



L'Ecole Française du Maine

The French School of Maine Parent / Student Handbook

* Please be advised:

In 2021-2022, our protocols for COVID-19, communicated separately, take priority over previously established policies, and these protocols may be updated throughout the school year.

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Mission Statement

L'Ecole Française du Maine ("EFDM") offers an educational experience entirely in French while instilling in its students eternal curiosity towards foreign languages and the diverse cultures of the world. We believe that it is through play, actions and searching for independence that each child discovers his/her unique path towards learning and obtains the necessary tools for development. The children are encouraged daily to gain their confidence and to express themselves freely in French as well as through various art forms. L'Ecole Française du Maine offers a unique opportunity to celebrate diversity through language immersion and cultural exchange by providing an authentic mind-opening educational experience in an atmosphere of understanding and discovery.

L'Ecole Française du Maine is a non-profit organization founded by Elizabeth and Willy LeBihan in May, 2002. Today, as in 2002, their vision for the school is one where a rigorous academic program simultaneously contributes to the Renaissance of the French language in Maine and to inspiring students to become ambassadors of peace through daily immersion experience.

Présentation de l'école

L'Ecole Française du Maine is the only French immersion school north of Boston and is fully accredited by the French Ministry of Education (AEFE) and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). L'Ecole Française du Maine is an Approved Private School by the Maine Department of Education. Academic subjects (except for English Language Arts, Swimming and Music) are taught in French and our classroom teachers are speakers with native fluency. L'Ecole Française du Maine follows the directives of the Ministère de L'Éducation Nationale and applicable Maine state educational guidelines. The school, which has been entirely renovated, is situated in the heart of the small fishing village of South Freeport, located 15 minutes north of Portland, Maine's largest city. During recess and outings, the children and their teachers enjoy exploring the wood-surrounded playground and the nearby seashore. The School offers a program from Early Childhood through the Elementary grades. In the spacious, sunny classrooms a low student/teacher ratio ensures the best possible learning environment.

Brief History

In 2002, L'Ecole Française du Maine was founded to provide a bilingual educational experience for people in Maine. Recognizing the extent of Franco-American citizens concentrated in this area, we hoped to create a bilingual educational experience for the children of many parents who grew up with French-speaking parents and grandparents, passing their cultural heritage to their English speaking children. Originally located in Winthrop, Maine, the school relocated to Freeport, Maine in the fall of 2004, where the demand for an international school was high. Learning of a vacant elementary school in South Freeport, we obtained proper approval from Freeport town officials for a lease on the building. The lease was contingent upon agreeing to renovations to the existing structure specified by the town. Renovations were completed just in time for the beginning of the 2005 academic year. Additional improvements continued including: a new playground (completed 2010), a new building addition with additional classroom and glassed in staircase (completed 2012), and a new entrance, security system and walkways all around the school (completed 2013), redesign of an existing classroom into an Arts and English classroom, including installation of an art sink and custom cubbies installed in classrooms (completed 2015 and 2016). Most recently, in the spring of 2017, the school occupied the building adjacent to the school. This large amount of additional space provides teacher housing, Admissions Office, space for our music program, tutoring and other activities, as well as meeting and gathering space.

Our most recent project is the remodeling and updating of the bathroom facilities, to be completed in May-June 2021.

Thank you for considering a contribution to our Annual Appeal in support of these and future improvements.

School Accomplishments

Increased Enrollment

In just ten years, the number of students enrolled increased more than 7-fold and the School continues to thrive as we enter our 20th academic year.

Academic Achievements

In 2012, two of our graduates studied independently through the school and received the French Brevet (Middle school) Diploma – becoming Maine’s first and only recipients.

In 2013, the School implemented its DELF middle/high school program, and received 100% success in the exams, an amazing accomplishment in its first year. An exceptional success rate has been achieved each year since and this program continues to grow.

In 2013, the school coordinated a CNED (long distance learning through the French Ministry of Education) program for a 7th grade student. Annually, students participate in various contests including: Rallye Maths, Printemps des Poetes, and Défi Lecture (math, poetry and reading contests)

In 2017, EFDM became an official Testing Center for DELF- the only one north of Boston.

Alumni

Over the last 19 years, the educational foundation built through immersion education at EFDM has taken our students successfully to excellent private and public high schools worldwide, as well as to outstanding colleges and universities in the USA and abroad.

High Schools our students have attended:

Waynflete School, Greely High School (IB Program), Falmouth High School, Hebron Academy, Cheverus High School, Maine Girls Academy, Thornton Academy, The Masters School (Dobbs Ferry, New York), The Putney School (Vermont), The International School of Boston, Calgary International School, The International School of Los Angeles, The French American School of San Diego, Lycée Pierre Loti in Istanbul, Public School of Paris, France, The French School of Johannesburg, South Africa, NYA, Public Schools in Munich and Fryeburg, Germany, The French School of Rome, Italy, The French School of Ecuador, The International School of Amsterdam, Waldorf Schools in USA and France, Carrabassett Valley ski Academy, CVA- just to name a few.

Colleges/Universities/Conservatories our students have attended:

Sarah Lawrence College, Skidmore College, MIT, Harvard, Yale, Bowdoin, American University of Paris, Rochester Institute of Technology, Sherbrooke University- Canada, UCLA, Williams and Mary, Middlebury College, Science Polytechnique- Paris, University of Maine at Orono, University of Southern Maine, Ecole Normale de Musique- Paris, among others and many more to come!

