

# CLC Handbook

*Inspire. Empower. Accelerate*

## Welcome

The staff and administration at our school welcome students and parents to a new school year. We realize that a proper atmosphere for learning must exist to allow students to best enhance their educational, social and physical development. This handbook has been prepared to help acquaint students and their parents with our procedures and programs.

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**Hours:**

- Class Times 8:00 am – 11:00 am, 11:45 am – 2:45 pm
- CLC Office Hours 7:00 am – 4:00 pm (Monday – Thursday) 7:00 am – 3:30 pm (Friday)
- Teacher Workday 7:30 am – 3:30pm

**Communication:**

We are located at 1601 Fourth St SE Austin, MN 55912 and our main office phone line is 460-1700. All APS staff have an email that they review daily, and their address follows this model  
firstname.lastname@austin.k12.mn.us

All our classrooms at the CLC utilize the Seesaw app to communicate frequently with families. Seesaw allows teachers to send notes, pictures, and videos through the app. Families will be asked to sign up their child at Back-to-School home visits. We also ask that you check the app frequently as important notices and information will be sent throughout the year.

Our Facebook page is titled Austin Public Schools Early Childhood Programs. Please follow us for important information and updates. Our preschool website can be found at  
<https://clc.austin.k12.mn.us/early-childhood-programming/pre-k>

Commonly requested phone numbers

- Office/Attendance 507-460-1700
- ECSE/Referrals 507-460-1705
- Kids Korner 507-460-1706
- EC Screening 507-460-1709
- Spanish Interpreter 507-460-1703
- Karenni Interpreter 507-460-1711
- SMART Bus 507-433-2379
- Palmer Bus 507-433-5358
- School Nurse 507-460-1713

If you have a change in address, phone number or email address throughout the school year we ask that you please contact the main office with the change via email at  
[dayna.winkels@austin.k12.mn.us](mailto:dayna.winkels@austin.k12.mn.us) include the following in your email: child's first and last name, date of birth, and the change that needs to be made.

**Custody Information and Restraining Orders:**

Please make sure that our school office has any pertinent copies of legal documents on file.

**Arrivals and Dismissals:**

For child safety, we operate under a hand-to-hand model. This means that the parent walks the child to the classroom staff at the start of the day and then picks the child up from the teacher at the school building at the end of the day. Because we have significant traffic outside our building with buses and parents dropping off, we cannot have children walking alone to the door or into the parking lot. Our children are always attended by an adult when they are in the building at this young age, and this practice is the same when we welcome them and send them home at the end of the day.

If someone other than the parent will be dropping off or picking up each day, please let our team know in advance. Please advise that we will be checking a photo ID to verify their identity.

When coming to the CLC, please park in one of our parking lots. Please be mindful that several areas surrounding our building are designated for bus drop-off and handicap parking.

### **Change of Plans:**

If you have a change from your regular schedule, it is important to notify the classroom teacher ahead of time. In the absence of such notification your child will be sent home per their usual schedule. A phone call to the school office can be made in case of emergency.

### **Transportation:**

If your child is NOT going to be riding their bus for the day, please call the appropriate bus company as soon as possible. Each bus company requires that a parent/adult meet the bus on time to ensure that the route can be completed on time.

#### Palmer

507-433-5358

- Palmer transportation is only available for students on an IEP through Special Education.

#### Rainbow Route

507-437-2313

- The Rainbow Route is intended for families who would not be able to attend preschool without transportation.

### **Health Office/Nursing:**

If your child becomes ill, suffers an injury requiring your attention, or appears to have possible symptoms of a communicable disease, you will be notified and asked to pick up your child. If you cannot be reached at home or work, the school will contact the emergency party you have indicated on your child's enrollment form.

Austin Public Schools give the following guidelines for determining whether a child should attend school or remain at home. It is recommended that children remain at home if they have the following conditions:

- Severe cold, cough or sore throat
- Skin rashes, especially if draining, unless medical opinion states the rash is not communicable
- Temperature of 100.0 or more with or without symptoms
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or abdominal pain
- Or any other signs of acute illness

The child may return to school when:

- They are free of symptoms (including fever) for 24 hours
- On antibiotics for 24 hours
- Or advised by a physician to do so

Please do not hesitate to contact our nurse if you need assistance in deciding whether your child is well enough to be in school. 507-460-1713.

