



The French American School
— O F T A M P A B A Y —

Parent-Student Handbook

COVID-19 Notice

Please be advised: In 2021-2022, if any of our Handbook policies conflict with the School's COVID-19 Protocols and Recommendations, the protocols take precedence. These protocols, which largely compliment this Handbook, are communicated separately and may be updated throughout the school year.

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Mission Statement and Vision

Mission: The French American School of Tampa Bay offers a bilingual educational experience through purposeful, joyful and challenging programs, inspiring children to become internationally minded and actively engaged citizens. Our collaborative school community offers an inclusive, diverse and peaceful environment that fosters excellence and empathy.

Vision: The French American School of Tampa Bay values diversity, celebrates multiculturalism, and empowers students to understand and improve the culturally diverse world around them. The school's vision is centered upon the fascinating relationship between music and art education and the immersion process of learning a second language. Though the national trend is to reduce these components of education, we believe that a strong music and art curriculum lays the foundation for strong mathematical and scientific intelligence. All grade levels will be immersed in music and art programs, including an opportunity for private Suzuki instrumental lessons.

We believe that it is through play, actions and the search for independence that each child discovers his/her unique path to learning and obtains the necessary tools for development. The children are encouraged to express themselves freely in French and through various art forms, helping them boost their confidence and their knowledge. It's through this commitment to language and culture that we're able to provide a diverse, mind-opening educational experience in an atmosphere of understanding and discovery.

Présentation de l'école

The French American School of Tampa Bay offers a multicultural educational experience through French immersion from Early Childhood through elementary grades, with special programming offered through grade 8, instilling in our students a constant curiosity towards foreign languages and the diverse cultures of the world. FASTB provides students the opportunity to benefit from French and American education systems, combining the approaches of two different and complementary educational methods. The education is further enhanced by exposure to both cultures.

The French American School of Tampa Bay is a French Immersion Program. Language immersion means a program in which the usual curriculum activities are conducted in a second language, which is the medium of instruction rather than the object of instruction. There are variables in immersion programs as to the amount of time spent each day in the second language. In total immersion programs such as this one, the second language is used for the entire school day during the first two or three years of the program. Students who go through the entire sequence of an elementary immersion program are able to communicate in the second language on topics appropriate to their age level. In addition to the goal of functional proficiency in the second language, immersion programs have as a further goal the mastery of subject content material, which is taught through the second language.

Core Principles:

We believe that academic immersion in more than one language combined with a multicultural environment cultivates:

- Respect for others and their ideas
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Appreciation of one's cultural identity
 - Excitement for and openness to other cultures

We believe that a challenging and innovative academic program cultivates:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Intellectual curiosity and love of learning
- Solid learning methods and a sound work ethic
 - Balance of intellectual, emotional and physical development

We believe that an encouraging and positive environment cultivates:

- Integrity and fairness
- Confidence and leadership
- Compassion and generosity
- Civic and social responsibility

Core Values: The French American School of Tampa Bay community shares a set of core values.

- Empathy: compassion, respect for individuals and their ideas and cultures.
- Integrity: an extension of honesty; it is doing the right thing even if no one is watching.
 - Respectful discourse among members of our school community
- Respect for diversity, the individual, ideas, cultures and the environment
- Responsibility: being accountable, doing our best to meet our commitments and to keep our word.
- Resilience: an extension of courage. It's the ability to recover quickly and to not give up when beset by setbacks and disappointments.
- Pursuit of Excellence, expect and help everyone to do their best
- Intellectual rigor and fairness, strong emphasis on hard work and work well-done
- Adaptability to a changing world
- Support and cooperation between and among our students, our staff and our community
- Openness and transparency in our decision making process and communication.

Non-Discrimination Statement:

The French American School of Tampa Bay admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Brief History

The French American School of Tampa Bay (FASTB), founded in February 2017 by Elizabeth and Willy LeBihan, offers a unique immersion school experience to students from Early Childhood through grade 8. Inspired by their successful creation of L'Ecole Française du Maine (The French School of Maine) in 2002, the Founders decided to put their experience and devotion for education to work in the Tampa Bay area they have grown to know and love. They purchased and renovated the school building and playground in time for the initial opening in the fall of 2018. FASTB employs an extremely talented teaching and support staff.