Whole School Productions and Projects

In 2013, the school performed a major musical production, *Emilie Jolie*, featuring solos and full chorus pieces for an audience of over 400 spectators at the Franco Center in Lewiston, Maine. An encore performance was held at the Freeport Performing Arts Center. In 2014, the school welcomed a French circus family into our community for a week-long workshop on juggling, acrobatics, mime, and more, and ending with a culminating performance. In 2015, the entire school collaborated and performed a children’s opera: *La Maison du Vieux Léon*. Costumes and props were fabricated by the students. In 2016 the entire school participated in a musical production of Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* featuring choral music with costumes and stage scenery created by the students. The performance took place at the Franco Center in Lewiston, Maine. Also in 2016, the entire school participated in the creation of the School’s first original Stop-Motion animation short film: **"Les incroyables aventures de Rover l'Écureuil"**. Students were also recorded in French, telling the adventures of **"Rover the Squirrel"** depicted on the animation film; the two were then combined creating a real movie, which was made available to families on DVD. In 2017, two faculty members traveled to France for a specific training in preparation for another whole school opera, *Les Musiciens de Brême*, which was performed in March 2017. In 2018 the school’s annual production was on the theme “bonheur”. In 2019 the whole school performed a theatre and musical presentation “C’est moi le plus fort!” for an appreciative audience at the Franco Center in Lewiston. This annual tradition will continue for years to come. Due to COVID-19, we sadly had to cancel our March performance in 2020 after all preparation was completed, and also in 2021, but we look forward to many more spectacular shows to come!

Public Awareness

L'Ecole Française du Maine has received extensive press coverage in American and International newspapers including: The New York Times, Le Figaro, France Amérique, The Portland Press Herald, Le Courrier International

and many more. Local television stations have featured the school on their broadcasts, including a feature on Maine Public Radio's: Maine Things Considered, an interview on France Culture / Dijon, France and a feature on Radio Canada.

Accreditations

L'Ecole Française du Maine is fully accredited by the French Ministry of Education (AEFE) and The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and is an Approved Private School by the State of Maine. The school is a fully licensed Child Care Center for 100 students by the Department of Health and Human Services, State of Maine. EFDM is also an Approved Candidate School for the International Baccalaureate/PYP Programme.

Memberships and Affiliations

DHHS: Licensed Child Care Center – State of Maine

MLF: Mission Laïque Française

NEASC: New England Association of Schools and Colleges

AFSA: Association of French Schools in America

FISNA: The Society of French Schools of North America

AEFE: Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger

AGFAS: Admissions Group of French American Schools

AATF: American Association of Teachers of French

FLAME: Foreign Language Association of Maine

Freeport Chamber of Commerce

Freeport Historical Society

MANP: Maine Association of Nonprofits

Maine Suzuki Association Suzuki Association of the Americas

International Baccalaureate IB World Schools: EFDM is an approved Candidate School: *The French School of Maine is a candidate school* for the PYP. This school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy- a commitment to high-quality, challenging, international education- that we believe is important for our students.* Only schools authorized by the IB Organization can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP), or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted. For further information about the IB and its programmes visit <http://www.ibo.org>.*

The Curriculum and Instruction

Early Childhood Program: La Maternelle

La Maternelle is the Early Childhood/Kindergarten program of L'Ecole Française du Maine. In this total French Immersion program, instruction occurs completely in French. The curriculum follows the model of the world-renowned Ecoles Maternelles of France. Learning centers are brought over from Europe and provide diverse experiences to enrich comprehension. The blossoming of each child happens by developing his/her strengths and creativity. La Maternelle combines song, play, art and movement with structured learning in the classroom. Through activities that challenge and captivate young children, we instill a life-long desire to learn and create. The benefits of learning through this immersion method go far beyond the acquisition of a second language. Our students experience a true appreciation for different cultures. We teach the children to embrace differences and to recognize how these differences contribute positively to the group. This lesson carries over into their everyday lives, encouraging them to be tolerant and respectful of all people.

Elementary Program

A full-time elementary program is offered to students through grade five. A full curriculum with a strong emphasis on multicultural education is taught through the immersion/bilingual approach. Small multi-level classes enhance the experience and allow for individualized programming. At this level of our program, students learn to read and write in French and are encouraged to speak French exclusively in the classroom. Learning in another language teaches children there is more than one way to solve a problem and there are alternative ways of responding to situations. Learning in French leads children to a more flexible way of thinking and involves higher-level thinking skills. The result is an appreciation for nuances of meaning. We strive for excellence in math and sciences and have experienced great success in all subject areas.

Physical education includes opportunities to explore a wide variety of sports activities, ranging from team sports such as soccer to Fitness Classes, Yoga, Dance, Swimming Lessons, Alpine skiing and biking trips.

Advanced Middle and High School French Classes: DELF

Starting in the fall of 2012-2013, L'Ecole Française du Maine began offering Advanced French Classes for our students who wish to keep up their French after completing their immersion education at the School. We offer this class primarily to meet our former school students' needs, to keep challenging them, and to help them reach a higher level of fluency in French. Many of these students were enrolled in our French immersion program for many years or have demonstrated interest in the French language and culture. We also welcome outside students who have had a French experience at some point and who are looking to improve their proficiency in the French language. The goal of the afterschool program is to provide an opportunity for our graduates and other advanced French students to converse in French on a regular basis, and to keep up with written skills in a fun and challenging atmosphere. Regular attendance will be required to participate and benefit from the program.