Austin Public Schools recognizes that some students may need medication during school hours. The school district has implemented policies and procedures to make sure these services are delivered to your children safely. Prescription medications require an authorization form that is signed by the medical provider and parent. The medications must be brought to school by the parent in the original pharmacy labeled container. Over the counter medications that do not exceed bottle recommendations may be administered with written parent permission. The parent needs to provide a new, unopened bottle, labelled with the student's name. Do not send any type of medication to school with your child in their backpack. Please feel free to reference our medication policy on the school website.

Parents are encouraged to share student health information with health office staff, either verbally or by using the online registration form. Parents should update this information if the condition or treatment changes so that the health and safety of the student can be maintained in school. Students receive a snack throughout their day. If your child has any allergies, you will need to notify the school health staff. Staff may ask questions regarding severity of symptoms or if any emergency medication is required. If your child requires dietary modifications for the allergy, a medical provider will need to complete a Special Diet Statement Form. Food services will accommodate lactose intolerance without a Special Diet Statement Form completed. If your child has had a history of anaphylaxis, please notify school health staff and contact your child's medical provider to get an Anaphylaxis Action Plan.

### **Attendance Procedure:**

Attending school each day is important. Instruction occurs every school day. Students learn something every day from their teachers, their fellow classmates and from the planned interaction that takes place each day in the classroom. It is not educationally beneficial when a child misses' school. Children are expected to attend school unless there is a valid reason for not being there. Please also help your child to arrive on time to school each day. When students are tardy, they miss out on the important relationship and routine building that happens at the beginning of the school day. Please call the school office and/or notify your child's teacher if they are not going to attend school. If a student is absent from school for 15 consecutive school days without receiving instruction in the home or hospital may be dropped from the roll and classified as withdrawn.

### **School Closings:**

It is the policy of the Austin Public Schools to recognize the right and responsibility of parents in the matter of school attendance on stormy or cold days. In most cases of bad weather conditions, the parents should make the decision as to whether the child should attempt to come to school. Austin Public Schools provides school closing alerts through the Parent Portal Messenger utility. If you would like to be included in receiving school closing alerts via email, voice, and text messages, please use your Parent Portal account to set your contact support at: [portal@austin.k12.mn.us](mailto:portal@austin.k12.mn.us)

### **Birthday Treats:**

Individual classrooms will observe birthdays with special activities planned by teachers, such as allowing children to wear a "Birthday Hat" or by singing to them. If students choose to share a treat with the class on their birthday, food must be an individually wrapped and purchased treat that, in the interest of instructional time, can quickly be consumed. Examples of such treats are fruit snacks,

individual packages of cookies or crackers, etc. Parents should contact the teacher to make them aware that they are sending a treat for the class. Please do not distribute personal party invitations at school. If you do not want your child to participate in holiday or birthday celebrations for personal or religious reasons your desires will be honored. Please contact the classroom teacher to discuss the activities in which your child should not participate, and to decide what he or she will do during these events.

### **Visitors:**

Austin Public Schools recognizes the importance of parents and community members supporting our schools. Requests to observe classrooms are to be made through the school office. School administration reserves the right to closely monitor school visitors to minimize disruption of instruction. For a complete copy of our Visitor Guidelines please inquire in our school office.

### **Volunteers:**

Parents and adult family members are encouraged to volunteer at their child's school and with the Austin Public School system. Volunteers provide a valuable service to our students and staff. Volunteers must complete an application and background check before serving students affiliated with Austin Public Schools. This includes chaperoning for school events and field trips. Volunteers must abide by confidentiality and ethical standards set out by the district for all district staff. Volunteer applications are available at all schools and district offices. The district will cover the cost of the background check. Please allow four weeks for applications to be processed.

