

Preschool Handbook

2023-2024



DISTRICT WEBSITE:

www.rvk12.org

For Parents of the River Valley School District

INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the River Valley School District Special Needs Preschool Program. This handbook describes the procedures and policies of our preschool. It is our goal to provide your child with a quality education. If you have any questions, please talk with your child's teacher or the educational staff. Thank you for joining us on our journey to a great school year full of excellent teaching and learning.

Sincerely,

The River Valley Preschool Staff

Teachers

Alicia Strzelecki: astrzelecki@rvk12.org

Carli McCurdy: cmmcurdy@rvk12.org

Teacher Assistants

Shana Klaus: sklaus@rvk12.org

Paige Conklin: pconklin@rvk12.org

Speech and Language Therapist

Principal

Tom Bower: tbower@rvk12.org

Coordinator of Special Education

Heather Kantzer: hkantzer@rvk12.org

This handbook was approved by the River Valley Local School Board in May of 2023.

River Valley Local Schools Mission

The mission of River Valley Local Schools is to achieve excellence through growth and learning for each student's success.

River Valley Special Needs Preschool Philosophy

The River Valley Special Needs Preschool is a child-centered program devoted to meeting each child's unique needs. Our concern is for the whole child. We believe it is important to provide a safe and nurturing setting in which to foster each child's cognitive, speech and language, social, emotional, self-help and motor development. Children learn best through play. Learning is encouraged through selected play activities that are developmentally appropriate for each child. Skills are integrated across activities. The teacher serves as facilitator to guide children in their interactions with varied learning opportunities. Family involvement is critical to a child's growth. Parents are partners in the development and provision of learning situations. The overall goal is to foster in all of our children a positive sense of their self-worth and a belief in their ability to be independent individuals.

Goals

1. To encourage creativity, allowing each child to develop a positive image.
2. To encourage independence and self-direction by helping children learn to make their own decisions.
3. To provide opportunities for each child to establish positive relationships with peers and adults.
4. To provide opportunities for each child to learn at their developmental level in order to be ready for kindergarten.

Preschool Hours

AM class: Monday-Friday
Drop off: 9:00-9:15am
Tardy: 9:15am
Dismissal: 11:40am

PM class: Monday-Friday
Drop-off: 1:00-1:05pm
Tardy: 1:05pm
Dismissal: 3:40pm

Preschool Hours - 2 Hour Delay

AM class: Monday-Thursday
Drop off: 11:00-11:15am
Tardy: 11:15am
Dismissal: 12:40am

PM class: Monday-Thursday
Drop-off: 2:00-2:15 pm
Tardy: 2:15pm
Dismissal: 3:40 pm

***Please note - Parents who are not present at the time of dismissal or residential drop off will be charged for child care services. Repeated offenses may result in a referral to Marion County Children's Services.**

Preschool Address
Liberty Elementary
1932 Whetstone River Road North

Caledonia, OH
43314

Preschool Peer Program

The River Valley Schools Preschool Program serves children with typically developing skills in the same classroom with special needs preschool children. Typically developing peers serve as a model to stimulate the development of skills in our children with special needs. These skills may include social interaction, speech and language, motor, play, and general learning.

Payment Program

Typically developing peers are required to pay a monthly tuition fee and are not guaranteed transportation. Failure to make timely payments may result in removal from the preschool. Tuition is due on the 20th of each month. The cost of the programs for typical peer models will be \$140.00 per month for a total of 9 months per year.

Preschool Dress Code

Students will do many different things during a day of school. Weather appropriate clothes that children can manage themselves and sturdy shoes will allow them to work and play comfortably and safely.

SUGGESTED DAILY ATTIRE:

- Gym Shoes for daily motor activities (tennis shoes, shoes with a back)
- Play Clothes (we will get dirty – all clothing should be washable)
- Please note that during motor activities we are often on the floor and move in a variety of body positions. We suggest that your child wear shorts/pants daily.

WEATHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Motor and various activities may be outdoors if it is dry and the temperature is not below 25 degrees in actual temperature or with the wind chill factor. Please send children with a warm jacket, hats, gloves, and boots if the weather is cold or snowy.

Personal Property at School

Parents are requested to mark their children's coats, rainwear, sweaters, hats, gloves, boots, lunch boxes, and backpacks so that they may be easily identified. The school has a Lost and Found that students and parents should check for any lost items. We recognize that children may have many personal items they choose to carry in their bags.

The following are not permitted in classrooms or the buildings (unless notified by your classroom teacher):

- Chewing gum, toys, and games
- Skates, skateboards, scooters, and wheelie-shoes

Visitors

Visitors, particularly parents, are welcome at school. In order to properly monitor the safety of students and staff, each visitor must report to the school office upon entering the school to sign in and obtain a Visitor's Pass. Any visitor found in the building without a visitor/volunteer badge will be asked to return to the office. If parents wish to confer with a member of the staff, they should call for an appointment prior to coming to the school, in order to prevent any inconvenience to parents/staff or disruption of the learning process. Students may not bring visitors to school without first obtaining permission from the building principal.

