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PRE-K HANDBOOK



Murfreesboro City Schools

**Integrated and
Voluntary Programs**



We
Prek!

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**Black Fox*Gason Lane*Erma Siegel
*John Pittard*Mitchell-Neilson*Northfield**



Welcome!

We are excited you and your child are part of Murfreesboro City Schools PreK Programs. Our programs value the uniqueness of each child and foster a safe, active learning environment. The classrooms are designed to promote learning through play, structured activities, and interactions with peers and teachers.

Our VPK (Voluntary) program is not a mandated program, but it does offer a unique opportunity to provide the best experiences for your four-year old child. Every day is filled with an enriched curriculum of developmentally appropriate activities designed to prepare your child for elementary school. All VPK classrooms follow a curriculum approved by the Tennessee Department of Early Learning, and the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards.

Our IPK (Integrated) PreK classrooms consist of three and four-year-old students with an identified disability, along with a limited number of “typically developing” students. Our classrooms offer low student/teacher ratio and experienced teachers and teaching partners. We also integrate therapies (speech/language, occupational, physical) into the classroom to meet the diverse needs of students. All integrated PreK classrooms follow a curriculum approved by the Tennessee Department of Early Learning, and the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards.

Families play an essential role in their child’s education. We look forward to partnering with you to ensure your child is ready for his/her next steps after PreK! We hope you have a wonderful experience with MCS PreK Programs.

Murfreesboro City Schools

Mission Statement

“To Assure Academic and Personal Success for Each Child”

PreK Vision Statement

Murfreesboro City Schools PreK Programs provide educational opportunities to PreK-aged students. We value the education and uniqueness of each individual student. It is home to active learners who are engaged in differentiated and authentic learning in a safe environment. Students with disabilities are provided a continuum of services with supports necessary. Our program fosters supportive classrooms where children, families, schools, and communities work together to establish a love of learning.

PreK Values:

- Supported structured environments
- Collaboration with families, professionals, and community
- Engagement of all students in developmentally appropriate activities.
 - Achievement in all developmental areas:
social, adaptive, fine & gross motor, communication, and cognitive

Curriculum

Developmentally appropriate curriculum provides for all areas of child development through an integrated approach. Our teachers provide a variety of language enriched activities and materials. Our curriculum is based on child developmental principles about how children grow and learn. **Both IPK and VPK classrooms use the following curriculum:**

Connect 4 Learning is an interdisciplinary early childhood curriculum that aims to synthesize research-based approaches in four domains of learning: mathematics, science, literacy, and social-emotional development. The curriculum comprises of 6 units that focus on supporting children's development of ten comprehensive thinking processes, which are applicable across all four domains: cooperating, comparing/classifying, communication, curiosity, imagination, observing, self-regulation, reasoning/problem solving, making sense, and using tools strategically.

TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement provides students with many opportunities and ways to discriminate sounds: rhyming, detecting syllable breaks, and identifying phonemes. These exposures are designed to be fun, to build lots of vocabulary and word awareness, and to set students on the track to reading success.

Tennessee Early Developmental Learning Standards (TN-ELDS) These standards are correlated to kindergarten standards and provide a trajectory of developmental skills.

Second STEP: Child Protection Unit All classrooms are mandated to teach a personal safety curriculum / child abuse prevention curriculum every year.

Additional Voluntary Pre-K Curriculum:

ABC 123 Just for Me! Handwriting Readiness takes a fun, playful approach to introducing young students to handwriting instruction. The program builds the readiness skills student need for handwriting in Kindergarten and beyond: letter recognition, numeral recognition, print awareness, phonemic awareness, fine-motor skills, spatial awareness, and handwriting skills.

Second STEP: Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning provides a foundation for self-regulation and social-emotional competence.

Additional Curriculum for Integrated Preschool:

Read it Once Again is a literacy based curriculum focused on establishing the love of books and reading at a young age. This curriculum uses repetition of foundational skills to ensure learning and acquisition of higher level skills. Activities are presented in multi-levels of difficulty to meet the needs of individual students.

Handwriting without Tears is a researched method to make handwriting easy to learn in a developmentally appropriate way. Students are exposed to multi-sensory tools and strategies in an active learning environment.

School Contact Information

Black Fox Elementary

753 South Rutherford Blvd.

Murfreesboro, TN 37130

(615) 893-6395

John Pittard Elementary

745 Dejarnette Lane

Murfreesboro, TN 37130

615-396-0240

Cason Lane PreK

930 Cason Lane

Murfreesboro, TN 37128

(615) 898-7148

Mitchell-Neilson Primary

1303 Jones Blvd.

Murfreesboro, TN 37129

615-895-2904

Erma Siegel Elementary

135 West Thompson Lane

Murfreesboro, TN 37129

(615) 904-1002

Northfield Elementary

550 West Northfield Blvd.

Murfreesboro, TN 37129

(615) 895-7324

School Hours and Attendance

Integrated PreK Program Hours:

Siegel Elementary and Northfield Elementary school hours are 7:30 – 2:30 which includes:

- Morning Class – 7:30 – 10:30 (Monday – Thursday)
- Afternoon Class – 11:30 – 2:30 (Monday – Thursday)

John Pittard Elementary and Mitchell-Neilson Primary school hours are 8:30 – 3:30 which includes:

- Morning Class – 8:30 – 11:30 (Monday – Thursday)
- Afternoon Class – 12:30 – 3:30 (Monday – Thursday)

Cason Lane Pre-K Building hours are from 8:00-3:30 which includes:

- Morning Class – 8:00 – 11:00 (Monday – Thursday)
- Afternoon Class – 12:15 – 3:15 (Monday – Thursday)

Peer Models will attend both morning and afternoon sessions (Monday –Friday). During the mid-day break, they will have naptime.

