



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 children who turn 4 on or before September 1st of the new school year. By offering the VPK program, we are preparing your child for their educational future by providing appropriate curriculum, fostering social/emotional skills and promoting 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.

In our inclusive program, students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are integrated with general education students, reflecting the diversity of classrooms in Flagler County Schools. We maintain a balance where no more than 50% of a VPK class consists of students with disabilities.

Blended classes located at Bunnell Elementary School, Rymfire Elementary School, and Wadsworth Elementary School include both students with disabilities and VPK students. These classrooms are led by state-certified Pre-K teachers with additional support from dedicated paraprofessionals.

Our VPK facilitators are certified in Early Childhood Education and receive ongoing training to stay current with the latest educational trends, curriculum and behavioral strategies. We adhere to the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards, ensuring a high-quality educational experience for all VPK students.

Attendance Policy

Flagler Schools VPK follow(s) the school year calendar for Flagler County Schools. The VPK program operates for 3 hours a day and wrap-around services are available at each school. 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 179-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 does not follow 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-around 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-around 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, 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- Please email: excusedresnotes@flaglerschools.com or report absences through this site <http://fcsb.link/res-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.

Toileting Policy

Children may use the bathroom as needed throughout the day. Due to health and safety concerns, staff members will not be responsible for changing children should a toileting accident occur. If the child is not able to change him or herself, the parent will be contacted. Parents are required to provide current phone numbers in case of emergencies. Parents should bring an extra set of clothes, including underwear, socks, and shoes, in case of an accident. This does not include students with a medical care plan, or a student with an IEP/504 Plan that specifically addresses toileting.

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.

Students with social-emotional goals on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be provided a behavior plan for support. If a student does not demonstrate adequate progress on their behavior plan, an IEP review will be conducted. During this review, additional supports may be implemented in the classroom, additional goals may be added to the student's IEP, or the student may be transferred to another classroom to receive 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 wrap-around, 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 wrap-around 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 communicate with their child's VPK facilitator or teacher, regarding any concerns 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 brought to school. On occasion, your child may be asked to bring something in for class, please make sure it is labeled with their name. Additionally, we recommend labeling all extra clothes and outerwear to prevent any mix-ups or losses. Flagler Schools VPK and Flagler County School Board are not liable for lost or damaged 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, except in cases where an older sibling is already 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 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 [Florida Early Learning](#).

Promotion

If a student is asked to leave the program or voluntarily withdraws 1 month or more before promotion, that student will not be permitted to participate in the ceremony. Participation in promotion practices is crucial, and attendance is expected.

If parents have outstanding balances for wrap-around or late fees by the week before promotion, their child will not be permitted to participate in the promotion ceremonies. Notifications will be sent out one month prior to promotion to remind parents of any outstanding 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 wrap-around 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 wrap-around and does not follow behavior expectations, I understand they may be removed from wrap-around.

_____ 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