School Accomplishments

Renovation Completed and New Playground Installed for Grand Opening September 12, 2018

Beautiful school and grounds ready to welcome the Founding Class ☺

Press Coverage:

News of the School's Opening in St Pete spread fast and we have been featured in several publications:

Articles can be viewed on our website media page: <https://fastb.org/media/>

Support for FASTB:

Thanks to the solid reputation Beth and Willy built in Maine, FASTB has already received endorsements in Florida for the founding of FASTB. The following organizations assist the School and offer many benefits:

- French Ministry of Education and its prestigious international network of 400 schools (AEFE / FISNA)
- Mission Laïque Française (MLF) renowned for successfully managing French schools abroad (more than 55,000 students in 41 countries). FASTB is a full member/partner school.
- The French Consulate and Consul General Of Miami: Actively promotes FASTB to all French nationals living in the Tampa Bay Area, supports applications for scholarships for French families through funds provided by France.
- St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce: FASTB is an active member.

Accreditation (Homologation) by The French Ministry of Education awarded in 2020

IB- International Baccalaureate : International World School- Approved as an Official Candidate School for the PYP (Primary Years Programme) 2021

Memberships and Affiliations

MLF: Mission Laïque Française

FISNA: The Society of French Schools of North America

AEFE: Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Etranger- Accredited

AGFAS: Admissions Group of French American Schools

Suzuki Association of the Americas

IB/ International Baccalaureate: Candidate School for PYP (Primary Years Programme)

The Curriculum and Instruction

Early Childhood Program: La Maternelle

La Maternelle is the Early Childhood program of The French American School of Tampa Bay. 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 every day lives, encouraging them to be tolerant and respectful of all people.

Elementary and Middle School Program

A full-time elementary program is offered to students through grade 8. 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 during lessons taught in French. English Language Arts are also introduced in grade 2 and continue through the upper elementary grades and middle school years. 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. Physical education includes opportunities to explore a wide variety of sports activities.

Advanced Middle and High School French Classes: DELF

The French American School of Tampa Bay offers Advanced French Classes for 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. 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 is 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.

French Immersion / Curriculum Instruction

At The French American School of Tampa Bay: French is used as the language of instruction for approximately the following percentages of the school days:

Preschool / Kindergarten through Grade 1: Total immersion program, 95% French.

Grades 2-and up: 70% French: English Language Arts are added to programming. Other subjects are taught in French.

Homework

At The French American School of Tampa Bay, students complete most of their written work during the school day and **we do not assign much 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
- *In order to support our English Language Arts program, it is suggested that 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 FASTB, students are evaluated each trimester. The school evaluation form identifies many facets of your child's progress and identifies in great detail 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 November and mid February, and upon teacher request in May. 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 FASTB. 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. Parent Chaperone and Carpools may be requested and are greatly appreciated!

Lunch at School

Your child will need to bring a lunch box to school and must include an ice pack. 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 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 snacks on hand for an emergency, until you can arrive with lunch for your child.

Our Approach: Behavior, Safety

We believe each child is different and has individual needs. To best serve the child, both parent 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 FASTB reserves the right to disenroll any child whose behavior is disruptive to the learning environment.

(See Disenrollment below)

Our Expectations of Children

FASTB'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.

Per licensing requirements:

The child care facility shall adopt a policy consistent with Section 402.305 (12), F.S., including standards that prohibit children from being subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking or any form of physical punishment is prohibited.

Communication: Partnership between Family & School

A collaborative, constructive and positive partnership between a student's parents or guardians and the school is critical for The French American School of Tampa Bay to effectively and successfully serve our students and carry out our mission. All members of our FASTB community are expected to model our Core Values, which include Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Empathy, Resilience and Adaptability.

Should our Head of School determine that the actions of a parent or guardian create a situation that places this partnership in jeopardy, school reserves the right to terminate or refuse a student's enrollment contract. In a similar way, if the Head of School makes a determination that the rights of students, other parents, teachers or administrators have been impacted negatively by the actions or language of a parent or guardian, thereby creating a serious impediment to the school's ability to accomplish its mission, the school may terminate or refuse a student's enrollment contract.

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. That 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, The School Director is always available to listen and help.

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 School Director supervises the day to day running of the School, so if you have a question or concern that falls outside of the classroom, please see the School Director.
- Director of Admissions. Contact Admissions with any questions about Tuition/FACTS payment plans or Financial Aid.
- Our Head of School oversees all operations, so for any concern that has not been addressed through other

channels, please contact the Head of School.

- 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, who works closely with your child each day and is the best resource.

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

We ask our students, faculty and families to be respectful and responsible with their words and to avoid speaking unkindly about members of our community. Please be thoughtful in how you share concerns to avoid gossip and rumors.

Should an intervention be needed with someone else's child, please contact a school employee immediately. At no time should a parent reprimand, confront, or discipline someone else's child.

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. The School Director will, 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: (727) 800-2159. We love to hear from you personally, especially when the subject involves sensitive issues where discussion would be more effective.

Independent school success relies largely on the quality of its parental involvement. At FASTB, we ask that our parents support the school by following arrival and dismissal procedures, reinforcing the school's policies with their children, turning to teachers and school administrators when they have questions and need information and contributing in many other ways to support our educational mission.

