

Francis A. Desmares School
Flemington-Raritan School District



FRANCIS A. DESMARES SCHOOL
16 Old Clinton Road
Flemington, NJ 08822
(908) 284-7540

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Francis A. Desmares Info Sheet & Important Contacts

[Flemington Raritan School Website](#)

[Francis A. Desmares School Website](#)

Important Contacts	
Principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Mark Masessa ○ Phone: 908-284-7554 	Vice Principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mrs. MaryJane Custy ○ Phone: 908-284-7543
School Counselors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mrs. Krista Monks ○ Phone: 908-284-7543 ○ Sra. Viviana Moncada ○ Phone: 908-284-7543 	Secretaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mrs. Marie Blaser ○ Phone: 908-284-7541 ○ Mrs. Katia Tempalsky ○ Phone: 908-284-7546 ○ Mrs. Matilde Picchio
School Nurse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Alexis Sellers ○ Phone 908-284-7545 	Attendance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online Absence Form

School Guidelines & Procedures

2024-2025 School Year

A Note From The Administrators

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome back to school! We could hardly wait for our halls to echo with the sounds of children. Our teachers and staff have been busy preparing for the new school year, and we look forward to partnering with our Desmares families for another successful year for our Dolphins.

This handbook provides an overview of school procedures that ensure a safe and respectful school environment. This information changes a little from year to year, so we ask even our “veteran” parents to please read closely. We know we can count on your cooperation and assistance!

Warm regards,

Mark Masessa and Mary Jane Custy

Desmares School Song

Francis A, Desmares, we sing to thee,
Diligent Dolphins we'll always be.
As we learn and play each day,
Come on, you Dolphins, shout “Hooray!”
We will be sure to make history,
With all our Demares School family.
Oh the knowledge we receive,
As we make memories!

Desmares School Chant

Everywhere we go...(echo)
People want to know...(echo)
Who we are...(echo)
So we tell them...(echo)
We are the Dolphins...(echo)
The mighty, mighty, Dolphins...(echo)



The School Day



Students are to arrive no earlier than 8:40 am and will not be allowed into the school until 8:45 am. Parents may not enter the school building with students or escort them to their classes. If a child has too much to carry, parents should bring the items to the School Office. Please mark the item(s) with your child's name. Please remember that the school day begins promptly at **8:55 am**, and both teachers and students are busy with the morning routine.

All students arriving later than 8:55 am must be “signed-in” at the Office by an adult. The student will then receive a pass that will allow him/her to go to the classroom, and they will be marked as **Tardy**. The school day normally ends at 3:25 pm and on early dismissal days students are dismissed at 1:20 pm.

Student Absences

If a student will be absent for any reason, the school office must be notified by a parent or guardian. If your child is ill, please call the attendance line before the school day begins. Messages may be left on our voice mail system at any time, day or night. Please dial 908-284-7540 and press 1 to access our absentee line. You may also call the attendance line to let us know if your child will be late for school. Do not email teachers regarding attendance. You may also use our electronic attendance reporting system. You can click [here](#) to access the electronic attendance reporting system, it is also on our [school website](#). Parents are asked to wait twenty-four hours before requesting missed assignments when a student is absent due to illness. All assignments will be placed in the main office for parents to pick-up.

The Board requires a written statement from parents/guardians for students who are tardy, dismissed early, or absent from school. Any infractions of Board policy requiring the attendance of enrolled students may result in disciplinary action and the involvement of appropriate authorities. ([Policy Number: 5210](#))

The Board recognizes that on occasion compelling circumstances will require that a pupil be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day. The Board requires that the school be notified in advance of such absences by the pupil's parent or guardian, which shall state the reason for the tardiness or early dismissal. An **excused absence** is a pupil's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:

- The pupil's illness must be verified by a medical doctor's note after three consecutive days;
- A death or critical illness in the pupil's immediate family;
- Family illness;
- Educational opportunities;
- Excused religious observances;
- When consistent with Individual Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act Accommodation Plans and Individualized Health Care Plans.