Attendance

Daily attendance is strongly encouraged. Students benefit most from our program when they can be part of the classroom every day. Excused absences include: personal illness, illness in the family, family emergency, and observance of a religious holiday. When a student is absent from school, the parents need to call the school. If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, the school secretary will make every attempt to contact the parents at home or at work. If your student is tardy or needs to leave school early, he/she must be signed in or out with the secretary.

In the event of a planned absence, parents need to send a note to school at least three days before the absence indicating the dates your child will be gone and the reason for the absence. Check with your child's teacher to find out what will be covered during the child's absence.

School Delays or Closing Due to Weather

In case of hazardous road conditions or severe weather, the starting of classes may be delayed or school may be canceled. When this occurs, the delayed starting time or closing of school will be announced on the local radio and television stations.

*** Delayed start – Please follow the two-hour delay schedule listed above.**

Our primary contact list, along with locations on the dial, includes:

WSNY (94.7) WCMH (Ch. 4)

WNCI (97.9) WSYX (Ch. 6)

WBNS (Ch. 10)

AM Radio WTVN (610)

WBNS (1460)

WCOL (1230)

Also please check the River Valley website at [www. http://www.rivervalley.k12.org](http://www.rivervalley.k12.org)

Emergency Procedures-Fire/Tornado/Safety Drills

Fire Drills: Fire drills conducted in an orderly manner are a necessary part of the school program. Students will leave the building by following the "fire exit" instructions posted in their classroom.

Tornado Procedures: Students are assigned to a safe and protected area during a tornado warning. Drills will be held to facilitate this procedure and specific safety instructions will be given.

Lock-Down Drills: Lock-down drills will be conducted periodically as a part of the school safety program. Parents/visitors are requested to cooperate in the school's effort in the operation.

Abuse and/or Neglect

Teachers, administrators, and other professionals who may come into contact with students are required to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. A report will be made immediately to the County Children's Services Board in the county in which the suspected abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred. The principal/director shall be made aware of suspected abuse or neglect.

Reporting Student Progress

We will have several opportunities to share your child's achievements throughout the school year. Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held in the fall and spring and can be called at any time during the year per parent, teacher, or related service staff request. Written progress reports will be sent home every 12 weeks.

Positive Intervention and Behavioral Management

The preschool program follows a general management plan that is positive and proactive in preventing behavior problems. The preschool teacher and related services staff shall be responsible for discipline. Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are used at all times and include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation, and praise for appropriate behavior. Behavior management/discipline policies and procedures shall ensure the safety, physical, and emotional well-being of all individuals on the premises.

Preventive techniques include, but are not limited to:

- Positive reinforcement (increasing behavior by adding something to the environment that is perceived as positive to the child);
- Positive phrasing (telling a child what he/she can do instead of what he/she can't do: i.e. "Chairs are for sitting, not tipping.");
- Reflective listening (honoring and labeling a child's emotion: i.e. "It makes you sad when you can't play with that toy.");
- Modeling appropriate behavior (modeling desired behavior: i.e. teacher helps a child calm down by demonstrating deep breathing or taking a break);

Interventions addressing a child's behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Planned ignoring of undesired behavior (attending to child doing the correct thing: i.e. "Jim is sitting quietly.");
- Verbal and nonverbal redirection (redirecting child to desired activity/teach alternative behavior);
- Proximity control or touch control (moving closer to a child who is having behavioral difficulty, touching his/her shoulder to redirect behavior);
- Limiting choices (limiting child's choices to 2, and following through);
- Taking a break or time away from activity (briefly asking child to move away from group until he/she is ready to rejoin and participate);

- Natural consequences (temporarily losing a motivator: i.e. child intentionally throws toy, child loses privilege that moment to play with toy).

The center's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:

- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use, and food shall not be used as a reward for behavior.
- Separation, when used as discipline shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.
- The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

Illness and Emergency Procedures

During the school year, there may be changes in addresses and telephone numbers on emergency cards. If there is a change, please notify your child's teacher and/or the secretary.

Completed emergency cards are REQUIRED, and only those persons listed on an emergency card may pick up students unless there has been prior approval from the building administrator.

Students who become ill during the school day should report to the clinic. The school personnel will attempt to notify the parents/guardians or person listed on the student's emergency card to make arrangements for the student to go home. We assume no responsibility for treatment of sickness beyond emergency first aid.

In all cases of illness or injury, it is expected a parent/guardian or the emergency contact person will pick up the student as soon as possible after being called. If a student needs to be transported by an emergency vehicle, the emergency squad official will determine to which hospital, the student will be transported.

Immunizations

Each student should have the immunizations required by law or have an authorized waiver. If a student does not have the necessary shots or waiver, the Principal may remove the student or require compliance with a set deadline. This is for the safety of all students and in accordance with State Law. Any questions about immunizations or waivers should be directed to the school nurse.

