

PARENT GUIDE

FIRST DAY SCHOOL

BOULDER MEETING OF FRIENDS

January 2019

“Care of the children of the meeting should be the responsibility of every Friend. Let us share with our children a sense of adventure, or wonder, and of trust and let them know that, in facing the mysteries of life, they are surrounded by love.”

--Excerpts from Faith and Practice, New England Y. M., 1985



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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of First Day School of Boulder Meeting is to create an exciting learning environment for our Meeting's kindergarten through high school students and to supplement parents' efforts in religious education at home. First Day School will nurture an understanding of Friends' history, practice, and testimonies, primarily "that of God in every person," and will help Young Friends to develop skills for deepening their spiritual lives.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Meeting Times

10:00 – Young Friends join adults in Meeting for Worship or parents supervise them.

10:15 – Young Friends go to class for activities and snack.

11:15 – Pre-K children may be brought to parents in Meeting for Worship; parents pick up K-5 students in the classrooms or from the supervised playground after the rise of meeting. Older children can meet their parents in the Fellowship Room or at a prearranged location.

We realize it is sometimes a challenge to bring an entire family anywhere and arrive on time. We gladly welcome you late to the meeting, if necessary, rather than suggest that you avoid coming at all for fear of disturbing First Day School activities or worship.

Teachers use the time from 10:00 – 10:15 to attend Meeting for Worship or for class preparations. Please supervise your children during this time if they are not in Meeting for Worship. We strongly encourage you to bring your children for the first 15 minutes or for a shorter period of time that they can successfully enjoy. It is a good time to sit lovingly with your child in silence. The adults in our meeting relish having them!

For everyone's safety, parents need to supervise their children on the playground after class and when teachers have left. Parents usually help one another with this task. Please help children to pick up toys and bikes before you leave.

The youngest First Day Class (K-5th graders) meets every Sunday in the room closest to the door at the end of the hall. Junior Young Friends (6th to 8th graders) meet every Sunday in the room closest to the office. Senior Young Friends (9th to 12th graders) meet twice a month in their comfortable Teen Room that is second to last at the end of the hall.

Although most children attend First Day School, families may also choose to stay together in worship for the entire hour or for as long as they can do so comfortably.

Registration

Please register your child. The information we request helps us to serve your child appropriately and safely. It also helps the Meeting budget for programs and facilities. Registration forms are available at the end of this packet or from First Day School staff. Completed registration forms can be given to a teacher or put in the REC mailbox in the office.

Snacks

A light snack provided by volunteers is served during the First Day School classes. Please let us know of any dietary restrictions so that we serve your child correctly.

Special Needs

We make accommodations so that your child will have a safe and rewarding experience in First Day School. Please let us know if there are special needs so that we can successfully provide for your child. Talk with your child's teachers or with a member of the Religious Education Committee.

Visitors

Visitors are always welcome to First Day School. It's best to arrive 5-10 minutes early on your first day so that you will have plenty of time to find your way to your child's class before Meeting for Worship begins at 10 AM. You may, of course, go to class with your child. Your child can also invite a friend to attend First Day School for a visit. After your second visit, if you would like your children to continue to participate, we ask that you register them. Registration forms are available in a pocket on the First Day School bulletin board, at the end of this document, or from the teacher. It is not required that parents be members/attenders of the meeting before enrolling their children in First Day School. We do ask that an adult responsible for them is on the premises during the First Day School programs and that the teacher knows who this person is.

First Day School Email List

If you'd like to receive email notice of events of interest to FDS families, please give your contact info to Susan Stephens at susan@operant.com, or for teens you may give your email to Margaret Wallace at mewalace@comcast.net or to Sonja Toutenhoofd at sonjat3141@gmail.com.

Class Emails: Susan Stephens, REC (Religious Education Committee) convener, will send out weekly e-mails to the parents and grandparents of the K – 5 class. Teachers will also send out e-mails to the teens and their parents with plans for upcoming classes and activities so that parents can support their children's participation.

Boulder Meeting of Friends Website

See the “Youth” section of our meeting website for up-to-date information about our 1st Day School.

First Day School Staff

The Religious Education Committee: This committee is responsible for the smooth running of the First Day School program. The committee meets on the second Sunday of every month from 8:45 – 9:50. Visitors are welcome and childcare is provided. Volunteer teachers and assistants are particularly encouraged to attend.

Volunteer Teachers: A team of adult teachers and assistants volunteer to lead the First Day classes. They are often parents or others in the Meeting with little formal teaching experience but a desire to work with our children. These individuals usually teach or assist one day a month, leaving the other days free to attend Meeting for Worship. Teachers are supported in their work by the Religious Education Committee (REC) and other Friends. Usually there is a teacher orientation each August, and REC sponsors a retreat for teachers in February. Teachers may join REC but are not required to do so.

