



# **Early Childhood Education**

## **VPK/PreK ESE Parent Handbook**

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## **Flagler Schools VPK**

Flagler Schools Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is a free educational program for every student who turns 4 on or before September 1<sup>st</sup>. By offering the VPK program, we are preparing your child for their educational future by providing them with age-appropriate curriculum, social/emotional skills and physical development.

**Flagler Schools VPK Vision-** Students in our program will learn the skills necessary to ensure they will be kindergarten ready.

**Flagler Schools VPK Mission-** Our mission is to ensure a safe environment that fosters the love of learning in order to promote students to continue on a path of success leading to their growth socially, emotionally, physically and academically.

We are a full inclusion program where students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), who are a part of the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program, and general education students are in the same classrooms. No more than 50% of a VPK class will be made up of ESE students. This model reflects the classrooms in the upper grade levels of Flagler County Schools.

Blended classes are at Bunnell Elementary School. These classes are taught by state certified Pre-K teachers and have both 3 and 4 year old ESE students as well as typical 4 year old VPK students. A paraprofessional is in each of these classrooms for additional support.

Our VPK facilitators are certified to teach Early Childhood Education and are required to recertify as needed. We provide up-to-date training on the latest educational trends, curriculum and behavioral strategies. Our program is based on the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards.

## **Attendance Policy**

Flagler Schools VPK will follow the school year calendar for Flagler County Schools. The VPK program operates for 3 hours a day and wraparound services are available at each school. All enrolled families receive a calendar showing the scheduled days off. Attendance is extremely important to a student's success in school and multiple absences may have a negative impact on your child's readiness to enter into kindergarten.

- In accordance with FL statutes, parents will be required to sign verification of their child's attendance in the Flagler Schools VPK program. You will be required to comply with the policy on attendance and tardiness to remain in the VPK program. If a parent or guardian is not available to come to the school, these forms will be sent home and must be returned to the school.

### **Flagler Schools VPK Attendance Policy**

- Daily attendance in the VPK program is necessary for optimal learning, however, you will be allowed (3) absences per month. Any absences beyond those require a written note from the parent for one of the following reasons:
  - Illness or injury of the child or the child's family member which requires hospitalization or bed rest;
  - Physician or dentist appointment;
  - Infectious disease or parasitic infestation;
  - Compliance with a court order (e.g. visitation, subpoena)
  - Special education or related services for the child's disability;
  - Observance of religious holiday or service;
  - Family vacation, not to exceed 5 excused absences per program year.

**Please Note: A student may be withdrawn for not abiding by the Attendance Policy or if the student has 10 consecutive unexcused absences it will be considered a withdrawal from the VPK program. Withdrawals from the VPK program will not be eligible for re-enrollment. The school will allow one documented 5-day absence during the 180-day instructional period. Documentation must be submitted in advance, explaining the reason for the 5- day absence, and be dated and signed by the child's legal parent/guardian. Students missing 10 days, in a 90-day period will receive a warning letter and may be removed from the program if absences continue.**

**If a parent or guardian violates the Flagler Schools VPK Attendance Policy, this may result in the removal of their child from the program.**

**Tardiness and late pick up:** The instructional day begins promptly at the school start time. Tardiness is tracked by the school. Arrivals after the school start time are disruptive to the group in progress and difficult for the arriving child as well. We understand that it is occasionally unavoidable to be “running late”, but more than 3 (three) tardies in a month will not be acceptable and may be cause for termination from the VPK program. If a child is not enrolled in wrap care and a parent/guardian is late picking up their child from VPK after 12pm, more than once in a week, they will be charged the full wrap rate for the week.

**Absence documentation:** Documentation of an absence may be submitted in advance of any absence. Vacations are not considered excused absences. Absences and tardiness may be excused if appropriate documentation is provided. Please contact your child’s school for further assistance.

**Belle Terre Elementary-** Please report absences through this site  
<http://fcsb.link/btes-attendance>

**Bunnell Elementary-** Please report absences through this site  
<http://fcsb.link/bes-attendance> or the sick line number may be called, an email may be sent to [besattendance@flaglerschools.com](mailto:besattendance@flaglerschools.com), or a note may be written and sent in to the teacher- 437-7537

**Old Kings Elementary-** only notes are accepted, please send in to the teacher

**Rymfire Elementary-** ~~call front office directly or a note may be written 206-4600~~ Please email: [excusedresnotes@flaglerschools.com](mailto:excusedresnotes@flaglerschools.com) or report absences through this site  
<http://fcsb.link/bes-attendance>

**Wadsworth Elementary-** A note may be written and sent to the teacher.

**Admittance into the VPK program:** A student will not be allowed into the Flagler Schools VPK program if they have previously been dismissed from any Voluntary Prekindergarten Program because of attendance issues. Admittance to the VPK program will be contingent on the completion of the registration packet, attainment of the Certificate of Eligibility from the Early Learning Coalition of Flagler and Volusia and the parents or guardians signature of the written agreement in the VPK Parent Handbook (pg. 20) to adhere to the school district’s VPK Attendance Policy and requirements.

## Discipline Policy

In order for your child to be successful in our VPK program and show they are ready for kindergarten, they must learn to follow the rules and procedures in their classroom. If a child is not successful in the classroom with a staff-student ratio of 1:10 and the child becomes injurious to himself or others, the following may occur:

- A. Parents or guardians will be asked to become involved via written notification and/or phone call and/or parent teacher conference.
- B. The parent or guardian may be asked to pick up their child from school.
- C. The child may be removed from the program if the parent refuses to pick up their child within a two hour time frame.
- D. The child may also be removed from the program if behavior does not improve after the following steps occur:

Step 1- Steps A or B have already happened

Step 2- A parent conference is conducted along with the Coordinator of Early Childhood Education and the assigned VPK facilitator. A warning letter is given and a positive behavior plan is made.