Medical Statement

A medical statement, provided by a licensed physician, physician's assistant, clinical nurse specialist or certified nurse, affirming that the preschooler is in suitable condition for enrollment into the preschool program must be submitted to the school. The statement must be submitted no later than 30 days from the date of admission. The examination must be within the previous 12 months prior to the admission date.

An updated medical statement must be provided every 13 months from the date of admission.

Contagious Situations

If a child has been ill, please remember that he/she should be fever-free, without the aid of fever reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school. A child will be sent home if he/she has a temperature of 100 degrees or above, has vomited, has diarrhea, chicken pox, pink eye, scarlet fever, strep infections, whooping cough, impetigo, and other conditions indicated by the Local and State Health Departments. Any removal will be only for the contagious period as specified in the school's administrative guidelines. The following precautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

- The program shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.
- A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated and discharged to his parent or guardian:
 - Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a twenty-four-hour period);
 - Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound; (c) Difficult or rapid breathing;
 - Yellowish skin or eyes;
 - Conjunctivitis;
 - Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other signs of illness;
 - Untreated infected skin patch(es);
 - Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool; or
 - Stiff neck; or
 - Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation.
- A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated from other children. Decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged immediately or at some other time during the day shall be determined by the director and the parent or guardian. The child, while isolated at the program, shall be carefully watched for symptoms listed in paragraph of this rule as well as the following:
 - Unusual spots or rashes;
 - Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing;

- Elevated temperature
 - Vomiting.
 - Programs shall follow the Ohio department of health “communicable disease chart” (September 2009, odjfs.state.oh.us/forms) for appropriate management of suspected illnesses.
- A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:
 - Cared for in a room or portion of a room not being used in the preschool program;
 - Within sight and hearing of an adult at all times. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised;
 - Made comfortable and provided with a cot. All linens and blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. After use, the cots shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent, or, if soiled with blood, feces, vomit, or other body fluids, the cots shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent;
 - Observed carefully for worsening condition; and
 - Discharged to parent, guardian, or person designated by the parent or guardian as soon as practical.

Medication Administration

Medication shall not be given without consent of the parent. All medication must be received in its original pharmacy container for dispensing to the student. The school cannot accept or dispense medications brought in plastic containers, baggies or improperly labeled bottles. A completed “Medication Administration Record” form must be on file on order for any medication to be administered. Prescription medications are to have the signature of both the physician and the parent/guardian. Non-prescription medications must have a parent/guardian signature. Only the student’s medication shall be given to that student. Liquid medication must be received and dispensed in a liquid medication administration cup or spoon with visible measuring lines that indicate the dosage dispensed. No medication, prescription or non-prescription, may be carried by the student except for emergency medications as stated below. Otherwise, ALL medication must be secured in and dispensed from the clinic. Medications that the physician has determined are required by the student for a life threatening condition and which must be immediately available to the student, for self-administration, if symptoms occur, may be carried by the student if a written order is provided by the student’s physician indication that the student’s condition requires that the medication must be carried by the student at all times, for example: asthma rescue inhalers or epinephrine auto-injector.

Individuals with Disabilities

The American’s with Disabilities Act (A.A.A.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provide that no individual will be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. This protection applies not just to the student, but to all individuals who have access to the District’s programs and facilities. If you know of any individual with a disability who is in need of accommodations to enable them to attend a function in our district, please contact our Director of Student Services

Parent Participation:

Parents are encouraged to be active participants in the educational experience of their child. Opportunities to volunteer in the classroom are available and welcomed. These opportunities may include assisting at special events, reading to the children on a regular basis, sharing a special talent or item, chaperoning field trips, etc...Please contact your child's teacher directly for further information. Parent partnership will be developed through regular parent/school communication, and may include communication notebooks, surveys, questionnaires, trainings, and focus groups.

Complaints

Students and/or their parents/guardians may file reports regarding suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Such reports shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal or supervisor for review, investigation, and action.

Students, parents/guardians, and school personnel may make informal or anonymous complaints of conduct that they consider to be harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such complaints shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who receives an informal or anonymous complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing, including the information provided. This written report shall be promptly forwarded by the school staff member and/or administrator to the building principal or supervisor for review, investigation, and appropriate action. Individuals who make informal complaints as provided above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school staff member(s) and administrator(s) who receive the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action shall be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying. When an individual making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complaint. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The preschool will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

To Request Additional Information...

If you have a question or concern that cannot be answered by your child's teacher, or if you would like further information on the licensing and compliance reports for your child's classroom, please contact the Preschool Director at 740-725-5400.

To Further Report...

To report any concerns, complaints, and/or violations related to preschool licensure, call the Ohio Department of Education (OMBUDSMAN) (614) 466-0224 or (877) 644-6338. Email: contact.center@education.ohio.gov

THANK YOU, AND HAVE A GREAT YEAR!