We always have two adults in each classroom, a lead teacher and an assistant. All adults who work regularly with our meeting’s children have gone through a vetting process to assure the safety of the children. This process includes an application, background check, interview and completion of an on-line training.

We encourage parents and others in our religious community to serve as teachers or to support religious education in other ways, such as helping with special projects or multiage activities. Simply attending the first 15 minutes of Meeting for Worship with your children and supporting your children in participating in classes is appreciated deeply by Friends. Friends who teach, serve on REC (Religious Education Committee), or assist with youth programs often find this an enriching part of their spiritual path.

Nursery Caregiver: Paid caregivers and volunteers recruited by coordinator Susan Stephens provide loving nursery care. The coordinator can provide parents with an introduction to the caregivers. Teens from our meeting can assist the adult caregivers by prior arrangement, but will not receive compensation. Our youngest children share the delightful space occupied by the New Horizons Cooperative Preschool during the week. Parents are asked to sign their child(ren) into the nursery each Sunday.

PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

Monthly themes for K – 5 students

Lessons centered on themes that change monthly provide continuity from week to week and over the years while permitting religious explorations and activities to address the interests of children in an age-appropriate way.

Sept. The Light Within, Quaker Values (the Testimonies)

Oct. Discovering the Bible: The Old Testament

Nov. The World's Religions and Spirituality

Dec. Advent, Christmas and Other Religious Observances

Jan. Equality, Harmony and Peace Making (MLK Jr. Day)

Feb. Quaker History and Practices

March Discovering the Bible: New Testament

April Stewardship and the Web of Life

May Living Simply and Affirming Personal Values

On 5th Sundays, a service activity is planned, and all ages are invited.

Classroom Curriculum

Using a variety of sources and the guidance of the RE Committee as needed, teachers develop lessons to meet the needs and interests of our children. Many lessons are based on successful curricula published by Friends General Conference (FGC) Online Library. Others are generously shared by other First Day School programs or adapted from youth programs such as Teaching Tolerance, Reading to End Racism, Anti-defamation League, and other sources. In order to engage children with a variety of learning styles, teachers try to combine high interest, high involvement activities with quieter projects and reflection.

Our Classrooms

We enjoy the benefits of small, multi-aged classrooms. The children work together, learning to help one another and enjoying being both the helper and helped. We attempt to build community within each group. Because we try to plan carefully for the children in each class, please check with teachers or the RE Committee before having your child attend a class for a different age group.

Elementary School: Youth in K-5th Grade Classes

Goals: By the end of fifth grade, to know the Quaker concept of "The Light Within" and Quaker Testimonies; to have familiarity with Bible stories and to know basic facts about the Judeo-Christian tradition; to know basic differences and similarities between the world's major religions; to feel a sense of belonging to our community; to discuss their personal beliefs; and to grow in appreciation and responsibility for the earth.

Junior Young Friends (JYFs): Middle-schoolers in grades 6 – 8

Goals: By the end of eighth grade to relate Quaker Advices, Queries and Testimonies to different world religions; to more fully understand Quaker practices; to apply their understanding of diversity, peace, and justice to their daily life and in the greater community; to begin to develop a personal credo; to develop self-worth, dignity, self-respect, compassion, and responsibility. JYFs have more autonomy about their activities, and service projects are strongly encouraged.

Senior Young Friends (SYFs): High school youth in grades 9 – 12

The Senior Young Friends generally meet two Sundays a month, although this may be expanded as need and interest arise. One Sunday is dedicated to exploring Quaker topics, including history, comparative religions, and discussions of topical relevance. On the other Sunday we walk to a nearby coffee shop for Friendly conversation and fellowship. Throughout the year, SYFs participate in a variety of pursuits including various service projects and activities that build community. Details of each session are sent in an email to interested participants.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Behavior Management Guidelines:

- Adults and children are expected to treat one another with kindness and respect while acting responsibly and safely. Communicating in person and addressing issues or needs as they arise can help things run smoothly.
- To honor children's inherently curious, active, and experiential nature, lessons are planned to reflect the need to move around and change activities without chaos.
- Teachers are encouraged to practice active, engaged listening and to ask the same courtesy from the children.
- When a child steps outside the boundaries of kindness, respect, responsibility and safety, positive methods of re-directing behavior are used. If a child does not respond to positive re-direction, a parent may be asked to assist during classes. The teacher, or a member of the RE committee, will meet first with the child and then with the parent(s). Parents are welcome to speak to the teachers or any member of REC.
- For some Young Friends in middle school and beyond, independent study, service learning or attending Meeting for Worship might be an alternative to class.