All other tardiness and early dismissals will be recorded as unexcused. An **unexcused absence** is a pupil's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed above as excused.

Tardiness and early dismissals result in the loss of instructional time. Excessive unexcused tardiness and/or early dismissals may cause students to be subject to disciplinary procedures and/or meetings involving the parents or guardians with an administrator and/or counselor. ([Policy Number: 5210](#))

Parents will be receiving notification of accumulated absences as follows:

- A letter will be sent home after a student has accumulated 10 days of absences. **This includes both excused and unexcused absences,**
- A second letter will be sent home **and a conference may be held** to discuss absences after a student has accumulated 15 days absent.
- After a student has accumulated 20 days absent, a letter will be sent home explaining that the student is at risk of retention at his/her grade level. A meeting with a building administrator may be requested.
- After a student has accumulated 30 days absent, the student shall be retained unless extenuating circumstances exist.

Attendance Matters

K- Grade 1

- [Get Ready For School English](#)
- [Prepárate para la escuela de español](#)

Grade 2-4

- [Help Your Child Succeed in School: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early](#)



- [Ayude a su niño a tener éxito en la escuela: desarrolle el hábito de la buena asistencia escolar desde los primeros años](#)
- [Attendance in the Early Grades- English](#)
- [Asistencia en los grados primarios-español](#)

Our Dolphin Proactive Approach to Attendance

**** Please note that if you do not report your child absent for the day, you will receive a call from our office staff inquiring about your child's absence. ****

Days Absent	Action Taken
3	We will contact you to inquire about the absences ** Not Policy**
5	Student may be assigned a mentor. We will touch base to provide further support if needed **Not Policy**
8	Possible parent conference with the School Counselor to provide additional support **Not Policy**
10	Formal letter sent documenting excessive absences
15	Second letter; a meeting with a building Administrator
20 - 25	3rd letter sent home from building Administrator explaining the risk of retention at the student's grade level Meeting with a building Administrator may be requested
30 +	Student will be retained unless extenuating circumstances exist. Letter outlining possible retainment.

Sick Child



Please keep in mind that children learn best when they are healthy and well rested. To help ensure that illnesses do not spread, please follow these school procedures:

Please do NOT send your child to school if...

- He or she has a fever or temperature greater than 100⁰ Fahrenheit. Your child must be “fever free” for 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school.
- He or she has had vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours.
- He or she has “Pink Eye” (conjunctivitis). Your child must have a doctor’s note indicating when the child may return to school.
- He or she has Strep Throat. Your child may return to school after 24 hours on antibiotics if they are feeling better.
- Your child has a cold that has progressed to a point such that the discharge from the nose is green and your child feels tired and looks poorly.
- His or her cough is so bad – even on medication –that it interferes with your child’s ability to sleep and, as a result, how he or she will feel at school.

If your child has a rash...

- Your doctor should examine the rash to determine if it is contagious. The doctor must provide a note stating when your child may return to school.

If your child requires medication while at school...

- Please contact the School Nurse for the specific steps which must be followed before any medicine may be given at school.
- In addition, please note that, before any medicine may be given by prescription or over the counter, the Nurse must receive a completed medication form from your child’s doctor including the child’s name, the type, dosage, and purpose of the medication. The medicine must be in its original container and must be brought to the Health Office by a parent.

After an absence from school...

- If your child is absent for any reason, please remember to send a note to school on the day your child returns.
- Please be sure to date the note and include the specific dates your child was absent, the reason for the absence, and the signature of a parent or guardian.
- All students are encouraged to wash their hands before coming to school to prevent the spread of germs and to help prevent the contamination of surfaces for students with significant food allergies.

Please don’t hesitate to contact our School Nurse, Mrs. Sellers, if you have any questions or concerns at 908-284-7545 or alexis.sellers@frsd.us.

Vacations

Parents who choose to take students out of school for vacations are asked to write a note stating the reason for absence and the duration. Students are responsible for making up assignments and tests that are missed. However, the material for students to make up will be given to them upon their return to school and not before. The students will be given adequate time to complete the missed work but are responsible for completing all that is assigned.

