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## PARENT INVOLVEMENT at FRIENDS WESTERN SCHOOL

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### HOW ARE PARENTS INVOLVED?

Parents help out with the **educational program**: in the classroom by supporting teachers, in the world on hikes and field trips, and on the yard teaching conflict resolution.

Parents help out with the **functioning of the school**: helping keep the school clean and safe, fundraising, serving on the Board of Directors, overseeing admissions, marketing, and the finances of the school.

Parents participate in **decision-making**: voting on the budget, co-op rules and obligations, future strategic planning, and other major decisions.

Parents are **part of a community** of children, faculty and families - learning and growing together. This includes everything from ordinary daily events, to supporting families in need, to annual whole-school celebrations. *For families, being a part of the Friends Western community is often a deeply valuable, unique, and transformative experience.*

### WHY IS PARENT INVOLVEMENT SO IMPORTANT?

**Two, rather than one, perspectives are best for children.** Children are most successful when parents and teachers share information and work together to deepen their understanding of each child.

**Parents better understand their children.** Through their involvement at Friends Western, parents understand their children's school experience, and are therefore better able to support their children.

**Children become more resilient.** Children thrive when they are known, heard, and have connections with multiple adults.

**Children and adults learn first hand about democracy.** We are a living, breathing example of democracy in action. Parents, students, and staff all develop the skills of communication, collaboration, and problem solving by working together in this community.

**Parent involvement allows your tuition dollars to go farther.** Having parents handle school functions typically managed by paid staff allows us to keep overhead costs--and tuition--as low as possible.

## WHAT ARE THE OBLIGATIONS FOR FAMILIES?

Being a family at Friends Western School means being a part of a cooperative. The obligations required of families to keep our co-op functional are very flexible, and a wide variety of families find it possible to meet these expectations. The responsibilities can be fulfilled through helping the school with various activities and tasks, and/or "buying out" rather than completing some or all obligations.

**Monthly Meetings:** This is where the bulk of planning and decision-making takes place. All families, even those buying out of some or all obligations, are expected to attend.

**Committee Work:** One member of each family will work on a committee, or take on a school job. There are a wide variety of committees: Community Life, Finance, Admissions, Fundraising, Site, and many more. Families are required to work a minimum of 36 hours per term, which averages out to 3 hours per week. Many jobs can be done at night and remotely. Families that can't make this commitment have the option to buy out.

**On-Site Shift:** Every family works one shift at the school every week. This includes: helping out on the playground during lunch or recess, taking part in "Park Day" on Thursdays, or chaperoning classes to the library. Many families do multiple on-site shifts. Families that cannot help during school hours can buy out those hours.

**Fundraising:** All families participate in our annual fundraising events, and are expected to contribute to the Annual Fund.

**Field trips:** Every family chaperones at least one field trip per term, if possible.

For the co-op responsibilities, families have four choices as outlined in the chart below.

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS	MONTHLY MEETING	COMMITTEE WORK	ON-SITE SHIFT	FIELD TRIP	FUNDRAISING	TOTAL REQUIRED HOURS
REGULAR MEMBERSHIP	✓	Minimum 36 hours per term	Minimum 1 hour per week	Suggested minimum 1 per term	✓	36 hrs per term for committee 1 hour per week on-site
ON-SITE BUYOUT	✓	Minimum 36 hours per term		Suggested minimum 1 per term	✓	36 hrs per term for committee buyout = \$240 per term
COMMITTEE BUYOUT	✓		Minimum 1 hour per week	Suggested minimum 1 per term	✓	1 hour per week on-site buyout = \$3600 per year
FULL BUYOUT	✓				✓	buyout = \$4320 per year