### **Kids Korner:**

Kids Korner is a quality preschool and school age childcare program within Austin Public Schools. Our goal is to provide a safe place for children before and after school, on specified non-school days, snow emergency days, and during the summer. We provide an environment that encourages adventure, creativity, healthy self-concepts, respect for others, responsible behavior, and a positive attitude.

The Community Learning Center provides care for children ages 3 – 5 that are enrolled in ECFE or ECSE Preschool programs and with limited availability open to the community. Students are required to be successfully toilet trained at the time of enrollment. The CLC site is open 7:00 am – 5:15 pm.

There is a minimum of three business days processing time between registration and the time a child can begin to attend the program. Children may not start the program until the registration fee is paid and processed. For more information on Kids Korner please call the main office at 507 460-1706 or visit the Kids Korner page on the district web site [www.austin.k12.mn.us](http://www.austin.k12.mn.us).

### **Pets:**

Pets are NOT permitted at the CLC unless for an educational purpose with prior approval. This procedure is for your child's safety. School Board Policy 535 addresses Service Animals in Schools.

### **Personal Property:**

Students are discouraged from bringing personal items to school unless requested to do so, such as for "Show and Tell." Electronic devices, sports equipment or toys should be kept at home. The district is not responsible for damage to or loss of personal property which is brought to school.

**Annual Parent Notification:**

<https://www.austin.k12.mn.us/district-resources/annual-notifications>

## CLC Early Childhood Resources and Information

**Success Coaches:**

We are fortunate in Austin Public Schools to have Success Coaches to support our students. The purpose of a success coach is to help parents communicate with school staff to ensure important information is understood. A coach answers questions, provides tools at monthly meetings, supports a better understanding of the benefits of helping your students growth socially, emotionally, and academically.

**Food and Nutrition:**

Students will eat a snack at school in both morning and afternoon sections. Preschool students do not eat lunch at the CLC. We have a food supplement program called "The Backpack Program" where students bring home food items for the weekend. This program requires enrollment.

We also ask that all families at the CLC complete the application for Free and Reduced Lunch. While our students do not eat lunch at the CLC, this data is used by the state and federal government to provide funding to our schools.

**Clothing/Outerwear:**

Please make sure your children dress for the weather each day that they attend the CLC. We recommend that children wear shoes that they can actively engage in running and jumping activities. Also, because our little ones may have an accident from time to time, we ask that you send a backup set of clothing to school with your child.

## **Parent Engagement:**

Home Visits - to increase parent comfort about what to expect at preschool, and to give students a chance to meet their teachers in a place where they feel safe, their own home

Open House – an opportunity for parents and children to see their school and classroom prior to the start of the school year

Mid-year conferences - an opportunity for parents to hear updates about their child's progress at school, and for teachers to field any questions about concerns and to ensure that parent and teacher goals are aligned for the remainder of the year.

Families and Children Together (FACT) events – these special events occur outside of the school day. Please watch for information and register when requested and assist/ supervise your child through various learning stations.

Council for Little Packers -meets bi- monthly from October – May. This Early Childhood Advisory Council is required by Minnesota statute which requires that the council must assist the district in developing, planning, and monitoring the early childhood family education program. We also use the monthly council meetings as a method of providing opportunities for families to learn about important topics in early childhood.

Austin Public Schools Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) – an opportunity for parents of children with special needs to become involved in their child's education.

## **Typical School Day:**

Our preschool day is centered on the belief that children learn best through play and engagement with the people and world around them. While each classroom has its own schedule, you will find the elements below in each classroom.

- Lockers/Check in/Table Activities/Free Play 15 minutes
- Class Meeting 10 minutes
- Gym 20 minutes
- Bathroom 10 minutes
- Snack time 15 minutes
- Circle Time 20 minutes
- Centers 60 minutes
- Bathroom 10 minutes
- Music 10 minutes
- Check out/Dismissal 10 minutes

## **Program Descriptions:**

Birth –3 services are designed to provide services for children birth through 2 within their home environment.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) is an early intervention program for all children that have been evaluated, meet educational disability criteria, and qualify for special education services. ECSE provides services for children from three through five years of age.