DELF Exams

The DELF Exam (Diplôme d'Etudes en Langue Française), designed by the CIEP (Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques), is an official qualification awarded by the French Ministry of Education certifying a level of fluency in French. Such certifications are useful for school records, as well as college and job applications. **Scores are valid for life.** The entire program includes six different units. Each unit leads to an exam and, if successfully passed, to a French diploma. The last levels of the program can give access to French universities without having to take another proficiency test before enrolling in a class. Typically, French majors in college seek the DELF at the university level, but thanks to their immersion education, our students will be positioned to pass this exam prior to attending university. This is an impressive accomplishment that could exempt the students from foreign language requirements, or allow them to be accepted into higher-level classes sooner than is typical. The institution itself will make the determination, but the DELF will provide the students with an official record of their advanced proficiency in French. Passing the B2/ C1 level should waive language proficiency exam if attending a French higher education institution. In 2017, L'Ecole Française du Maine was honored to become a DELF Testing Center, thanks to our credentialed teachers and successful students. If you have any questions about DELF, feel free to contact us at: delf@frenchschool.me

French Immersion / Curriculum Instruction

At L'Ecole Française du Maine: French is used as the primary language of instruction.

Preschool / Kindergarten through Grade 1: Total immersion program. Swim and music lessons are taught in English. All other subjects are taught in French.

Elementary Grades: English Language Arts, music and swimming are taught in English. All other subjects are taught in French. Please see our Curriculum Guide for more information.

Curriculum in French	Curriculum in English
Mathematics	English Language Arts
History and Geography	Music (instrumental lessons)
Sciences	US and Maine History
Music (chorus, theory, history)	
Physical Education	
Visual Arts	

Homework

At L'Ecole Française du Maine, students complete most of their written work during the school day and **we rarely assign homework**. The purpose of homework, when assigned, is to encourage reading outside of the classroom, to keep parents informed and involved in classroom learning and projects, and to develop responsibility in students. Classroom teachers have individual procedures as to how they prefer their students record and complete homework assignments, so please refer to your child's teacher for more information. The school aims to guide students toward independence. We hope parents will support us in this effort by reminding their child of his/her responsibilities in regards to homework while reinforcing that homework is primarily the child's responsibility. We encourage parents to help their children with homework and we offer the following guidelines as for the amount of time we expect students to spend on homework at each grade level.

- GS/Kindergarten: No homework
- CP/Grade 1: Occasional 10 minutes of "homework" to help children develop a sense of responsibility and reinforce classroom learning.
- CE1/Grade 2: 10 minutes
- CE2/Grades 3 and up: 15 minutes plus additional reading assignments and projects
- To support our English Language Arts program, it is suggested students read 15-20 minutes per evening in English.

Homework assignments (when assigned) do not present new concepts to students and are designed to reinforce lessons introduced in class. If your child does not understand an assignment and tries but cannot complete the work for any reason, please write a note to the teacher explaining the situation. The teacher will then be able to offer help and support to your child. Occasionally this can happen because a child is too tired or does not understand the directions, or for any number of other reasons. Please do not work for hours on an assignment at home trying to get it completed if your child is "stuck", as this is not our intent. We do not want our students to experience frustration. In case of an absence, the teacher will help the child with the concepts and the class work will not need to be made up as homework.

Evaluation of Students

At EFDM, students are evaluated each trimester. The school evaluation form identifies many facets of your child's progress and identifies the specific skills we are teaching and that your child is developing at each grade level. On the form, teachers give their insight based on their classroom observations of your child's performance. We meet to discuss this progress with you twice a year. Recommendations for placement for the following school year are made at the end of the year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Teachers meet with the parents of the students in early December and late March, and upon teacher request in June. We urge that you make every attempt to attend and we hope that both parents will be able to come. You will be reminded of these dates as they approach and can always refer to the website calendar page. During conferences parents and teachers discuss the progress report. These meetings offer both teachers and parents the opportunity to discuss any concerns which may have arisen and, in partnership, to work out a plan for helping the child.

Field Trips

The school organizes field trips from time to time. These field trips support the curriculum and offer children the opportunity to broaden their experience at EFDM. While participation in field trips is optional, please do not consider field trips as "extras" and opt to take the day off from school. Your child will be missing out on enrichment and positive social interaction with his/her peers and teachers. If you have any questions about field trips, please ask your child's classroom teacher. Signed permission slips are required for field trip participation.

Lunch at School

Your child will need to bring a lunch box to school. Please make sure his/her name is written in the lunch box

for easy identification should it get misplaced or left behind.

When preparing lunch from home, please be aware of the following:

1. We have a pack home policy. This means we will send home all unfinished food with your child. This way, you will be able to monitor what and how much your child is eating during the day, based on what remains in the box.
2. Please include a water bottle or other beverage.
3. Families should include a light morning snack for the recess break, if desired, and another for after school if your child is attending a club activity or aftercare. Please label what is snack for preschoolers so as not to confuse with lunch.
4. We will not do “warm-ups” so if your child is bringing a hot portion of lunch, please make sure to heat it at home and pack it in a thermos or other heat-retaining recipient.
5. While we like to encourage children to share, lunch is not the appropriate time. Please speak with your child about not sharing his/her lunch with friends at school, even if it is with good intentions. Many children have allergies and this could be a risky practice, however considerate.
6. If your child does have allergies, our faculty and staff needs to be aware of these restrictions. Please make sure to note any allergies on the Emergency Form. *If your child forgets his/her lunch at home, we will attempt to contact you. In the case we cannot reach you, the school keeps a limited supply of ingredients on hand to provide lunch in an emergency. If the school provides lunch, you will be billed \$5.00.*

Our Approach: Behavior, Safety

We believe each child is different and has individual needs. To best serve the child, both parents and staff need to honestly communicate their insights into the causes of behavior problems, the effects of current strategies to support improved behavior, alternative approaches, and feelings about what is happening. Rules of the school are designed for the safety and well-being of all children and staff and we strive to be clear and consistent. We also aim to guide children toward self-reliance and independence by giving them the opportunity to build the necessary skills to solve problems on their own.

