage you to let your child board and become familiar with the bus.

Kindergarten Notification Kindergarten and First grade parents will receive a name tag for your child. Please write your child’s name on it and indicate how he/she will be getting home from school (e.g. “bus and number”, “picked up at school”, “going to SACC”, etc.). It is important to have your child have this tag attached to their backpack on the first day of school. Our staff will be ready to help make sure your child gets to the proper classroom and bus in the afternoon.

Kiss and Ride It is important to note the start of our school day given that we have high volume in our Kiss and Ride. It is important that you allocate ample time for traffic and for proceeding through our kiss and ride area. It can take between 10 and 15 minutes to proceed through the kiss and ride area. All traffic should enter the school from Melbourne Drive. Due to the heavy volume of neighborhood traffic, left hand turns from Lumsden St. onto Melbourne Dr. are not permitted in the morning drop off or afternoon dismissal times. Cars will enter Van Fleet and Dean Streets and should turn left on Melbourne to enter the school. Cars will exit by turning right via Lumsden St. PLEASE ALLOW EXTRA TIME in the morning to ensure a timely arrival. Kent Gardens website has a diagram and additional information. http://www.fcps.edu/KentGardensES/kgpolicies.html

After crossing the intersection of Lumsden St. and Melbourne Dr., proceed through the parking lot in a single lane as indicated by the attachment. Do not pass any other vehicles for any reason. Keep in mind that there are walking students from the neighborhood so please adhere to traffic laws and do not use your cell phones. Pull forward towards the marked area to discharge your child. Staff will be posted as indicated by the markers on the attachment and should follow their directions.

1. Load and unload students from passenger side of vehicle. Children should NOT cross in front of or between the vehicles.
2. Drivers must remain in vehicles during the Kiss and Ride drop off and loading zone. Safety patrols will assist with car doors. Parents should not exit their car to assist students with seat belts etc. Please instruct your children on how to work the safety belt or have them sit on the right hand side (passenger side) of the car so that the staff may safely assist them and ensure a quick arrival and departure.
3. In the afternoon, if your child is not present, you will need to repeat the final loop of the parking lot.
4. Cars parked in the Kiss and Ride area must wait until the Kiss and Ride area has cleared.
5. Do not drop your child in the neighborhood, only walkers should use the crosswalk.
6. Remember that our school day begins at 8:40 a.m. with morning work. We will receive children no earlier than 8:25 a.m.

Tardy Students If your child arrives at 8:50 a.m. or later, they are considered tardy. Parents must walk their child into the office to sign them in when they are late. This procedure is for security purposes. We desire that students arrive in time for morning work at 8:40. Our school news show and instruction begins promptly at 8:50 a.m.

Sign Up for Keep In Touch (KIT) Parents of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) students are automatically enrolled in the KIT Basic service. Kent Gardens’ administration will use KIT to communicate news and announcements about the school day or other calendar dates. We will eventually transition to News You Choose. Basic email contact information from the student information
system is uploaded to the KIT system. It is important for parents to keep their child’s emergency contact information up to date and you should whitelist Keep in Touch email addresses to ensure that you receive important messages. There is also a KIT Plus which parents may enroll in. It provides the opportunity to have FCPS updates regarding school closures and other events. Please access www.fcps.edu/kit/ if you are interested in enrolling and subscribe to receive information.

**SIS/24/7 – Blackboard Parent View Info.** FCPS uses an online resource known as FCPS 24-7 Learning (or Blackboard) to allow students and families access to homework or other class information. This fall, your FCPS 24/7 Parent View account will be the same login as your SIS Parent View account. FCPS provides a SIS Parent Account to each parent of a student in FCPS. This account allows access to student information such as your child’s attendance and report card grades. New parents will receive a letter that will include an activation code. Existing codes should still work. For information, please visit this page: [http://www.fcps.edu/KentGardensES/sisparent.html](http://www.fcps.edu/KentGardensES/sisparent.html) If your key has expired or you cannot find your key, you must contact Mrs. Dean (tadean@fcps.edu) in the main office to be issued a new activation key.

**KG ROAR** The school newsletter is our main means of communicating with our parents and community. It is sponsored by the PTA, but will include my principal’s letter as well as other essential information regarding the school day and the PTA events. We will be utilizing this newsletter as a direct means of communication and will be decreasing the amount of information in paper format in the Friday Folder. Make sure to read the newsletter every week to ensure that you stay informed of school events and news.

