



FORT WORTH MUSEUM
SCIENCE AND HISTORY

Museum School®
Fall/Spring 2019-2020

**Parent Handbook
and
Operational Policies**

Dear Parents,

This handbook is offered to parents of currently enrolled Museum School students. As the year progresses, we hope that many of your questions will be answered and that you will find this a useful reference throughout the school year.

Communication is extremely important to our staff. Teachers will email weekly updates on what is happening in your child's classroom. In addition, the Museum School newsletter, *Turtle Talk*, is published and distributed twice during the school year. This newsletter will keep you informed of upcoming Museum School events and dates.

We invite you to speak with your child's teacher or me if you ever have a question or concern. We will be happy to make an appointment if you have a need.

We look forward to a fun-filled year and are happy to have you and your child as a part of Museum School!



Sarah Oliver
Museum Preschool Director
soliver@fwmsk.org
817-255-9337

Philosophy

Museum School's discovery approach enhances a child's awareness of the world. The curriculum combines natural and physical sciences, history, and anthropology with art, music, and literature.

Goals

Children will have first-hand experiences.

Children will develop an appreciation for the natural world.

Children will begin to construct their own knowledge.

Children will gain skills in listening and language acquisition.

Children will creatively express themselves through music, art, and drama.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History has an established blueprint for the way it conducts its daily business and treats visitors and program participants. The following are the Operational Policies for Museum School®.

Months, Days and Hours of Operation

Fall/Spring Museum School begins in mid-September and ends in mid-May each school year.

Days and Hours of Operation

Morning sessions (no Monday classes)

Tuesday through Friday: 9:00am - 11:30am

Afternoon Sessions (no Monday classes)

Tuesday & Friday: 12:30pm - 2:30pm

Wednesday & Thursday: 12:00pm - 2:30pm

General Information

Museum School Office Hours

Monday through Friday 8:30am - 4:00pm

Museum School Telephone

817-255-9333

Museum School Email

museumschool@fwmsh.org

Museum School Address

1600 Gendy Street
Fort Worth TX 76107

Education / Museum School Staff

Amber Shive
Director of Education

Sarah Oliver
Museum Preschool Director

Miki Gabbard
Assistant Director of Education

FALL/SPRING 2019-2020 MUSEUM SCHOOL CALENDAR

August 30, 2019	Student Paperwork is due
September 10-13	2019-2020 School year begins this week
October 3	Museum School Open House (more details to come!)
November 25-29	Thanksgiving Break
December 3	Classes resume this week
December 16-January 3	Winter Holiday Break
January 6	Classes resume this week
February 4-7	Stock Show Break
February 11	Classes resume this week
March 9-13	Spring Break
March 17	Classes resume this week
May 12-15	Last week of 2019-2020 Museum School

To be announced:

Preregistration dates for Summer 2020 and Fall/Spring 2021-2021 Museum School

Teachers' names and phone numbers:

Name _____

Phone number _____

Name _____

Phone number _____

Your child's classroom email address:

Licensing

The Parent Handbook and Operational Procedures for Museum School can be found on the Museum's website at www.fwmuseum.org/about-us/museum-school/. A paper copy of this document is available upon request.

A copy of the Minimum Standards and current licensing reports are posted in the Parent Resource Room. Contact information for the local Licensing office, access to Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline and access to the DFPS website are posted in the Parent Resource Room. The contact information is also listed below.

In accordance with Licensing, parents may visit Museum School at any time.

Contact the Department of Family and Protective Services at 817-321-8604 or www.dfps.state.tx.us or 1-800-252-5400 to report abuse or neglect.

Local Licensing Office, PRS Child Abuse Hotline and the PRS Website information
Health and Human Services Commission—Licensing Office
1501 Circle Drive, Suite 310
Fort Worth, TX 76119
Phone: 817-321-8000
Fax: 512-276-3513
http://www.dfps.state.tx.usd/Child_Care/About_Child_Care_Licensing

Enrollment Information

Enrollment information can be found online at www.fwmuseum.org/about-us/museum-school/.

For a child to enroll, parents must complete a Museum School registration form. Parents are notified with a confirmation email or, in the case of no email address, a written confirmation. Any changes in enrollment procedures will be posted on our website, emailed to parents, posted throughout Museum School and a copy will be in each classroom.

After confirmation of enrollment, parents are required to submit the following records and information before the child attends his or her first class:

- Current signed and dated immunization records
- Statement of child's health from a health care professional
- Emergency contact information (on the registration form)
- Child Release Form denoting contact information for persons other than parent to whom the child may be released
- A completed allergy emergency plan, if applicable
- Vision and hearing screening results (if age 4 by September 1)

In addition, parents are required to sign a form stating that they have received and agree to the Parent Handbook and Operational Policies for Museum School.