The following list reflects our beliefs in the most effective ways to manage behavior:

- consistency
- using positive reinforcement
- conveying guidance with love, acceptance and respect
- setting clear expectations and consequences
- role modeling
- redirecting inappropriate behavior
- communicating at eye level
- implementing behavior management strategies immediately
- providing intervention
- encouraging children to express their feelings
- supporting a child at all times

We will work with children according to these objectives, but EFDM reserves the right to disenroll any child whose behavior is disruptive to the learning environment. (See Disenrollment below)

Our Expectations of Children

EFDM’s expectations of students’ behavior are in the spirit of inclusion and respect for one another. This means all children are welcomed into games on the playground and classroom activities. Boys play with the girls, girls play with the boys, they are all peers, friends and the goal is for all to get along and play cooperatively with one another.

The following behaviors are expected of all students.

The students will:

- show respect to their teachers, students, and all members of the school community;
- refrain from yelling, teasing, name calling or other forms of abusive behavior, harassment or humiliation;
- respect and care for their own property and that of others and the school;
- avoid all forms of aggressive behavior, including pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping and spitting (this is also a health consideration, as well as a safety issue);

- walk in the halls;
- keep the school clean and remove any trash they find;
- be respectful of the games and activities of others on the playground, include others in their activities and avoid aggressive games and behavior;
- refrain from bringing to school any type of toys or games that represent violence or hard equipment that could physically harm another person;
- remain seated while eating at lunchtime;
- always wash hands before leaving the bathroom.

Communication

From time to time, you will have questions and/or concerns. This is expected. When those questions do arise, please know we are here to help. We will always do our best to respond to you in a professional and timely manner. So, please do ask a teacher or administrator of the school whenever you have a question, large or small. You may feel you do not want to “bother” teachers with your questions or concerns or you may be reluctant to approach us, feeling we are too busy, but that is not the case. It is our job to work with children and families in partnership and we do this best when you come to us directly with a question or worry. Direct communication with the parties concerned is the best approach to resolving any situation, so please do come to us. Let us help.

When you have a specific concern, the best place to start is always your child’s teacher. He/She is the person who can best inform you about your child’s needs or classroom situations. If, after conferring with your child’s teacher, (or before if you prefer), you still have questions, we are always available to listen and help. If the question concerns curriculum, Our Curriculum Coordinator can assist you. If it is a policy question or larger concern, please see the School Director/Office Manager who will clarify or alert the Head of School. Whatever your query or concern, we will give it our attention and will do our very best to respond in a timely manner.

To help you direct your question to the person who knows the answer, please keep in mind the way we have divided the responsibilities of the school between ourselves. The staff directory is available on our website: efdm.org

The School Director can answer most of your questions, and if not, will look into your query and get back to you. Keep in mind, our office is a busy place, so please consider sending an email (office@frenchschool.me) as another efficient option. For example, a quick email to inform the office of an absence, need for aftercare, dentist appointment, etc. is appreciated. The school office handles the billing for all incidentals, so if you have a question about an invoice for after-care or other services, please let the Office Manager know. The Director/Office Manager is also responsible for maintaining student files and will be in contact with you to make sure all required forms are returned so that your child may participate in school activities.

The Director of Admissions is the first contact with the school and gives tours and guides families through the admission and financial aid process. Please contact the Director of Admissions with any questions about Tuition/FACTS payment plans or Financial Aid. If you know of anyone who might be interested in EFDM for their child, please let our Admissions office know 😊

The Head of School oversees all operations, so for any concern that has not been addressed through other channels, please see the Head of School for assistance.

Teachers: For daily questions about schoolwork or your child’s progress, what your child needs to bring for special projects, etc., or most anything concerning your child, please ask your child’s teacher. He/She works closely with your child each day and is the best resource. When in doubt, your child’s teacher can point you in the right direction.

If the person you approach cannot assist you, that person can get the message to someone who can.

Communicating with your teachers happens best from 3:00 to 3:30 pm. For informal updates and nuts and bolts questions, please catch up with your child’s teacher during this time. For topics that need appointments, these can also be scheduled within this time frame. This is a convenient time for our teachers as we can easily get coverage and there is ample supervision on the playground for children or siblings, allowing parents to have adult discussions without the child present. Other arrangements can be made if this does not work for you. We cannot discuss confidential issues on the playground nor can we discuss any student, other than your own child, with you. If you have a concern regarding another child in the school, please do not approach this other child yourself. Instead, we ask that you come to us and let us resolve the issue.

If, for any reason, none of these options are available to you on a given day, please call the school to speak with your child's teacher, or to leave a message, and he/she will get in touch with you as soon as possible. Please identify the best way and time to reach you.

We do ask, out of respect for the teachers' personal time, that families refrain from calling or emailing teachers at home. Administrators, however, accept phone calls and emails at home, and will convey messages to the teachers, even when the message is simply to have the teacher contact you. Of course, during school hours, you can call the school: 207-865-3308. We love to hear from you personally, especially when the subject involves sensitive issues where discussion would be more effective.

Information about the school is available on the website (www.efdm.org), where the school calendar can be found and downloaded/printed and upcoming events are listed. You will receive a weekly newsletter via email- "Latest de L'école". This should be your primary source of information for the week to come and future events. The school also makes regular posts on our Instagram account, and hosts a Facebook page (please "Like" us) to inform you of school happenings. The bulletin boards next to the office and on the playground also contain information on news and upcoming events.