**Friday Folder** Every Friday, parents will receive a Friday folder in your child’s backpack. It will contain some student work and some school notices. During the first week of school, the PTA will provide the family of every student with information regarding the beginning of the school year. There will be many forms to complete and return to school. Please take the time to review. We will continue to decrease the volume of paper transmittals and utilize the KG ROAR to remit timely parent information.

**Join the PTA** The Kent Gardens Parent Teacher Association is the organization that supports our teachers and students – as well of our teachers! We strongly encourage all parents to join the KG PTA. Their website is [http://www.kentgardenspta.com/](http://www.kentgardenspta.com/).

**Team Newsletter** Each team will release a weekly newsletter that will inform you about team activities and curriculum. This will be emailed by the homeroom teacher to all parents. This practice will begin after the first week of school.

**Social Media:** Like us on Kent Gardens Facebook and/or follow us on Twitter. We share weekly updates and information.

**Entry to Kent Gardens/Security** During the school day, our school is locked at all times. You will need to ring the buzzer and identify yourself and you should be prepared to show your identification to gain access to the school. All parents or visitors MUST obtain a badge in the office even if it is for a brief moment to walk to a classroom. Parents are encouraged to allow their child(ren) to walk to the classroom on their own. During the first week of school, we will have staff and counselors help walk students to his/her classroom. Please be prepared to show your id when you pick up your child during the school day. The back gates will be locked during the school day at 9:30 a.m. and reopened at 2:30 p.m.
Parent Handbook  View our school’s handbook on our school webpage. Our goal is to provide electronic communiqués and less hard copy paper information in the Friday Folder. You can also follow Kent Gardens on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram by liking us or following us.

Lunch Information  http://www.fcps.edu/KentGardensES/kgpolicies.html
The Fairfax County Public Schools lunch is available for all students at Kent Gardens. The cost of lunch is $3.00. Breakfast is offered for $1.75. Students are encouraged to purchase a meal card and replenish the account on a weekly or monthly basis. Payments can be made online at www.MySchoolBucks.com. The cashier will notify each student when his or her balance is low. Checks should be made payable to Kent Gardens Food and Nutrition Services and can be sent to school in the money envelope in the Friday Folder. Money should always be turned in first thing in the morning and NOT at lunchtime. Please check with your child or the cafeteria to keep current with this balance.

Lunch money loans are provided by the office on a limited basis and in extenuating circumstances. Parents must reimburse Kent Gardens PTA for lunch loans. You will be contacted by Sonia Shi regarding lunch loans. Questions may also be directed to her. For students who are ‘out’ of lunch money, we will be serving an alternate lunch until payment is made.

Special lunches - We are always happy to see a parent, grandparent, or sibling come to eat with a student. It is a special occasion for the entire class. Visitors typically either purchase lunch from the cafeteria or bring a bag lunch from home. It is nice for the students to see that grownups also eat nutritious lunches. We ask that you do not bring in soft drinks or “fast-food” lunches. The sale of soft drinks to students is prohibited in all Fairfax County Public Schools, from elementary through high school, during the school day. The emphasis on nutritional eating is reflected in our health curriculum and in the selection of food sold in the cafeteria. We ask that when you come to eat lunch with your child, you help continue to model healthy, nutritious eating. It is your presence, more than anything that makes the occasion special for your child.

Salad Bar – New! We are excited to announce that we will be in the first wave of fifteen schools that will receive a salad bar. The timing for installation is estimated to take place in November. The goal is to provide healthy and nutritious food that is based on fresh and local procurement. We will remit additional information as it becomes available.

Back to School Night On September 14, 2016, we will hold our Back to School Night for all Kent Gardens’ families. The 4th, 5th, and 6th will be at 5:00 p.m. and the K, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd will take place at 7:00 p.m. During this time, parents and guardians will have the opportunity to hear from your child(ren)’s teachers about the grade level curriculum and an overview of the school. You will also hear from the PTA and other FCPS leaders. This event is for parents and guardians only – not children.

We are looking forward to a great school year! We are a community of learners committed to working together to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students. The Kent Gardens’ staff and administration will work diligently to provide a positive environment for your child. It is our desire to help each child continue to develop into strong, curious learners and become valuable members of our community. We look forward to partnering with you. Please do not hesitate to stop by the office or give us a call if we can assist you in any way.

Sincerely,

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