Student Attendance

It is important for your child to arrive on time and be picked up promptly. Since "Group Time" is scheduled close to the beginning of each class, your child will want to arrive on time. Preschool children have little concept of "time," so tardiness in picking them up can create stressful situations. Please notify the Museum School Office if you will be late for emergency reasons.

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Security / Child Safety / Drop-off and Pick-Up

Your child's safety is very important. A child should never be allowed to walk from the parking lot into the building unattended. Children must be signed in and out each day at the classroom door. The sign-in sheet should also reflect who will pick up the child up at the end of class.

Parents must complete the Child Release Form and return it to the Museum School office before the first day of classes. The information on the form must include a list of parent(s)/guardian(s) and other designated drivers (carpool drivers, relatives or friends) who might assume responsibility for the child. It is important that the Child Release form is up to date and there is a copy in the classroom and in the Museum School Office.

Changes or additions to the release form should be made in person with the child's teacher. The teacher will inform the Museum School Office. Children will be released only to those people who are listed on the Child Release Form. Anyone picking up for the first time, other than the child's parents, will be asked to show a picture identification. Emergency last-minute changes for the designated pick-up person must be authorized by the Museum Preschool Director or office staff.

In case of non-custodial parents, a copy of the custody and visitation papers must be on file in the Museum School office.

During operational hours, the doors at the main entrance to Museum School will be locked 10 minutes after class begins and unlocked 15 minutes before dismissal. If a parent should need access to the Museum School in between those times, entrance will be given by using the doorbell (located on the north wall outside the Museum School entrance). Parents waiting in the Museum School lobby or the Parent Resource Room during their child's class should not open the Museum School doors to admit anyone who rings the doorbell. Museum School staff can hear the doorbell in the office and will come to the door to check who is wanting admittance.

Parking

The lot to the north of the Museum School building is reserved for Museum School families on the day and time their child is enrolled. Each family will receive a dashboard parking permit. Additional permits are available for others that may drop off or pick up your child. Some important things to remember when entering the Museum School parking lot:

- Enter the lot from Lansford Lane across from the Western Heritage Parking Garage
- Permit must be visible on the dashboard to the parking attendant when entering the parking lot and must remain on the car dashboard while in the parking lot
- Permit is only valid during your child's class hours on the day your child attends Museum School

Parents are asked to observe all parking guidelines including leaving available the parking places that are reserved for vehicles with an official handicapped license plate or hanging car tag and following the one-way direction through the parking lot.

If you are late dropping off or picking up your child and arrive after the gate has closed, please park in the Western Heritage Parking Garage directly across from the Museum School parking lot entrance while you drop off or pick up your child. (Parking in the garage is normally free up to 45 minutes unless a special event is taking place.)

Museum School Sculptures

Museum School has been the beneficiary of several generous donations of whimsical outdoor sculptures, all of which are on display in front of the Museum School entrance. While all of these are considered art, **the Dr. Seuss sculptures are not meant to be climbed on.** Therefore, parents are asked to monitor children when coming and going from Museum School to keep them from climbing on these art sculptures.

Health and Wellness

Museum School is a **WELL CHILD** facility. Please be respectful of other families by keeping sick children at home. Museum School staff does not administer prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, sunscreen or insect repellent; however, staff will administer an EpiPen or allergy medication in an emergency (see “EpiPens & Allergic Reactions” below). Parents should note any medical conditions or special situations on their child’s registration form; notes will be kept in the classroom folder for the teachers’ reference.

If a parent should inform a teacher of a special medical situation or condition that is not listed on the child’s registration form or in the classroom folder, the teacher will direct the parent to the Museum School office to discuss the child’s condition with the Museum Preschool Director.

Immunization Records

In keeping with the guidelines of the Child Care Licensing division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Museum School requires a signed Medical Release Form must be submitted before the child’s first day of class. Along with the Medical Release Form, a statement of child’s health from a health care professional and a signed and dated current immunization record (or a signed, dated and notarized affidavit exempting the child from Texas immunization requirements) must be submitted before the child’s first class day. Museum School also requires that a copy of the Hearing and Vision Screening for children 4 years and older by September 1 must be submitted before the child’s first class day. Tuberculin testing is not required. Information about immunization requirements can be found at: www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize.

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases for Employees

Museum School has implemented the following immunization policy for employees to be in compliance with The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services which requires a policy for protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases. While the safety of our employees and children in our care is paramount, we have elected to make immunizations for vaccine-preventable diseases optional to the employee. The only exception to this policy is the TB test that is currently required for the employee as required by the City of Fort Worth.