Step 3- A positive behavior plan is made specifically for the student and has been implemented for at least 4 weeks, but is unsuccessful.

**\*If a child becomes physically violent toward himself, other students, or staff members on more than 1 occasion, after the first parent conference, the child may be removed from the program.**

Students with social emotional goals on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be put on behavior plans as well, along with an IEP review after 4 unsuccessful weeks on a plan. Additional supports may be put into the classroom, additional goals may be added or a child may be moved to another classroom for the additional support.

In accordance with s. 1002.55(5), F.S., Flagler Schools VPK agrees to implement minimum standards for child discipline practices that are age-appropriate and consistent with the requirements in s. 402.305(12), F.S. Such standards must provide that children not be subjected to discipline that is severe, humiliating or frightening. The discipline must not be associated with food, rest or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited. Children may not be denied active play as a consequence of misbehavior.

VPK students attending wraparound, are expected to meet the same behavior expectations they do during VPK instructional time. If a student is not able to meet the expectations, the student may be removed from the wraparound portion of the program.

## **Parent Involvement**

Parents and guardians are encouraged to volunteer at their child's school, but must be an approved volunteer to stay in the classroom. Parent conferences must be scheduled ahead of time, by appointment with the VPK facilitator.

Having strong classroom to home communication is key to a child's success. Parents and guardians are encouraged to talk with their child's VPK facilitator or teacher, about any problems or issues that arise in the classroom, before contacting the school principal or VPK coordinator.

## **Personal Property**

Toys and stuffed animals may get lost or broken at school and are a distraction. Please check your child's backpack daily to make sure these items are not coming to school. On occasion, your child may be asked to bring something in for class. Please make sure it is labeled with their name on it. Flagler Schools VPK and Flagler County School Board is not responsible for lost or broken items.

## **Transportation**

**Parents: For the safety of our children, it is important that you follow the transportation guidelines listed below:**

- A. Transportation is not provided by Flagler County Public Schools. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child has proper transportation both to and from school, unless stated on a student's IEP.
- B. An authorized adult (at least 18 years old and listed on the emergency card) must carry picture identification when picking up your child.
- C. You must be on time picking up your child from school.

## **School Choice**

Flagler Schools VPK does not have school choice, unless there is an older sibling attending during the same school year as the younger sibling. School choice must be reapplied for before entering Kindergarten and is not guaranteed.

## **Testing**

Students attending Flagler Schools VPK will take the currently approved statewide pre-kindergarten assessments. This data helps drive instruction and is mandatory by the state of Florida. For more information on the current assessment, please contact your child's instructor or the program coordinator.

**Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Screening:** Early interventions are available for students struggling with speech, physical limitations and academic needs, in our Flagler Schools VPK program. If at any point in the school year a student is identified as needing extra support, permission for screening will be asked of the parents. Our goal is to provide early intervention to increase the likelihood of academic success. Screening does not mean a student is eligible for ESE services. It is a preliminary process to see if further evaluations are needed.

### **Dress Code**

VPK students will follow the Flagler Schools Student Code of Conduct dress code. Go to [flaglerschools.com](http://flaglerschools.com) for more information.

### **Standards Based Instruction**

Flagler Schools VPK follows the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards. For more in-depth explanations of the standards, please visit [http://flbt5.floridaearlylearning.com/standards.html#d=l&a=four\\_year\\_olds](http://flbt5.floridaearlylearning.com/standards.html#d=l&a=four_year_olds)

### **Promotion**

If a student is asked to leave the program or leaves the program 1 month or more before promotion, that student will not be permitted to participate in the ceremony. Classes practice for promotion for many weeks and attendance for the practices is important.

If parents owe money to the program for wraparound or late fees by the week before promotion, their child will not be permitted to participate in promotion ceremonies. Notifications will go out one month prior to promotion to let parents know of the upcoming payments.

### **Contact Information**

The Early Childhood Education office is located at 800 E. Howe Street, on the Bunnell Elementary School campus. The direct phone number is 437-7584.



**Please read and initial each item**

As a Parent/Guardian I will:

\_\_\_\_\_ have my child attend the VPK program daily. I understand that my child may be withdrawn from the program if we violate the Flagler County Schools attendance policy.

\_\_\_\_\_ call or write a note for any excused absence

\_\_\_\_\_ have my child wear the appropriate clothing following the dress code.

\_\_\_\_\_ make sure my child is at school on time and picked up on time, or I may incur a fee of \$1.00 per minute after the 5:30pm pick up time. I may also lose wraparound if late pick up continues to be an issue more than twice.

\_\_\_\_\_ sign and promptly return the Verification of Student Attendance form at the end of each month.

As a Parent/Guardian I understand:

\_\_\_\_\_ enrollment in the program is voluntary and may be revoked if attendance or behavior issues arise.

\_\_\_\_\_ if my child attends wraparound and does not follow behavior expectations, I understand they may be removed from wraparound.

\_\_\_\_\_ transportation is not provided by the district for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program. If a child has an IEP where transportation has been deemed necessary, Flagler County Schools will provide it.

\_\_\_\_\_ my child is expected to follow the classroom rules and be safe

\_\_\_\_\_ if I am called to pick up my child due to behavior, illness or dismissal, I have a maximum two hour time frame to retrieve them, otherwise they may be removed from the program.

\_\_\_\_\_ my child will attend kindergarten at their home zone school, unless school choice is granted.

\_\_\_\_\_ if there is a balance owed to the program for wrap around or late fees by the week before the promotion ceremony, my child will not be permitted to participate.

I have read, understood, and INITIALED each item listed above.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

VPK Facilitator/Teacher's Signature

Date

School

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_