Parents are encouraged to take trips and/or to travel when school is not in session. If a family trip or travel should last more than 15 school days, **students need to be withdrawn** by a parent or guardian and re-enrolled during such an extended absence. All absences due to family trips or travel will need to be reported to the school in writing at least 10 days prior to the absence. [Policy Number: 5210](#)

Emergency Contact Information

During the school year, there may be times we need to contact you concerning the health and safety of your child. Please make certain we know how to reach you during school hours. We rely upon the information you provide on the Emergency Contact Form through the [Parent Portal](#) and will use this to reach you and/or other adults who can take care of your child in an emergency. Please remember to update your information on the Parent Portal or inform the Office if there are any changes in telephone numbers or other emergency contact information.

Staying Connected

We encourage you to communicate regularly with your child's teacher. Please send a note or call if you have any questions, concerns, or comments, and you can expect our teachers to respond as soon as possible. Many teachers may not get a break to return your call until the end of the school day depending on prior meetings that may have already been scheduled. If your call needs immediate attention, please let our school secretary know, and she will direct your call to another staff member who may be able to assist immediately.

All your child's basic demographic information and emergency contacts will appear on the Parent Portal. Rather than providing the same information each September, you will be able to review, edit, and confirm the existing data at any time through the Parent Portal.

The district is now using an enhanced automated communication system. In addition to the phone messages regarding important school announcements, you will also be able to receive text and email messages from the district. The [Parent Portal](#) will be the tool you

use to control what phone numbers and email addresses are used for these services. Please be sure that your contact information is up to date to ensure smooth communication. All these features will be in addition to the existing ability to track your child's attendance and view report cards.

Procedures for Driving Students to School

Students can be dropped off in front of the school building. Please be aware of other cars and students before leaving the curb area. Make every attempt to unload children on the **sidewalk side** in a timely fashion. Cars will not be allowed to park along the curb. If there are items that need to be brought to school, parents need to park in the lot and come into the building with their children. Any adult or child who needs to enter the building prior to 8:45 am needs to report to the office before proceeding to any location in the school.



Procedures for Picking up Students at the End of the Day

Our focus is on the safety of each child and for that purpose, we ask for your cooperation with our pick-up procedure.

- Students will be dismissed with their classroom for pick-up and not at an earlier time.
- Students will be brought to the pick-up area only if the classroom teacher has received information stating what day the child will be picked up and by whom.
- Do not call or email the classroom teacher your child's dismissal information during the school day. **Please contact the Main Office prior to 3:00 pm.**
- If students have a regularly scheduled day(s) that he/she will be picked up, then the parent can write one note for the year stating the reason and dates.
- **Again this year, Parents remain in the car as they pull up along the curbside.**
- **Place the new placard on the dashboard or hanging from the passenger visor with your child's last name, clearly written for a staff member to see.**
- We cannot release students to adults who are not designated on notes or emergency forms.
- Students will be matched with designated adults before leaving the school.
- In the absence of a note or phone call, students will go home on the bus or report to the YMCA aftercare program if scheduled.

The YMCA Child Care program is available for parents who need a place for their child earlier or later than our school hours. Please contact the YMCA directly for more detailed information at 236-4184.

Your cooperation with these procedures will ensure a safe environment for our students.

SCHOOL HOURS

Grades K-4 Elementary Schools

Regular Day Grades K-4 8:55 a.m.-3:25 p.m.	Scheduled Early Dismissal Grades K-4 8:55 a.m.-1:20 p.m.
Unscheduled Early Dismissal Grades K-4 8:55 a.m.-1:20 p.m.	Delayed Opening: Grades K-4 10:25 a.m.-3:25 p.m.

For weather closures please check our [district website](#).

****Please note:** when school closes early due to inclement weather, the YMCA Aftercare Program will be canceled.

Nutrition Guidelines

The Flemington-Raritan School District is required to implement a school wellness policy that addresses healthy eating and physical activity. The following information reflects the established nutrition standards for all foods available on each school during the school day.