EpiPens & Allergic Reactions

Should your child require an EpiPen on site while in class, a form will need to be completed to keep with the child’s EpiPen. Because of the wide variety of pens and different levels of allergic reactions, this form will describe – in the parent’s own words – what signs to look for in their child and the steps to be followed in case of an allergic reaction. The EpiPen will be registered in the office and will be placed in a paper sack with the parent’s instructions and returned to the classroom where it should be placed in the closet on a high shelf that is out of a child’s reach.

Illness/Communicable Diseases

Parents are asked to contact the Museum School office if their child contracts a communicable disease so that we may notify other parents. Texas Department of Health guidelines will be observed regarding re-admittance to class. Teachers will notify the office immediately if the parent contacts them with this information. Please contact the Museum School office about specific illnesses. A child with a communicable disease may return with medical documentation indicating the child is no longer contagious.

If a child becomes ill during class time, the child will be brought to the Museum School office; parents or the emergency contact will be notified to come and pick the child up. A first aid kit is kept in the office for cuts and scrapes. Parents will be provided an Incident/Illness Report in the case of illness or injury. The form must be signed by the Museum Preschool Director and the parent/guardian.

Exclusion of an ill child from attending Museum School is determined by –

- Whether or not the child can participate in the activities planned for the day in his/her classroom/age group
- Whether or not the child requires more care than the staff can provide without compromising the care/needs of other children in the class
- Whether keeping the child in care will pose an increased risk to other children and adults

Exclusion criteria includes fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, vomiting, diarrhea, or diagnosis of communicable disease or virus. A child must be fever free and symptom free without the use of fever relieving or other medications for a period of 24 hours before they may return to class.

Children diagnosed with an illness requiring antibiotic treatment must take the prescribed medication for a minimum of 24 hours and be fever and symptom free prior to attending Museum School.

Accidents & Medical Emergencies

It is important to act quickly and surely on behalf of the child. The Museum School Director will be notified immediately. The Director/Office staff will notify the Museum Security. If an accident requires transporting to an emergency room, 911 will be called with instructions to transfer to Cook Children's Hospital. Parents or the emergency contact will be notified immediately in the case that emergency care is required. An AED device is located outside the Museum School office.

Lice

Parents are asked to notify the Museum School Preschool Director if their child has lice. A written notice will be provided within 48 hours to the parents of all children in a group when there is an outbreak of lice.

Mother's Room

The Parent Resource room has full sized chairs and tables that can be used for mothers who are breastfeeding. If a mother prefers more privacy, there is a dedicated Mother's Room found in the Fort Worth Children's Museum Gallery. Museum School office staff can provide entry to this area.

Abuse and Neglect

The Museum School employees are dedicated to preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children. In the event of suspected abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the Museum School employee to contact the DFPS child abuse hotline at 800-252-5400.

Per the DFPS requirements, Museum School employees are required to complete annual training focused on prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse and neglect, including:

- 1) Factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse and neglect;
- 2) Warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect;
- 3) Methods for increasing awareness of prevention techniques; and
- 4) Community organizations that have assistance and intervention programs.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Fire, severe weather and lock-down drills will be reviewed and practiced on a regular basis throughout the year. Evacuation plans are posted in the classrooms, Parent Resource Room, and in the office workroom. Each classroom has a walkie-talkie for emergency communication.

Fire Emergencies

In the event the fire alarms sound, teachers will calmly evacuate all children in accordance with the classroom's evacuation route.

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Severe Weather/Lock Down

The Museum School Office will notify teachers when the Severe Weather Plan or Lock Down Procedure will be put into place. Teachers will calmly assemble all children in their designated shelter location, and the Museum School office staff will notify them when it is safe to return to class.

Incllement Weather

If the Fort Worth Independent School District cancels classes for the entire day, Museum School will cancel all classes. No refunds will be made or make-up days offered.

If the Fort Worth Independent School District has a delayed opening (e.g. 1 or 2 hours late) but does not close classes for the entire day, the morning session of Museum School will be canceled. The regularly scheduled afternoon classes will meet. For either situation, a message will be recorded on the Museum School's voice mail system as soon as possible that morning.

Firearms and Other Weapons

Law enforcement officials who are trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty may have firearms or ammunition on Museum premises. For all other persons, firearms, hunting knives, bows and arrows, and other weapons are prohibited on Museum premises.

Gang-Free Zone

As required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, it is the responsibility of the Museum School under the Texas Penal Code to notify parents that any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Parent Communication

Communication between parent and Museum School, teachers and staff, is extremely important. Teachers will use the email address provided on the child's registration form to send weekly updates on the learning that is taking place in class. In addition, the Museum School newsletter – *Turtle Talk* – is published and distributed twice during the school year. The newsletter serves to inform parents of what has taken place in the classrooms, upcoming Museum School and Fort Worth Museum of Science and History events plus other beneficial information such as child development articles.

