



F.R.I.E.N.D.S.  
STAFF  
HANDBOOK

“Learning Through Laughter and Friendship”

## WELCOME

Thank you for becoming a part of the F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Social Skills Summer Camp for Children with Autism. We sincerely hope that your experience with us will be enjoyable and rewarding.

Our staff have an extremely important role in providing quality services to the many children who attend our summer camp program. This Handbook is intended to make clear the policies and procedures related to your duties at F.R.I.E.N.D.S. and to answer questions you may have regarding how we operate. Please review the information contained in this handbook carefully. **You will be required to take a brief quiz during staff training to determine if all criteria was read and fully understood.**

If you have any concerns or questions not addressed in this Handbook, please do not hesitate to bring them to our attention.

# HANDBOOK CONTENTS

## Before You Start

\_\_\_\_\_All staff will be asked to complete an Employment Application Form that includes personal information about yourself; emergency contact information; personal references and information; and past job and work history/experience. We will treat this information confidentially and will utilize it only for the purposes of considering you as a F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Summer Camp employee. Depending upon the nature of the position, we may require a criminal background check and a reference check.

You will be trained for the position and provided general information about the **F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Summer Camp** and its programs, policies and procedures. You will be requested to sign a formal Agreement that clarifies the terms and conditions of your relationship with F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

## Employee Values

\_\_\_\_\_Working with children requires patience, dedication, and lots of creativity. Listed below are values we look for in our staff which are essential in providing a quality camp experience for all of our children.

- ✓ Be guest focused
- ✓ Be positive – a “can do” attitude
- ✓ Be enthusiastic - excited - friendly - outgoing
- ✓ Be entrepreneurial - approachable - visionary - creative - curious
- ✓ Be responsible risk takers; seeking, testing and embracing possibilities
- ✓ Seek and accept positive change
- ✓ Be objective - analytical; seek advice
- ✓ Be timely - fast responders, report to work on time
- ✓ Be efficient - skilled - reliable – organized - prepared
- ✓ Act and look professional
- ✓ Act with integrity - responsible stewards
- ✓ Have Fun!

## Drug, Alcohol and Smoking Policies

\_\_\_\_\_F.R.I.E.N.D.S. is a drug and alcohol free environment. Any staff possessing illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages, or judged by their supervisor to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, will be suspended or terminated. Smoking is not permitted inside the building or within 50 feet of the building.

## Firearms and Dangerous Weapons

\_\_\_\_\_Firearms, knives and other personal weapons are not permitted on camp grounds or within the building/facilities. You will be suspended or terminated if you have such weapons in your possession.

## Safety and Security

\_\_\_\_\_ We want F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Summer Camp to be a safe and secure environment for our staff and for our children. If you see an unsafe or dangerous situation, notify your lead teacher and/or your Director. In the rare event where a staff person is not immediately available to help with a safety or health emergency, dial 911 for help.

\_\_\_\_\_ RED Emergency Buttons are located in each classroom near the door and in the lunchroom, gym, and in the multipurpose room. This button is to be pressed **ONLY** if the Director is unable to provide support or if all attempts made to diffuse a situation fails.

\_\_\_\_\_ A staff member(s) is required to accompany all child(ren) to/from the bathroom and any other areas inside (e.g. gym, computer lab, etc.) and outside (e.g. playground) the camp location.

\_\_\_\_\_ Always wear your nametag and/or identifying shirt when on duty. This indicates you are serving in an official capacity for F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Failure to do so may result in staff being sent home to change into uniform.

## Drop Off and Pick Up

### Drop Off

\_\_\_\_\_ Students will be dropped off each morning in the car rider line. Due to the lack of parking, parents will not be permitted to escort their child into the building. The Camp Director will closely monitor Drop Off and Pick Up procedures on a daily basis. One staff member will be selected each day to safely escort the children (by holding their hand) from their vehicles to the next checkpoint, which will be an assigned Helper who will be stationed near the entrance/doorway of the building. The Helper will ensure that the child has entered the building and the Lead Teachers are to be waiting near entrance of their classroom doors to welcome the children to class each day. As the children enter the classroom, Lead Teachers will check that child “present” on his/her daily attendance chart. Safety is our utmost concern. In addition to parents dropping off children to attend camp, buses will also be unloading ESY children on Mondays and Wednesdays. **PLEASE** pay close attention to the children and your surroundings when you are on Drop Off duty to prevent any accidents/injuries.