1. All foods sold or served on school property must meet the following standards:
 - No more than eight grams of total fat per serving with the exception of nuts and seeds.
 - No more than two grams of saturated fat per serving.
 - 100% of all beverages offered shall be milk, water or one-hundred percent fruit or vegetable juices.
2. Prohibited foods:

- Food of minimal nutrition value as per USDA definition, including soda water, water ice or chewing gum.
 - All food and beverage items listing sugar, in any form, as the first ingredient.
 - All forms of candy including hard candy, sour balls, fruit balls, candy sticks, lollipops, starlight mints, after dinner mints, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints, jaw breakers and cough drops.
 - Food of minimal nutrition value include jellies and gums, gum drops, jelly beans, jellied and fruit-flavored slices, marshmallow candies, fondants such as candy corn, licorice, spun candy and candy-coated popcorn.
3. Sharing food in school:
- Any food sent to school to be shared with other students must have prior approval of the classroom teacher
 - Food sent in for a student's lunch or snack are not traded or shared with other students.

Birthday Celebrations

In congruence with our [Wellness Policy](#), and to protect the safety of our students with severe food allergies, all birthday celebrations will be food free. Parents should contact their child's teacher regarding specific recommendations for ways to celebrate, such as donating a book to the class library or distributing stickers or pencils.



Please be advised that invitations for private birthday parties can only be sent home through the school if all students in the class are invited.

Suggestions for Birthday Celebrations as alternatives to food:

- Non-food items to share with classmates such as stickers and pencils.
- Donate a book to the class library in the student's name.
- Game or craft activity.
- Be a secret guest reader,

The classroom teachers will be sure to celebrate their students' birthdays with a special song and recognition either in class or at a school assembly. ([Policy Number: 8505](#))

Volunteers & Visitors

We welcome classroom visitors and greatly value the assistance offered by our parent volunteers. You will receive information from our [Parent Teacher Organization](#) relevant to various activities and projects supported by our PTO. We encourage you to become involved in some way in the work



of the PTO. This parent group plays a vital role in the success of our school, and the more people who are involved, the more we can offer for our children. Please check the monthly FAD PTO Newsletter for important PTO information that will keep you up-to-date on activities and opportunities for your involvement. You can also join the Desmares PTO Facebook page.

Visitor Check-In System

In our continued effort to provide your children with a safe and secure learning environment, the Flemington-Raritan School District will be utilizing the Raptor System to check visitors into the building. This check-in system will require you to provide your drivers' license or passport which will be scanned into the database. Once you are cleared in the system, your picture ID visitor badge will be printed and you will be allowed to enter the building. Before leaving, you will be required to return to the office and check out. Each visitor will be asked to return their badge at the conclusion of their visit. Thank you very much for your cooperation and understanding, as this procedure aids us in maintaining a learning environment that is safe and secure for your children.



School Breakfast & Lunch

Maschio's Food Services uses the Comalex computerized point of sale system in our cafeteria. [Click here](#) for more information. In addition to the present availability of pre-payment for meals, you will have the added benefit of placing money on account, which may be used for a la carte purchase. Meals may be paid for in cash at the checkout line or a check may be sent in on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, or you may choose to use the [PaySchools Central on-line system](#). To access our Free & Reduced Lunch Forms please click [here for English](#) and [click here for Spanish](#).

When buying lunch, each student has an account into which money can be applied and will be identified by entering their Personal Identification Number (PIN) at the checkout

so their meal can be accounted for. The PIN is not the child's ID number. PIN cards are distributed to students on the first day of school in their homeroom.



All

If you are paying by check, please make sure your child's full name appears on the check or envelope along with the school name and teacher's name. Make the check payable to FRBOE (Flemington-Raritan Board of Education). If you have any questions, please direct all calls to the District Director of Dining Services at (908) 284-7517.

Students in kindergarten will not be allowed to purchase snacks at school. Ice cream will only be available to students in grades 1-4 once a week.