Garderie (Before and After-school Care)

The school offers before and after- school care for additional fees for children enrolled in the school. Before care begins at 7:30 am **upon request in advance** and after-care is offered from 3:30-5:30 pm daily. Please be advised, pick up time is by 3:30 pm. Any child remaining on campus at 3:30 without a parent will automatically be placed in after-care and you will be charged the designated fee of \$10.00 per hour (or part thereof) for this service. After-Care billing is sent out monthly. Delinquent After-Care accounts or repeated late pick-ups may result in termination of a family's access to these extended hours. Thank you for respecting these times and keeping your invoices paid to date.

After-school Clubs

EFDM offers after-school club activities after dismissal from 3:30 to 4:30. Club activities run once a week for 10-week sessions. Among some clubs ideas are: Ballet/Dance, Cards and Games, Lego Club and Origami. More offerings may be proposed as the year progresses. A minimum number of 5 participants is required for each club to run. Cost of clubs is \$15 per session. Watch for announcements about clubs in the Latest de l'école newsletter.

Attendance

Regular attendance is the best way for your child to progress, both academically and socially.

Absences

In the event that your child will be absent, please email (office@frenchschool.me) or phone (207-865-3308) the school so we can get a message to his or her teacher.

Parking Lot Safety

Please know the town has determined the directions and parking spots they would like the school to use. We ask that you drive slowly and respect the entrance and exit markings when you go in and out of the parking lot. Please do escort your children to and from the drop off and pick up locations in the school. **We also ask families to refrain from using cellphones while driving in the parking lot.**

Arrival at School

Please see 2021-2022 COVID-19 protocols.

Please note: Changes/adaptations may be made throughout the year.

Departure from School

Please see 2021-2022 COVID-19 protocols.

Please note: Changes/adaptations may be made throughout the year.

Instruction ends at 3:00 and the school day ends promptly at 3:30 pm.

***Please pick up your child before or no later than 3:30 pm.**

Children remaining after 3:30 will be considered part of the after-care program.
Once you are present on the school grounds for pick up, your child is now your responsibility.
We ask that you inform a staff member of your arrival and fully supervise your child upon arrival.

Health and Safety ***Please also see COVID-19 protocols.**

The following regulations of the Maine Department of Health will be honored:

- Students may not keep any type of medications with them (including throat lozenges).
- EFDM will administer prescription medication only upon written order from a physician or according to the labeled instructions on the original medicine container and with a written, signed and dated request from the parent or legal guardian.
- EFDM will not administer any non-prescription medications to a child without written, signed and dated parental permission naming the medication and dosage. Verbal permission is allowed in emergencies if the school makes a written note and then gets written permission from the parent as soon as possible.
- **Please, if at all possible, administer medications at home.**
- The School requires vaccination records or a letter of philosophical objection on file (to be updated annually)
- The School requires the Immunization / Health Screening Form on file for attendance (to be updated annually). *** This requires a doctor's visit and signature on the health screening form. Please take notice: All school paperwork and medical forms must be completed and submitted in order for your child to attend school.**

Illness

If your child becomes ill while at school you will be notified immediately. We request that all children be taken home as soon as possible. If your child does not feel well in the morning, we strongly urge that you keep him or her at home in order to ensure that he/she receives appropriate treatment and rest and to help prevent spreading infection. A child who is not well enough to participate in all of our daily activities, (including swimming for preschoolers), field trips and outdoor play, should not attend. If your child has a contagious disease or condition, you must notify the school to this effect as soon as possible so that parents of other students can be informed. When your child returns, he/she must bring a note from your doctor indicating that it is appropriate to return to class.

Please do not bring your child to school on any day that he/she displays the following symptoms or illnesses:

1. Fever
2. Rash (should be evaluated by your physician)
3. Diarrhea or vomiting (**should be free from these symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school**)
4. If he/she is being treated for a communicable disease.
5. Conjunctivitis
6. Pest infestations (head lice, pinworm, etc.) (**infestations must be treated before returning to school**)

When fever, diarrhea, vomiting, conjunctivitis, or any other contagious diseases occur, we require you to keep your child home for 24 hours after medication is prescribed and administered. In order to return to class, children must be fever-free for a period of 24 hours (without receiving fever medication). It is imperative that the school be notified of any communicable disease or pest infestation. The objective of our adherence to this policy is that it significantly reduces the spread of illness among students.

Snow Days/Cancellations

Because of our commuting population, we feel snow days fundamentally are based on each family's judgment, depending upon each family's particular situation. However, considering the way weather can be localized, families should consider safety and driving conditions based on their local area, and make their own decision.

The School sends out an email notification system and you will be informed by text, email, (or both if you prefer) as soon as a decision is made (typically before 6:45 am).

Cancellations are also posted on local television Channels 6, 8 and 13 and their websites.

To receive an automatic cell phone text message of cancellations from wcsh6:

Go to www.wcsh6.com : “Storm Center” and click on “Cancellations and Delays”.

From there, you may sign up to receive notification of school closings via text message on your cellular phone.

Occasionally, we have had to close the school for power outages. In the event of a power outage, we will send out a notification. If a storm picks up during the school day, we may, in the interest of safety, need to send students and staff home early. It is a tough call each time, and we do understand the inconveniences school closings can cause, but we do endeavor to keep the safety of all our families and staff in mind when making our snow day decisions.

Please be sure to have school cancellation child care arranged during this season.

We do not offer this service.