### Pick Up

\_\_\_\_\_ Parents will be permitted to enter the building to pick up their child(ren). Parents are required to “sign out” their child each day. Failure to obtain a “sign out” signature from a parent may result in a written reprimand.

\_\_\_\_\_ If an unknown person attempts to pick up a child, **DO NOT** release the child to this person. Notify the Director immediately. Children can only be released to persons who have been authorized by the parent/guardian.

\_\_\_\_\_ If a child is not picked up by the close of business, notify the Director immediately. The Director will attempt to contact the parent/guardian by phone.

## Commitment to Service Hours

\_\_\_\_Volunteers/Interns are asked to communicate a service schedule with their site Director each week. If a volunteer/Intern is unable to report for service, they must immediately notify their site Director. Volunteers/Interns or any staff member who does not show up for duty without notice may be dismissed from volunteering/interning/working with the F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Summer Camp program.

## Dress/Uniform

\_\_\_\_Staff appearance and attire are important parts of the overall image presented by the F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Dress must be neat, clean, and appropriate for their respective assignment. The Director is authorized to send staff home if they are dressed inappropriately. Camp Staff T-Shirts must be worn during work/service days. The initial Staff T-Shirt will be paid by F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Any requests for additional staff shirts will be ordered at staff expense. F.R.I.E.N.D.S. restricts all staff from wearing overly revealing clothing and apparel items that are offensive or derogatory and disruptive to the camp's environment. Shorts must be longer than fingertips when arms are stretched straight down sides. Any staff member wearing shorts not meeting this length requirement will be sent home to change. All staff are expected to comply with the dress code below.

Acceptable Dress Code (Uniform)	Unacceptable Dress Code
Khaki, Jean, Solid Navy, Black, Brown Colored Capris Khaki, Jean, Solid Navy, Black, Brown Colored Bermuda Shorts Khaki, Solid Navy, Black, Brown Colored Pants Solid Navy, Black, Brown Colored Scrub Pants	Short-Shorts Yoga or Stretch Pants Sweat Pants Shorts/Pants/Jeans with holes
F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Staff T- Shirt (must be worn daily)	Halter Tops Tank Tops Midriff Shirts (belly button exposed) Low Cut Shirts (cleavage exposed) Muscle Shirts
Sneakers Closed-toe shoes	Flip Flops Sandals

## Corporal Punishment

\_\_\_\_Corporal punishment, defined as any intentional physical contact used in the act of disciplining a child, is prohibited at the F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Summer Camp.

## Discrimination

\_\_\_\_F.R.I.E.N.D.S. prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or gender and is committed to maintaining an environment that is free from such conduct.

## Stipends

\_\_\_\_Having a quality agency means many people working together sharing their resources, talents, Knowledge, and energy so that the children we serve can receive the greatest benefit. Volunteers, Interns, and Helpers are essential to F.R.I.E.N.D.S.! **Volunteers and Interns cannot be paid for services rendered and/or time worked.** They may be provided reimbursement for expenses, if pre-approved, or may be presented with gifts of thanks and recognition. Helpers may receive a stipend either biweekly or at the end of summer camp as deemed by the Director. Factors that may determine stipend approval may include, but are not limited to: budget allotment, work performance, reporting to work on time, going above and beyond work expectations, etc.

## Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

\_\_\_\_\_ If a child or adult discloses information to staff concerning abuse or neglect toward themselves or another family member, immediately discuss this with the camp Director in private. Do NOT ask the child questions and DO NOT discuss the information in the presence of the child or anyone else! The Director must immediately contact the local Department of Social Services of any suspicion of child or adult abuse or neglect encountered or told to staff. Staff may be required to file a report by law within seventy-two (72) hours even if someone makes a statement of suspicion other than the alleged victim.