News de Nous- Weekly Newsletter and Social Media: Information about the school is available on the website (www.FASTB.org), where the school calendar can be found and downloaded/printed and upcoming events are listed. The website contains a great deal of information and is updated regularly. You will receive a weekly email: "News de Nous". This should be your primary source of information for the week to come and future events. The school also hosts a Facebook page (please "Like" us) to inform you of school happenings.

Garderie (FASTB Extended Care)

The school offers before and after- school care for eligible children for additional fees. Extended Care before school begins at 7:30 am **upon request**, and after school from 3:00-5:30 pm daily. **It is necessary to sign up in advance for morning care** so we can plan our staffing needs accordingly in advance. Please be advised, pick up time is by 3:00 pm. Any child remaining on campus at 3:00 without a parent will automatically be placed in Extended Care and you will be charged the designated fee of \$10.00 per hour (or part thereof) for this service. A la carte Extended Care billing is sent out monthly. Delinquent Extended Care accounts or repeated late pickups 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 Extended Care can also be purchased for the entire year in advance for families who use the service regularly – contact the School Director for more information.

After-school Clubs

From time to time, FASTB offers after-school club activities after dismissal from 3:00 to 4:00. Club activities run once a week for 10-week sessions. Offerings will vary depending on the interests of the instructors and students, but may include board games, card sharks, lego club or arts & crafts. A minimum number of 5 participants is required for each club to run. Cost of clubs is \$15 per class/\$150 per session.

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 or phone the school so we can get a message to his or her teacher.

Parking Lot Safety

The School has determined the directions and parking spots for the safest possible access to the school to our best prediction. We ask that you drive slowly when you enter and exit 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 cell phones while driving in the parking lot.**

Arrival at School

Students should be **dropped off by 8:30am, but not before 8:20** (unless enrolled in Before Care). Children arriving before 8:20 are considered under the supervision of their parents. School begins at 8:30. If your child is tardy, you will need to park and walk your child to the classroom when you arrive. Thank you for having your child enter quietly so as to limit disruption as much as possible.

Preschool

Children in **preschool** are to be **dropped off at their classrooms in the morning between 8:20 and 8:30**, where teachers will welcome the children at the door and will have an opportunity to speak with their parents. Parents must sign their child into the preschool. The parents are asked to kindly help their children put their belongings away in their cubbies and assure they have all they need for the day. The children are welcomed into the classroom, at which time they will say good-bye to their parents.

Students in Grades K and up

Students in **grades K and up** are to quickly put their belongings away and go directly to their classroom between 8:20-8:30. We ask students to arrive promptly so as not to miss and disrupt lessons. **After putting their backpacks away, elementary students should not be in the hallway in the morning.** Thank you!

Departure from School

Grades Kindergarten and Up:

Students go outside to the picnic area, with their backpacks and belongings, at 2:45 for pickup and remain in the picnic area until 3:00. Parents come directly to the gate on the parking lot side of the building, where a teacher greets parents, opens the gate, and dismisses students.

In case of inclement weather, please pick up your child in the classroom.

At 3:00, any child who has not been collected in the picnic area goes directly to the Extended Care program in the playground, even if not enrolled in that program. When parents arrive, they need to go sign the child out of Extended Care.

Preschool:

Parents enter the main entrance to pick your child up in the classroom. Those who do not have a parent in the building picking them up at 3:00, will go to the Extended Care program. When parents arrive, they need to go sign your child out of Extended Care.

Health and Safety

The following regulations will be honored:

- Students may not keep any type of medications with them (including throat lozenges).
- FASTB 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.
- FASTB 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.**
- By Florida law, the School requires vaccination and health records on file. We **MUST** have the Florida vaccination form **DH 680** form and the Florida Health Form **DH 3040** on file for your child to attend school. These forms are available from your child's physician/pediatrician.

Please take notice: All school paperwork and medical forms must be completed and submitted in order for your child to attend school.

Non-Smoking Policy

There shall be no smoking on the premises, including e-cigarettes.

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 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.

Hurricane Days/Cancellations

We feel travel decisions are fundamentally based on each family's judgment, depending upon each family's particular situation. Considering the way weather can be localized, families should consider safety and driving conditions based on their local area, and make their own decision.