Discovery is designed to introduce your 3-year-old to the wonderful world of school and focuses heavily on social/emotional learning. Classes are held Monday-Thursday in both am and pm sessions. Cost for programming is \$200 a month. Scholarships are available through Parent Aware. Students must be 3 by September 1<sup>st</sup>, have up to date immunizations and have participated in Early Childhood Screening.

Kindergarten Prep (KPrep) is designed to help prepare your 4-year-old child for kindergarten and all the school years that follow. It is held Monday-Thursday in both am and pm sessions. Our KPrep programming is \$200 a month. Scholarships are available Voluntary Pre-K.

Students must be 4 by September 1<sup>st</sup>, have up to date immunizations and have participated in Early Childhood Screening.

## **Developmental Milestones:**

### When entering 3-year-old preschool

#### Social/Emotional Milestones

- Calms down within 10 minutes after you leave them, like at a childcare drop off
- Notices other children and joins them to play
- Says first name, when asked

#### Language/Communication Milestones

- Says two or more words phrases
- Follows two-step instructions like "Put the toy down and close the door."

#### Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking and problem-solving)

- Uses things to pretend, like feeding a block to a doll as if it were food
- Shows simple problem-solving skills, like reaching a ball that is stuck under a table

#### Movement/Physical Development Milestones

- Puts on some clothes by themselves, like loose pants or a jacket
- Scribbles with a crayon/marker
- Jumps off the ground with both feet

### When entering 4-year-old preschool

#### Social/Emotional Milestones

- Asks to go play with children if none are around, like "Can I play with Alex?"
- Comforts others who are hurt or sad, like hugging a crying friend



### Language/Communication Milestones

- Says sentences with four or more words
- Talks about at least one thing that happened during his day, like "I played soccer."
- Answers simple questions like "What is a coat for?" or "What is a crayon for?"

### Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking and problem-solving)

- Names and matches a few colors
- Counts to 10
- Pays attention for 5 to 10 minutes during activities.

### Movement/Physical Development Milestones

- Holds crayon or pencil between fingers and thumb (not a fist)
- Run, jump, and climb

### **Toilet Learning:**

If your child is not yet toilet trained and attending preschool, they MUST come to school in a pull up (no diapers). Students will have one scheduled bathroom break during the day and will attempt to use the potty at that time. We do not have adequate staffing or space to do regular diaper changes/checks for your child. By having your child in a pull-up, we can promote more independence in the bathroom during our bathroom breaks. It is expected that students will be toilet trained by January 1 of their 3-year-old preschool year.

### **Help Me Grow:**

Help Me Grow provides resources for families to understand developmental milestones and learn if there are concerns. This helps families take the lead in seeking additional support or referring their child for a comprehensive, confidential screening or evaluation at no cost.

<https://helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/index.htm>

### **Early Childhood Screening:**

The early childhood years from birth to the start of kindergarten are an important time of rapid learning and growth. Early Childhood Screening is a quick and simple check of how children are doing. It identifies, at an early stage, possible learning or health concerns so that children can get needed resources.

Early Childhood Screening is a requirement of our preschool program. If you have not yet had your child screened, please call 507-460-1709 to sign up!

### **Social Emotional Lessons:**

The Pyramid Model provides structure and tools so that each child can develop the social and emotional skills that they need to be successful in life. This is an approach to teaching and supporting positive behavior and meeting the needs of ALL students. This tiered approach in preschool focuses on building a safe and caring environment in which all students can learn. Community Learning Center student's will be: A Friend, Safe and Responsible.

We also use a framework called the Zones of Regulation in supporting student's emotional health at the CLC. This framework teaches students skills to build awareness of their feelings and gives them tools and strategies for regulation, prosocial skills, self-care, and overall wellness.

**Happy Separations:**

We know that preschool is often the first time that many children are separating from their parent or guardian. Below is a list of strategies you might use when your child comes to school.

- Tell your child that you will be leaving.
- Say goodbye and leave.
- Come back, greet your child, remind them that you always come back.
- Praise your child for their independence.