## Confidential Information Policy

\_\_\_\_\_ All staff must recognize the right of participants (volunteers, interns, parents, children, and employees) of F.R.I.E.N.D.S. to have personal information held in confidence. All staff must agree in the performance of their duties as a F.R.I.E.N.D.S. employee/volunteer/helper/intern to observe this right of confidence, and understand that **any violation thereof may result in removal from service.** In their duties, staff may have access to participants' information of a personal and sensitive nature. Staff may not disclose names or any information that in any way might identify or be linked to a particular individual or disclose any information involving any non-camp children/staff (e.g. Coastal GA Comprehensive children and staff attending the summer session of the ESY Program). All staff are required to sign a confidentiality statement. Under no circumstances should any staff offer information concerning any child, staff, other volunteers/interns/helpers, or parent to anyone outside of the F.R.I.E.N.D.S Summer Camp Program unless there is a life threatening emergency.

\_\_\_\_\_ All staff of F.R.I.E.N.D.S must agree to abide by the terms of the Confidential Information Policy, even after a staff member leaves F.R.I.E.N.D.S.' service. Staff must:

- ✓ Keep confidential the names of all participants, all information learned in the performance of camp duties, and any information learned incidentally while performing camp duties.
- ✓ Refrain from discussing or disclosing, except privately with F.R.I.E.N.D.S staff, information that might in any way identify or be linked to a particular individual.
- ✓ Take precautions to prevent access by others, except F.R.I.E.N.D.S. staff. Take all actions within staff's power to safeguard the privacy of the participants and protect the confidentiality of information of FRIENDS students and staff and anyone FRIENDS may come into contact with.
- ✓ The policy requiring that keeping information confidential remains in effect even after service to F.R.I.E.N.D.S. ends.
- ✓ NEVER SHARE information about children or families with ANYONE other than F.R.I.E.N.D.S. staff. ***Confidentiality is of utmost importance at all times!***

\_\_\_\_\_ Various surveillance cameras are located throughout the building. Images and sound captured on these cameras are reviewed by the Chatham County Board of Education on a regular basis. Any images seen or sound heard that is deemed inappropriate by F.R.I.E.N.D.S. or the Chatham County Board of Education may result in immediate termination of employment.

## Forbidden Actions

\_\_\_\_\_The following actions or threats thereof are forbidden:

- ✓ Physical punishment, striking a child/adult, roughly handling or shaking a child/adult, restricting movement through binding or tying, forcing a child/adult to assume an uncomfortable position, or exercise as punishment. **Only trained staff will be permitted to safely physically restrain a child who becomes a threat to themselves, to other children, or to staff.**
- ✓ Enclosure in a small confined space or any space that the child cannot freely exit himself for punishment; however, this does not apply to taking a child to the Director's office" to calm down for this is permissible.
- ✓ Per state regulations, under no circumstances are the Exclusionary Time Out Rooms be used at any time. In the event a child becomes uncontrollable, the following steps must be followed in order:
  1. Diffuse the situation within the classroom
  2. Diffuse the situation in the hallway
  3. Seek Camp Director assistance
- ✓ Punishment by another child/adult/staff member
- ✓ Separation from the group within the classroom so that the child/adult is away from the hearing and vision of a staff member
- ✓ Withholding or forcing of food or rest
- ✓ Verbal remarks which are demeaning or abusive to a child, adult, or to staff
- ✓ Use of any cursing or foul language
- ✓ Punishment for toileting accidents
- ✓ Punishment by applying unpleasant or harmful substances
- ✓ Posting photos of students, and/or camp staff, or any child/staff not affiliated with FRIENDS (ESY students and staff) via Instagram, Facebook, YouTube or any other social media sites is strictly prohibited.
- ✓ Taking photos of camp students, camp staff, or any child/staff not affiliated with FRIENDS (ESY students and staff) with personal phones, personal cameras, or any other digital device is strictly prohibited. Only the Camp Director or authorized staff member will be allowed to take photos of students and staff which will be used for the sole purpose of slide shows for End of Summer Social/Special Events. Only photos of students in which parents have given signed consent/permission will be used in such events.
- ✓ Visiting any inappropriate web sites or social media sites (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.) on school computers, personal cell phones, or personal computers during camp hours of operation are prohibited. School computers are monitored by the Chatham County Board of Education and any inappropriate web sites or social media sites visited will be flagged for questioning. PLEASE NOTE: These rules also apply for camp students use. Therefore all staff must closely monitor student computer usage to ensure none of these sites are visited.
- ✓ Personal phone calls and/or personal text messages are not to be made during camp hours of operation. In case of an emergency, please inform the Director that you will need to make an emergency call.
- ✓ Violations of other policies set forth in this handbook.
- ✓ Any action deemed inappropriate by F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