Changes in policy and procedures, notification of special events, holidays or other pertinent information will be sent to the parent's email on file. Occasionally, additional important information on such topics as parking, registration, etc., will be emailed from the Museum School office (museumschool@fwmsch.org). If a parent does not have an email address, a copy of the information will be placed in the child's cubby to be picked up by the parent at the end of the class day. In addition to the email, teachers will keep a few copies of the information in the classroom and will distribute it to parents if asked. The information will also be posted throughout Museum School in prominent locations.

If a parent has a question or concern they may talk with the child's teacher or the Museum Preschool Director. Appointments for this can be made in person, by sending an email or by calling the Museum Preschool Director at soliver@fwmsch.org or 817-255-9337.

General Museum School Information

Student Behavior

Museum School reserves the right to deny participation in classes and activities to children who exhibit persistent behaviors which endanger themselves or the welfare of others. Discipline and Guidance Policies will be signed by parents prior to the first day of classes and kept in the child's file (see last page of Parent Handbook for the Museum School Discipline and Guidance Policy).

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Toilet Training

All Museum School students must be consistently toilet trained and independent. The classrooms are not licensed or equipped for diaper changing.

Museum School Snack

A small snack of animal crackers and water is served each class day. The snack will be served for the children to have independently during their scheduled playtime. The crackers are Keebler brand and contain the following ingredients:

Enriched Flour (Wheat Flour), Niacin, reduced Iron, Thiamine, Mononitrate (Vitamin B1), Riboflavin (Vitamin B2), Folic Acid, Sugar, Vegetable Shortening (Partially Hydrogenated), Soybean and/or Cottonseed Oil, High Fructose Corn Syrup, Contains 2% or less of Salt, Sodium Bicarbonate, Soy Lecithin and Artificial Flavor.

If something different is served, the specific snack will be posted on the wall outside the classroom on the day it is to be served. Parents should let the teachers know if their child cannot have the day's snack.

Halloween

Due to the nature of Museum School, Halloween costumes are not suitable.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays will be recognized throughout the year on the day they attend that is closest to his or her birth date. Please let your child's teacher know if you would like to send a small favor such as stickers, an individually-wrapped, store-bought cookie or other inexpensive items for your child to share with friends at the end of class. Birthday favors may be coordinated with the curriculum topic of the day. This opportunity is strictly optional.

Note: Balloons, hard candy, gum and very small objects are choking hazards and are not suitable.

Photographs and Filming

In respect for the privacy of all families, parents may not video or photograph children, other than your own, that are attending Museum School classes.

Field Trips/Excursions

In order to support the Museum School Philosophy and Goals, Museum School classes will periodically visit the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History exhibits to enhance the preschool curriculum. Teachers will walk their class to the Museum. As Museum School is a part of the Fort Worth Science and History Museum, transportation is not required.

Animals

Health regulations require that no live animals – other than Museum animals or official guide, hearing or service dogs – may be in the Museum School building or classroom at any time. Museum School staff and children practice good hygiene and hand washing when coming in contact with an animal and items used by an animal. Animals are required to have a statement of health from a local veterinarian.

Classroom Visitation

There are a few special events that parents are invited to participate in during the school year. Teachers will communicate by email or in writing when special events occur.

Parent Resource Room

The Parent Resource Room – located next to the Museum School office - is available to parents during their child's class time. It is intended to be a quiet place to read or work. Please observe the "no food" policy. Drinks with lids are allowed.

Lost and Found

You may inquire at the Museum School office for articles lost while attending classes.

Discipline and Guidance Policy for Fort Worth Museum Preschool

The discipline and guidance policy for the Fort Worth Museum Preschool is the Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Sub chapters L, Discipline and Guidance and is included on this page. Parents are asked to read the policy below and sign the acknowledgment form that was included in their child's preschool paperwork.

A paper copy can be obtained by calling the Museum School office at 817-255-9333 during business hours Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 4 pm, or sending an email to museumschool@fwmsch.org. Teachers are also required to read and sign this document.

Discipline is individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding and is directed at teaching self-control. Positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction will be employed.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY FOR FORT WORTH MUSEUM SCHOOL

- Discipline must be:
 - (1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
 - (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding;
 - (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control

- A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction, which include at least all of the following:
 - (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
 - (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
and
 - (3) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per one year of the child's age.

- There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:
 - (1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
 - (2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
 - (3) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
 - (4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
 - (5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
 - (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
 - (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
 - (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed;
and
 - (9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age