RECOGNITIONS

Recognition of Infants and Children: Every year, infants and older children new to meeting are introduced after brief announcements in the worship room, usually on Mother's Day. Children receive a certificate commemorating that they were lovingly held in the light and welcomed into meeting. Usually a small gift, such as a book, is also given.

Recognition of High School Students Who are About to Graduate: Teenagers who are about to graduate and have been Senior Young Friends (SYFs) for several years are introduced at Meeting for Worship, usually on Mother's Day. The SYFs are each given a card and a gift and lovingly held in the Light.

CHILDCARE FOR BUSINESS MEETING AND PROGRAM HOURS

To facilitate inclusion of parents in the life of the meeting, childcare is provided for Meeting for Worship for Business and for Program Hours. Parents can bring a sack lunch for their child or have some of the soup or snacks provided in the Fellowship Hall. Please respond to the weekly e-mail if you intend to have your child(ren) receive childcare.

WELCOMING YOUNG FRIENDS TO MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Many of us remember attending Meeting as a child: the dangling legs, the interest in what was said by adults (especially the excitement and fascination when someone was eldred!), the joy of being included in the world of adults, the boredom of being included in the world of adults, and the growing sense of accomplishment as the fifteen minutes passed by more quickly each year. Learning to worship in silence does not always come easily for adults or children, but as Quakers know, it is rich with possibility. Thus the first fifteen minutes of worship are designated as a time for family worship too. We encourage children to participate in silent worship and help them to feel welcome. Friends are aware of obvious challenges for children to remain quiet during worship due to young age and are tolerant of attendant noise or movement.

Some tips for all parents: A quiet toy, a piece of clay, or a soft book might be offered for kids who need to hold something in order to focus. Some families might find that the upholstered chairs allow for quiet movements. Holding a small child on your lap or other physical contact is calming for both child and parent. Some children might be introduced to silence in 5-minute increments and work up to the full 15 minutes. Families could sit near the door so that a quiet, early departure could be made if needed. In all your efforts, be assured that Friends are grateful for the gift of your family's presence in Meeting for Worship. The Religious Education Committee appreciates deeply your help in preparing the next generation of Quakers.

EXPERIENCES WITH SILENCE IN FIRST DAY SCHOOL

Silent worship is the core religious practice of the Society of Friends. We introduce children to this practice in ways that will support their spiritual development and full participation in the life of the meeting.

- Children's experiences with silence do not have to be worshipful to be enjoyable and meaningful.

- Parents play a key role in providing opportunities for their children to have meaningful experiences with silence, both at home and in Meeting.
- The Meeting continues to support this learning by including children in the first fifteen minutes of Meeting for Worship.
- First Day School also helps prepare children to participate meaningfully and appropriately in Meeting for Worship.

Program Guidelines around nurturing silence: First Day School teachers give children regular, age-appropriate opportunities to experience silent reflection in ways that are meaningful and enjoyable for them. Teachers also encourage the transfer of learning from these experiences to Meeting for Worship. These opportunities can be quite brief and need not occur every time a class meets. The children’s experience with silent reflection in First Day School does not have to resemble Meeting for Worship. It could be a moment of intentional stillness after a lively game or following a query prior to the sharing of thoughts. Our purpose is to help children on their journey to discover their “inner teacher.”

QUAKER FAITH AND PRACTICE

Quakers believe that there is that of God – the Inner Light or Spirit – in every person. This is the foundation of our faith in the worth and potential of each student.

The Testimonies

Quaker testimonies interpret universal values. They are guiding principles and are explored and reinterpreted by each generation. These testimonies are central to Friends Day School and Boulder Friends Meeting. We often call them the SPICES: simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, stewardship.

Simplicity: Our testimony of simplicity reminds us to live wisely. In a world filled with ever-increasing amounts of external stimulation, we all need space and time to discern what is truly important in our lives.

Peace: Quakers are most often known for their peace testimony. We believe that world peace begins with each of us. We try to settle all our disagreements without using weapons or words that hurt others.

Integrity: Integrity means being truthful and always trying to do our very best. We say what we mean and mean what we say.

Community: We welcome the perspectives of everyone, respect the worth of each individual, and value our collective wisdom. We strive to be a supportive and inclusive community.

Equality: Our belief in “the Inner Light” means that all people are equal. Everyone has the same human rights and should be treated fairly.

Stewardship: We need to take care of our earth and the things we use and own as well as each other. We believe in leaving the world a better place than we found it.

FAMILY OPPORTUNITIES, RESOURCES, AND SUGGESTIONS

Intermountain Yearly Meeting: IMYM is comprised of unprogrammed Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, South Dakota, and Northwest Texas. Go to IMYM.org for more information about the annual meeting in June. This is a great retreat for families, with programs for adults and young Friends and a chance for kids to meet other Quaker kids. The registration deadline for IMYM is usually mid-April.