Family Travel

Cultural education is a priority with us and we recognize the educational value travel provides. However, extended time away from school interrupts the learning process and academic progress may be compromised. If you know you will be away for an extended period, please make every attempt to plan trips during scheduled school vacations. When this is not possible, we will do our best to honor and work with families who are traveling with their children. We ask that you coordinate and plan ahead with your child’s teacher if you absolutely cannot avoid travel while school is in session. The School also cannot give any financial credit for travel-related absences.

Items to Take to School

Please bring slippers, backpack or bag, and a change of clothing for the younger children. **Please mark all of your child’s clothing and footwear with his or her name.** On swimming days, your child will need to bring another bag containing a swimsuit, towel, cap (or hair tie), and plastic bag for the wet swimsuit. Please help your child remember to take his/her bag home at the end of the day.

Children’s Belongings

Toys and items of value that could be damaged should remain at home. Under no circumstances will toys of any type, toys that require batteries, or toys that make noise be allowed. Your child will be assigned a cubby in which to store clothing and personal belongings. **Please have all items and belongings labeled.** This is a huge help to our staff and we appreciate your taking the time to do this.

Clothing

There is no formal dress code at L’Ecole Française du Maine. We ask that all students be dressed neatly, simply and comfortably in clothes that are suitable for their age, and suitable for a school environment, while allowing them to participate fully in the day’s activities. Any jewelry should be discreet and safe both for the student wearing it and for other students. For safety reasons, we ask that students not wear flip-flops or open-toed sandals to school. If a special dress is required for any occasion you will be notified. The school reserves the right to make a final decision regarding suitability of clothing and jewelry. Clothing should always be appropriate for the (ever-changing) weather. In all but the most severe weather, recess is held outside. Proper rain gear, including boots or waterproof footwear is important on rainy days. During the winter months your child should be dressed for snow and cold. Snow pants, boots, hats, and warm mittens or gloves are essential for children. Please mark all of your child’s clothing and footwear with his or her name. If your child has lost an article of clothing, he or she should look in the lost and found. **Articles that are not claimed prior to each school vacation will be donated to charity.**

Recess

The school has provided students of all ages with safe and developmentally appropriate spaces where they may play under direct supervision. The purpose of recess is for children to have fun and to develop strong muscles and good coordination, while releasing some of the energy typical of the growing child. We expect students to abide by the school's rules of safety and fair play. We also expect all students to play cooperatively and respectfully and for games to be inclusive. Children requesting to join a game or activity will be welcomed by their peers. Teachers will review specific playground rules with their classes from time to time throughout the year.

Nap Time (Early Childhood only)

Since our early childhood programs are designed with various activities to utilize each child's whole body and mind, a naptime is included to allow time for each child's body to rest. La Maternelle provides each child with his or her own personalized nap mat, pillow and blanket. Each child is asked to rest quietly for the first half hour. Then, for children who no longer nap, an alternative quiet activity is provided (books to look at, quiet play, etc.). We ask that you send along any comforting nap toy or blanket to help your child feel at home.

Holiday Celebrations and Special Events

At L'Ecole Française du Maine, we do not celebrate religious holidays, but we do celebrate cultural celebrations and other festive occasions, when they happen on a school day. On the other hand, when a holiday falls on a weekend, that special day is to be celebrated at home (except for Halloween, as we cannot resist the fun of dressing up in costumes with the kids!). Thank you for understanding; we cannot make up every holiday missed.

Professional Development Days / Early Release Days

Thank you for making alternate child care arrangements on these days. Release time will be 11:30 and aftercare will not be offered.

Social Invitations

In consideration of children's feelings, we ask that party invitations not be distributed at school and that social plans, which do not include everyone, be discussed outside of school. The parent directory will provide you with mailing addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers. Our goal is to teach children to be sensitive to and respectful of other people's feelings.

Parent Volunteers

As parents, we all want to play an active role in our child's education. At EFDM we recognize and value that parent involvement plays an important role in a child's educational experience. Due to the unique characteristics of the immersion education, we work at balancing the needs of the total French immersion classroom with the needs and added value of having parents contribute their time and energies to the school. There are many ways in which we welcome your presence and help. Please see your child's teacher to discuss how you can participate. For example, help on a field trip or with a special activity, garden on the school grounds, cover library books, be a guest speaker, run errands for the school, and countless other ways... Merci beaucoup!

Parents Association

Welcome!!! **As a parent of a student enrolled at EFDM, you are automatically a member of the Parents Association!** The goal of the PA is to work with the School to support the experience of the students and to foster close relationships within our school community. We encourage parent participation in school activities and we organize several fun events each year, including: Thanksgiving Community Meal, Chinese New Year Community Meal, Fall and Spring Family Picnics and our biggest event, our Annual Spring Carnival. Sign ups to help with these events are put out in advance through "Sign-Up Genius", so please pitch in however you can when you see the emails about these events. Volunteering in the Parents Association is a wonderful way to become acquainted with your child's friends, faculty, administration and other parents. There are positions that meet all areas of interest and time commitments, so if you would like to get involved, we have a place for you!

Parents' Back to School Week

Parents' Back to School Week provides an opportunity to visit the school, to chat with teachers and administrators in a relaxed setting, and to interact with other families. Each day of the week, one classroom teacher will present his/her classroom to the parents. The curriculum and daily routines will be discussed and questions will be

answered. Information on enrichment programs including Suzuki music, art, academic support, DELF, clubs/aftercare and athletic programs etc. will also be presented. The Parents' Association will welcome new families and encourage participation throughout the week. The Director will also be available to discuss the contents of the handbook and to answer your questions on any aspect of school life at L'Ecole Française du Maine. A schedule of the presentations will be distributed.