Full lunch price = \$3.50

Full Breakfast Price = \$2.25

Student Placement Requests

The Flemington Raritan School District does not honor parent requests for student placement. **Parents may write a letter, or email to the principal regarding Class Placement prior to May 1.**

Electronic Devices

Cell Phones, Cameras, Smart Watches

The use of Electronic Devices Cell Phones, Cameras, and Smart Watches are NOT permitted during school hours. Students are permitted to use school telephones in the case of an emergency or if they miss the bus. Students must make after-school plans prior to the school day. **Cell phones must be turned off and stored away from the learning environment at all times during the school day.** Also prohibited is the use of all cell phone functions, including text messaging or use of photographic features (such as cameras). Additionally, the use of any camera during school hours, including on a school bus, without administrative permission is a violation of privacy and is not permitted pursuant [Policy 5516- Use of 24 Electronic Communication and Recording Devices](#). School administrators reserve the right to confiscate any such device (whether or not it is in use) if it interferes with the educational program. The school is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged devices.



Toys at School

We ask that students keep toys and trinkets at home including stuffed animals and dolls. They may be lost or damaged and cause unnecessary distractions during the school day. Our PTO has provided all types of safe playground equipment and games for the students to play at recess, so there is no need to bring balls that may not be safe to use without

appropriate helmets or padding. Students that have such items for an after-school activity must keep them in their book bags during school hours. On occasion, children may be asked to bring an item in for a special classroom activity. Your child's teacher will inform you of those special events in a classroom newsletter.

Warm Weather Clothing

With the start of school, we thought it was a good time to review some general guidelines for student dress. All students should wear garments and shoes that are appropriate and comfortable for an elementary school setting.

- Shorts and skirts should be at least mid-thigh in length and not reveal underclothing.
- Tops, shirts and blouses must not reveal underclothing, midsection, torso or back. Halter tops and midriff tops are not allowed.
- Shoes and sandals should fit securely to allow students to move safely throughout the hallways, on the stairs and at recess. **The wearing of flip flops and sandals without a strap is greatly discouraged.**

Thank you for your support in helping us to create a positive image of our school and a distraction free and safe learning environment.

Cold Weather Recess

Throughout the **winter months**, we try to provide opportunities for students to go outside for recess as much as possible. Whether we are escorting the children in a power walk or allowing the children to play freely during a full recess period, we ask that they dress properly for the cold weather. Please send your child to school prepared for outdoor activity each day. This should consist of a **warm winter jacket, we strongly recommend a warm hat and gloves. Students that are not dressed appropriately for the cold weather will not be able to participate in outdoor activities.**



Lost & Found Items



Please be sure to mark your child's name in all clothing, backpack, lunch boxes, water bottles, etc. Every year we have an abundance of lost and found items that remain unclaimed. Items that are unclaimed at the end of the school year are donated.

General Notes and Reminders

- All visitors and volunteers must use the security window in our vestibule to sign in and obtain an identification badge. To gain access to classrooms and hallways visitors must be processed with our visitor check-in system and wear an identification badge. At the end of the visit you must return the badge and sign out of the system.
- If delivering party invitations at school, each child in the classroom must receive an invitation.
- In accordance with State law, smoking is not permitted anywhere on school premises. Please remember that this includes the outside school grounds and playgrounds.
- Students who are picked up for appointments during the day need to have a note written to teachers with a time of pick-up. Your child will be called once you arrive at school.
- **School Spirit Day** is the first Friday of every month unless school is closed on that day then it will be the second Friday. Encourage your child to wear our school colors which are turquoise (blue) and white.
- **The School Store** is open on the 1st Friday of every month for students in grades 1-4 during recess starting in October and ending in May.
- Parents can use our Voice Mail number for accessing all school personnel and leaving information about school absences. The school voice mail number is 284-7540.

Important Telephone Information

The telephone number to access the Francis A. Desmares School Information Line is 284-7540. The telephone menu is listed below, and a staff roster is on the following page. At any time during the message you can press the number you need. Please keep this sheet for future use.

To access our absentee line, **press 1**

To leave a message for a teacher, **press 2** and when prompted spell the teacher's last name

To access the school office, **press 3**

To access the nurse, **press 4**

To access the school announcements/school closings, **press 5**

To access the school counselors, **press 6**