Colorado Regional Meeting: Children, JYFs, SYFs, and their families enjoy gathering for several days in the fall at the Estes Park YMCA of the Rockies and for an afternoon each spring at one of the Colorado Meetings. These are welcome opportunities for youth fellowship.

Mountain Friends Camp: Camp presents another opportunity for JYFs and SYFs from a wide range of meetings to get together. Our students have a great time with old and new friends: <http://mountainfriendscamp.org>.

Our Library: Materials of interest to parents, teachers and children may be checked out from the library. Many of the books used in lesson planning are found in the classrooms or in the library. We also have many books and pamphlets in the REC (Religious Education Committee) closet, which is located in the classroom next to the office. Any book borrowed from the REC closet or the classroom needs to be signed out and returned in a timely manner.

Quaker Web Sites and Books:

- FGC Resources: <https://www.fgcquaker.org/resources?keys=>
- Books: www.quakerbooks.org

Quaker Family Activities:

Family opportunities for joint activities with other Friends through the year include:

- Work days cleaning up the building and grounds
- Making bag lunches for the homeless
- Fundraisers (Echo House, etc.)
- Meeting Potlucks
- Singing hour 5th Sundays
- Candlelight worship and singing on Christmas Eve
- Intergenerational Games Night
- Kids can have extended playtime while parents attend Meeting for Business

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILD/YOUTH WORKER

Child/youth workers, or “C/Y workers,” refers to teachers, assistants, and paid staff such as child care providers and the RE Coordinator. If there is an activity such as movie night or over-night, any additional chaperones would be included.

- Child/Youth workers with Boulder Friends Meeting(BFM) have been given a sacred trust to help the youth and children of BFM grow in Spirit and to grow safely. In light of this responsibility, C/Y workers are called on to meet specific expectations in their work:
- Appropriate interpersonal boundaries – Adults should model respectful and nurturing behavior, and youth will follow their lead. Adults should be attentive to appropriate dress, use of language, and demonstrations of affection and encouragement. Adults should never intentionally engage in contact with the “bathing suit” area of a child/youth’s body.
- In the area of physical contact, the general guideline is to allow the child or youth to initiate the contact and expect the C/Y worker to end it. Whenever questions arise about appropriate physical contact and expressions of affection, C/Y workers are reminded that they are the adults and they have the responsibility to behave maturely. All persons have different comfort levels with touch, and youth workers should be sensitive to each individual’s boundaries.
- There should be no sexualized behavior – Teasing and joking with sexual overtones and content is not acceptable.
- “Friendship” with youth – C/Y workers can serve as important mentors and guides for youth, and in this way might be seen as friends to individual youth. But BFM programs are to serve the children and youth, not the needs of the workers. A C/Y worker who “needs” young friends may present boundary problems for both youth and other staff. Any relationship with children or youth outside the program should be undertaken only with the knowledge and consent of the youth or child’s parent or guardian. Supervisory staff should be made aware of those activities.
- C/Y workers for BFM are responsible not only to children and youth, but to their families and BFM as well. If you suspect that a child or youth is a victim of abuse, is suicidal, or has a serious drug problem, you must not keep such information to yourself. You have a legal responsibility to report suspected abuse or neglect, and suicidal youth need professional help. For this reason, please never give children or youth the impression that you will keep secrets for them. Encourage them to seek help from a parent or authority figure. Please consult the Religious Education Coordinator about an appropriate course of action. Read and understand our Advice on One-on-One Conversation as well as the reporting protocol which is explained in our Child Protection Policy, which is posted on our website.

FIRST DAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM

Names of Children in the family:

Birthdate/Age

Grade

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Parents, Grandparents or Partners:

Please name 3 things each child is interested in that could be used in class:

1st Child:

2nd Child:

3rd Child:

Medical concerns/allergies that class leaders should be aware of:

Home Address(es)

Phone(s)

Email Contact (for announcements of reminders of events):

Permission Slip for Walks:

My child(ren), named above, **may/may not (circle one)**, as part of supervised class time, leave the grounds of the Boulder Friends Meeting to walk to nearby locations.

My child(ren), named above, **may/may not (circle one)**, as part of supervised class time, leave the grounds of the Boulder Friends Meeting by car on a First Day School field trip.

Volunteering:

I will volunteer to help out with (circle those that apply): teaching a class, teacher's assistant, end of year teacher recognitions, special music, art, or

(please fill in your ideas)

Photos on the Website:

The website committee for our Meeting would like to show photos of our children's activities on our meeting's website, www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org, and we need your permission to do so. Please indicate your preference below:

My child(ren)'s photos may be used anywhere on the Meeting website.

My child(ren)'s photos may be used only behind the password on the website.

Do not use my child(ren)'s photos on the website.

Signature: _____

Date: _____