Special Services Information

We are committed to educating each child to the maximum extent appropriate within our programs. If we find a child requires or would benefit from special services beyond the normal scope of our programs, we may suggest your child receive private Academic Support Services at the school. Alternatively, an evaluation and services may be available through the RSU5 public school Instructional Support Program while the child remains enrolled at EFDM. At the outset, the school's goal is to help each child succeed in the classroom. We work with families to develop strategies together. Gathering information from home and school, and working with parents and staff in the best interest of the child may lead to a referral to special services. For example, it may be determined that a child requires speech therapy. After consultation with parents and staff, if all parties agree, the educational team (parents and teachers) may suggest a referral to special services or to a private speech therapist. Final determination as to whether or not a child qualifies for special services is the decision of the Department of Special Services in Freeport. We want to do everything possible to help your child succeed in our school. We are very fortunate to also have academic support and tutoring services available at EFDM. If it is determined your child requires additional support, we will work with your family and available resources to develop an educational plan.

Computer and Internet Use

Laptops or iPads will be available to students in the elementary classes from time to time. The school's technology policy on the use of the laptops is included in Appendix B of this handbook. Parents are asked to review the addendum with their children, and both parents and students will be asked to sign a use agreement.

Adult Education

During the school year, EFDM offers several options for adults interested in improving their speaking skills or simply trying to keep up with their kids! Attendees are adults both from the school community and surrounding communities. Private lessons and weekly group classes are available.

The School Yearbook

Each year at EFDM we publish a yearbook to showcase the highlights of the year and provide a lasting souvenir for the children. In this book we compile memories of the entire school year and include photos of the activities and projects completed during the school year. We ask all families to sign a photo release form so that we can include all children in this book, a treasure for your child to keep and look back at as time goes on. We strongly urge all families to purchase the yearbook each year. Samples of the yearbook are available for review in the office. We ask that these samples do not leave the school.

Chorus CD

With the help of a professional sound engineer, the School produces CDs of the students singing the songs they have learned in the choral program throughout the course of the year. We encourage families to purchase a copy so that the children can keep you entertained on long car rides!

Café et Conversation

Each year, we organize morning coffees throughout the year. A coffee schedule will be posted in the school hallway and published in our newsletter. The coffees are planned for various groups, such as for the different grade levels, but you are always welcome to attend any coffee, regardless of the age of your child. The more the merrier, so please join us for a chat before you head off to work! We'd love to get to know you better.

Preparation for the Next Year Application and Re Enrollment Process

Non-Discrimination Policy

L'Ecole Française du Maine is committed to providing a working and learning environment free from harassment and discrimination. No employee of the school, student of the school or applicant to the school shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, disability or sexual orientation. We will also not tolerate any harassment or discriminatory conduct by any third party coming to our school, including parents, trustees or vendors.

Enrollment

Enrollment is open to any child between the ages of 3 and 7, with priority given first to children who are re-enrolling, then to siblings of children enrolled, and then to the waiting list. Children must be toilet trained.

Application Procedure

1. Complete an application for enrollment or re enrollment and return it to EFDM with a non-refundable application fee of \$50 (fee applies to initial application only).
2. For new applicants, arrange by telephone, letter or email for a visit to the school. The parent/child interview/visit is a required part of the application procedure. Application for re enrollment must be made each year, but the interview is not necessary for re enrollment.
3. Criteria for admissions are, but not limited to:
 - i. Child's readiness for and ability to benefit from our program, as determined by the staff of EFDM through interviews with the child and parent/guardian.
 - ii. We expect children to be toilet trained. Occasional "accidents" are age-appropriate and understandable, but diapers/pull-ups are not to be worn at school.
 - iii. Limitations of space and teacher/child ratio requirements.
4. Classroom placement of children will be determined by the staff and administration of EFDM.
5. Children are initially accepted on a six-week trial basis. If at any time during this period it should be determined by the School either that a child is not benefiting from this program or he/she is proving disruptive to other children, then it may be necessary for EFDM administration to terminate the enrollment with tuition refunded on a prorated basis.
6. Enrollment of any child is complete when the tuition agreement has been signed and returned with the required appropriate deposit, subject to the completion of the six-week trial period set forth above.
7. In early January, application materials will be sent home for current students. Enrollment priority is given to currently enrolled families, but re enrollment contracts must be received by February 14. Applications for students not currently enrolled will be considered thereafter.
8. Each year upon enrollment, a non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 is due to secure your child's placement. The deposit is a part of the next year's total tuition. This confirms your child's enrollment. Our school's situation has additional constraints – and benefits (!) - than other private schools in Maine. Because classroom teachers are native speakers of French, their presence depends upon valid visas from the US Government. The process of securing visas for the teachers and assistants requires long-term planning. Therefore, we begin making staffing decisions based upon the enrollment information we receive.
9. Back to School forms are sent home to enrolled families beginning in May and reminders will be sent through the summer until your child's file is complete. These required forms include health and permission forms, photo release form, and a biographical data sheet, among others. Thank you for returning forms as soon as possible!
10. When EFDM is full, a waiting list is established. When a space becomes available, families are contacted for an interview in the order of priority established above.

Disenrollment

On rare occasions, L'Ecole Française du Maine may disenroll children from the school. L'Ecole Française du Maine reserves the right to terminate services at any time. Here are some examples of times when children may be disenrolled:

1. If a behavior or condition exists which threatens the health and safety of children or teachers in the program or disrupts the educational program.
2. Non-payment of tuition or assessed fees.