School Closings:

The School sends out notification as soon as a closing decision is made by text, email, (or both if you prefer), typically before 6:45 am. Occasionally, we may have 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 weather impacted closing decisions. **Please be sure to have school cancellation child care arranged. 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

All students: Please bring slippers, lunchbox, backpack or bag. Preschool children: Also please bring a crib-sized sheet, and a change of clothing in a Ziplock bag. **Please mark all of your child's clothing and footwear with his or her name.** 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 toy guns 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 or uniform at The French American School of Tampa Bay. 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 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 weather. Whenever weather allows, recess and lunch are held outside. Proper rain gear, including boots or waterproof footwear is important on rainy days. While we are fortunate to have shade on the playground, sun hats and caps are encouraged for outdoor play. **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/Preschool 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 cot, pillow and blanket. Families are asked to provide a clean cot-sized sheet and to launder their child's nap bedding regularly. 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 The French American School of Tampa Bay, 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 & Parent/Teacher Conferences: Early Release Days

The school calendar includes 4 staff development days. There are 2 full Professional Development days prior to the start of the school year for students and, there will be 2 half days for Parent/Teacher Conferences, which are listed on the school calendar. The half days will be early dismissal days. Early Dismissal will be at 11:30, before lunch. There will be no after care provided on these days. Thank you for making alternate child care arrangements.

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 FASTB 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' 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 etc. will also be presented. The School Director will also be available to discuss the contents of the handbook and to answer your questions on any aspect of school life at The French American School of Tampa Bay. 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 outside of school while the child remains enrolled at FASTB. 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. We want to do everything possible to help your child succeed in our school.

Computer and Internet Use

Laptops may be made 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

FASTB offers French classes for community members, and parents who want to try to keep up with their kids! For more information, please visit our Adult Education page: <https://fastb.org/community/adult-education/>

Café et Conversation

We organize morning coffees throughout the year. A coffee schedule will be posted in the school and on the website. 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 (and not so healthy doughnut) before you head off to work! We'd love to get to know you better.

Preparation for the Next Year:

Application and Reenrollment Process

Non-Discrimination Policy

The French American School of Tampa Bay 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 or vendors.

Enrollment

Enrollment is open to any child between the ages of 3 and 12, with priority given first to children who are reenrolling, 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 reenrollment and return it to FASTB 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 valuable part of the application procedure. Application for reenrollment must be made each year, but the interview is not necessary for reenrollment.
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 FASTB through interviews with the child and parent/guardian.
 - ii. Ours is not a toddler program. 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 FASTB.
5. Children are initially accepted on a six-week trial basis. If at any time during this period it should be determined 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 FASTB administration to terminate the enrollment with tuition refunded on a pro-rated 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 folders will be sent home for current students. Enrollment priority is given to currently enrolled families, but reenrollment contracts must be received by February 15. 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(!) – compared to other private schools. 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 packets 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 FASTB 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, The French American School of Tampa Bay disenrolls children from the school. The French American School of Tampa Bay 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 The French American School of Tampa Bay. 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 FACTS Aid and Grant Assessment as a trusted third party. Based on the financial information you provide, FACTS gives us an estimated amount your family can contribute to educational expenses. This helps us make fair and objective financial aid decisions. The FACTS 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 FACTS 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 FACTS Family Report you might receive.

Tuition Assistance:

At present, three forms of tuition reduction or assistance are available at The French American School of Tampa Bay. 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.

- For students in grades K and up, we accept the Florida Tax Credit, Family Empowerment, McKay, Gardiner and Hope Scholarships. We encourage you to apply to these scholarships first: all but McKay are administered by Step Up for Students (<https://www.stepupforstudents.org>) or AAA Scholarships (<https://www.aaascholarships.org>). The McKay is administered by the state (www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/mckay/). These scholarships address a variety of family needs and it is recommended that you begin the application process early – you can monitor the websites for the open application dates, and you will receive updates in our newsletter//. **Families must apply for these scholarships before requesting direct aid from the School.**
- FASTB offers limited direct scholarship support, based on financial need. Applications for scholarships are made directly on the FACTS website: <http://FACTS.nais.org/parents/>. 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. **Families applying for aid from the school must also apply for Florida scholarships through Step Up for Students (please see above) before requesting direct aid from the School.**
- Tuition can be occasionally reduced through an exchange of services for families needing assistance. For example: maintenance, cleaning, running an after-school club and covering library books. Necessary services for which the school already pays in cash are considered and a volunteer agreement must be signed. Please see the School Director if interested in this option.
- If your child is a French national who is registered at the Consulate in Miami, 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 Miami 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.

Confidentiality in regards to Financial Aid:

A financial aid agreement with The French American School of Tampa Bay 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 1, or collected through FACTS Tuition Management Services. To enroll in the quarterly or monthly payment plan with FACTS, please go to the school's website: www.FASTB.org. A link to FACTS is found under Admissions - Pay Tuition. http://www.FASTB.org/pages/admissions_paytuition.html

Appendix A: TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY

At The French American School of Tampa Bay 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 The French American School of Tampa Bay. 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.

The French American School of Tampa Bay 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 on line 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.