## Tips for Staff

\_\_\_\_\_The following are some general tips for all F.R.I.E.N.D.S staff:

- ✓ Inform your Director of the day and time you want to volunteer/intern. If you can't make it, call the Director at least 24 hours in advance or as soon as possible. If you are ill or if an unforeseen circumstance arises in which prevents you from reporting to work or if you will be reporting to work late, notify your Director immediately.
- ✓ Picking children up or holding them is **discouraged**.
- ✓ Allow children to appropriate initiate hugs or touches. Some children may be uncomfortable with any appropriate touching and adults are expected to respect the child's feelings.
- ✓ If you have any questions or need help with a child, immediately ASK FOR HELP, especially if there is an immediate threat of danger to a child or adult. RED Emergency Buttons are located in each classroom near the door and in the lunchroom, gym, and in the multipurpose room. This button is to be pressed ONLY if the Director is unable to provide support or if all attempts made to diffuse a situation fails.
- ✓ Staff are encouraged to get down on the child's level (sometimes this means on the floor) and get involved in their activities.
- ✓ Always walk over to a child when speaking with them (never yell across the room).
- ✓ Always praise and encourage a child's efforts when it is appropriate to do so.
- ✓ Allow children to do as much as possible for themselves.
- ✓ Set a good example for the children by following rules. (Do not sit on tables or talk when the teacher is reading a story).
- ✓ **NEVER LEAVE A CHILD ALONE AT ANY TIME!**
- ✓ If a child is misbehaving, advise the staff and follow staff directions as to the appropriate response.
- ✓ If you disagree with a procedure or a directive from staff, wait until an appropriate time to discuss it with the staff. Do not voice your displeasure with something in the presence of children or other parents or staff. All Staff is expected to be respectful to each other in this type of situation.
- ✓ Do not discuss a child's behavior or anything about any child's family in the presence of children or other parents.
- ✓ At the end of the day, try to spend some time discussing your experiences with the staff in private.
- ✓ Volunteers may count their volunteer experience on their resume and future job applications.



Please initial certification areas and sign and return THIS PAGE to the F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Director as receipt that the F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Staff Handbook has been thoroughly reviewed. Please refer to the online handbook at [www.friendsofcoastalga.com](http://www.friendsofcoastalga.com) as often as needed.

## Certification

\_\_\_\_ I have read the online copy of the F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Handbook and understand the contents and agree to abide by these policies.

\_\_\_\_ I have read and understand the Confidentiality policies stated in this handbook

\_\_\_\_ I understand that these policies are intended to provide guidance for the management of staff.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that I am a F.R.I.E.N.D.S staff member and failure to follow these policies may result in my termination from service.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Staff Signature) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name Print) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Legal Guardian Signature; if staff member is under 18) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Legal Guardian Name Print; if staff member is under 18) (Date)

## Director's Statement:

I have trained the above listed staff to perform various camp related duties that may bring them in contact with confidential information and with children and adults with developmental disabilities. I have reviewed F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Staff Handbook with the above staff member.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Director/Staff Signature) (Date)