Tuition Assistance

Financial Aid:

We understand and appreciate the financial commitment families undertake in deciding to send their children to L'Ecole Française du Maine. And although paying for education is first and foremost the responsibility of a family, we devote funds each year to a financial aid budget that helps assist families. In turn, our school community benefits by attracting gifted students who otherwise would not have been able to attend. To help us objectively assess what a family is able to contribute to its student(s) education expenses, we use School and Student Services (SSS By NAIS) as a trusted third party. SSS is a service of the National Association of Independent Schools. Based on the financial information you provide, SSS gives us an estimated amount your family can contribute to educational expenses. This helps us make fair and objective financial aid decisions.

The SSS analysis of a family's "Estimated Family Contribution (EFC)" is a critical component of our financial aid decision. However, it is just a start. To make our final financial aid award decisions, we use the SSS figures as the baseline for our own additional review, taking into consideration our total financial aid budget, other information we may have collected, our school's policies and priorities, and the needs of our entire applicant pool. Due to circumstances like these, and others, our school may not meet the level of demonstrated need shown on the SSS Family Report you might receive.

Tuition Assistance:

At present, three forms of tuition reduction or assistance are available at L'Ecole Française du Maine. To be eligible for consideration of any of the following financial aid opportunities described below, you must complete your application by January 31 for the following school year. We will communicate decisions about financial aid by March 31 for the upcoming academic year. Late applications are considered on a case-to-case basis.

1. EFDM offers direct scholarship support, based on financial need. Applications for scholarships are made directly on the SSS website. A link to the application is found on our school website under admissions/financial aid. Because tuition assistance relies upon the past year's tax form and financial information, if a family's financial situation changes for the better, sharing this information provides the school with the opportunity to offer tuition support to additional families in need.
2. Tuition can be occasionally reduced through an exchange of services for families needing assistance. For example: maintenance, cleaning, snow plowing, running an after-school activity and covering library books. Necessary services for which the school already pays in cash are considered.
3. If your child is a French national who is registered at the Consulate in Boston, you may qualify for tuition assistance through the Government of France. The application process for this scholarship requires early filing of your US tax returns. The application deadline for this type of tuition support closes well before April 15th, possibly as early as late-February, and the family's US Tax form 1040 must be included with this application. This means your taxes must be completed prior to the deadline determined by the Government of France for this form of tuition assistance. Therefore, to apply, please plan to file your taxes as soon as possible. The Consulate in Boston will be available to help guide families through the application process for this tuition assistance. Even though the application relies upon the tax return accompanying the application form, every family with French national children could receive some form of tuition assistance, as much as 100% of tuition fees.

A financial aid agreement with L'Ecole Française du Maine is confidential. We make every effort to accommodate families and we keep financial information in the strictest of confidence. In turn, we ask that families refrain from discussing details of agreements with other families. Doing so is a breach of confidentiality. It is impossible to compare one situation to another. Many elements are considered in determining a family's ability to pay tuition and each family's financial situation is unique. Failure to respect this confidentiality may result in the loss of financial aid in the future.

Tuition Payment

We try to keep tuition as low as possible, and consistent with the programs we are offering. Tuition is listed on our website and is due either paid in full to the school by June 1st or collected through FACTS Tuition Management Services. To enroll in the quarterly payment plan with FACTS, please go to the

school's website: www.efdm.org. A link to FACTS is found under Admissions - Pay Tuition.
http://www.efdm.org/pages/admissions_paytuition.html

Fundraising

Fundraising is not our favorite task, however, it is necessary. This is why we send out letters of appeal and conduct other fundraising efforts. For any school to thrive and function in the short and long-term, fundraising is vital. Your participation matters because many foundations only fund schools that can demonstrate wide support from their own alumni, parents, faculty and administration. In addition, costs for running a school and providing a strong academic and arts program increase every year. To keep our school fiscally healthy, we need everyone's participation every year. Even a small donation means more to us than none.

If you cannot make a monetary donation, please consider giving your time or services. There are always ways to help and your skills may be just the ones we need!

This fall when you receive your annual appeal letter, we hope we can count on your support 😊

Appendix A: TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY

At L'Ecole Française du Maine technology is recognized as a tool to enhance student learning. Students are expected to use the school's network and computers primarily for educational and school-related purposes. Any use of personal computers or cell phones or PDAs at school is also subject to the conditions of this Use Policy.

Whenever students are using school computers or any portion of the school networks the student has no expectation of privacy. All information contained on or transmitted over the school networks is the property of L'Ecole Française du Maine. The school reserves the right to monitor any activity of any kind on its networks.

If a student violates this Use Policy, the school may revoke the student's technology privileges and impose such other consequences as the school deems appropriate.

L'Ecole Française du Maine expects its students to maintain the same standards of courtesy, honesty and respect in the electronic world that it expects in face to face communication. Students should always remember that anything they write could be forwarded to another person without their knowledge. It is wise to be cautious about anything you write about another person when you communicate electronically. Words have the power to be very hurtful even when they are electronically communicated.

Students must not engage in any conduct on-line that would violate the school's non-discrimination and anti-harassment policy. The school may discipline a student for sending a message that causes disruption at the school even if that message is sent from a location off the school's property.

Safety guidelines for students on the Internet:

1. Never give out your last name, address or phone number.
2. Never meet in person with anyone you have just met online without the permission of a parent or guardian.
3. Never post pictures of anyone else online without that person's permission.
4. Never post a picture or video of yourself that you would not want the whole world to see.
5. Always notify an adult immediately if you receive any message or material on your computer that is not appropriate.