Integrated PreK students with IEPs will not report to school for services on half days or delayed start days due to inclement weather. If either causes the student to miss a Monday-Thursday session, a make-up session will be provided on Friday of that week.

Voluntary PreK Program Hours:

Cason Lane VPK hours are 7:45-1:45.

Northfield Elementary hours are 7:30-1:30.

Black Fox Elementary, John Pittard Elementary, and Mitchell-Primary hours are 8:30-2:30.

Attendance:

Your child’s potential for growth and development is maximized through consistent participation in a high-quality educational environment. Establishing consistent attendance routines in Pre-K will increase chances of success in all future school experiences. Our goal is to establish healthy school habits as soon as school is introduced. Therefore, it is very important that your child attends school on a regular basis. With this in mind, Murfreesboro City Schools, in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education, has adopted a Pre-K attendance policy.

All students are expected to attend school each day. If you must take your child out of school for any length of time, please notify the school office and the classroom teacher. A written note is required stating the reason for the absence.

Absenteeism is defined as an absence for an entire school day, major portion of the school day, or the major portion of any class, study hall, or activity during the school day for which the student is scheduled. Students who are late to school or who leave early also miss part of the instructional day.

Excused Absences:

The following are acceptable reasons for excused absences:

1. Personal illness or injury;
2. Ongoing health related ailments which temporarily prevent attendance;
3. Communicable disease (virus or flu);
4. Religious observances;
5. Death in the family;
6. Limited medical/dental/therapy appointments.

Required Procedures:

1. Please communicate with your child's teacher when your child is absent, and send in a written note stating the reason for the absence.
2. Students who have four (4) or more unexcused absences within one (1) month shall be reported to the site-level administrator who will, in turn, contact the parent(s) / guardian(s) of the student and determine the child's participation status in the program. The site-level administrator shall document all communication attempts to contact the parent(s). At five (5) unexcused absences, progressive absenteeism intervention will be implemented.
3. Students who have five (5) or more unexcused absences in a (3) month period shall be reported to the site-level administrator who will, in turn, contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student and develop an attendance plan with the help of the parent(s)/guardian(s) and other appropriate school personnel. The attendance plan shall:
 - i. Identify the reasons for the absences
 - ii. Include a specific plan and date for establishing regular attendance or alternative services that meet the student's educational goals; and
 - iii. Include documentation of services and student outcomes to determine the effectiveness of the attendance plan.

Students who are absent five (5) days or more within one month or ten (10) days in one (1) year without adequate excuse may be terminated from the program. The site level administrator shall submit dismissal documentation to the Department of Education's Voluntary Pre-k director for approval. The district shall not dismiss a student without first implementing an attendance plan unless there are special circumstances approved by the state Voluntary Pre-K director. The student may re-enter the program after a 30 day waiting period and a parent conference if there are any available vacancies.

The site-level attendance administrators are:

School Principals:

Robin Newell, Principal MCS PreK Program and Cason Lane PreK
Adam Bryson, Principal Mitchell-Neilson Schools
Dr. Christy Robinson, Principal John Pittard Elementary
Tiffany Strevel, Principal Black Fox Elementary
M'Lisa Miffleton, Principal Northfield Elementary

Parent Orientation

A parent orientation meeting will be held at the beginning of the school year to provide an overview of the PreK Program and ensure all registration packets are completed and required documents are received. Your child's school and classroom teacher can help you with questions regarding registration. The classroom meeting will also include:

- Curriculum
- Class Schedule
- Arrival / Dismissal
- Meals / Snacks
- Classroom Communication
- Health Precautions
- School / Classroom Policies & Procedures

Policies and Procedures

Dress Code

For safety reasons, tennis shoes are preferred. The footwear should not be flip-flops, dress shoes, or sandals. Clothing should be comfortable for active play and learning. Your child must be able to manage their clothing (buttons, snaps, belts) for toileting.

- **Unacceptable attire** includes, spaghetti straps, halter tops, very short skirts or shorts (length of clothing should be to one's fingertips – shorts should be worn under skirts), inappropriate logos, clothing that exposes stomach, chest, or back.
- It is the expectation of the program that 4-year-old children are independent with toileting needs and manage their clothing without assistance. Please discuss any concerns with your child's teacher so that proactive strategies will be in place at home and school to support your child.
- Your child will need a complete change of clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, and socks) in the classroom at all times. Please label you child's belongings to help ensure all items are returned to the correct child. Dirty clothes will be placed in a bag inside the backpack. Please return a clean complete set of clothes the next day. Remember, these clothes need to follow our school dress code guidelines.
- We will go outside (in suitable weather) as long as the temperature is between 32 and 90 degrees. Please make sure your child is properly dressed for this activity.

Arrival / Dismissal

Children must be signed in/out daily. An adult (18 and older) is required to sign your child in/out daily. PreKers are not allowed to enter/exit the building without an adult. Extended School Program (ESP) staff will sign in/out students enrolled in ESP. Your classroom teacher will discuss school specific arrival/dismissal information with you prior to the first day of school. Children who are late will be required to receive a tardy slip from the office.

All students MUST be picked up on time. Per Board policy, students will not be released to friends, grandparents, or other family members unless we receive specific written permission from legal guardian or parents.

Meals and Snacks

Meals will be served daily to all students in the program. Any cost for the meal program, will be conveyed to parents by the school and classroom teacher. Students have the option of bringing a breakfast or lunch from home. Snacks may also be served to students in Integrated Preschool. Please discuss any dietary needs / food allergies with your child's teacher.

Classroom Supplies

Teachers may request specific supplies for the classroom. Typically, these are items that are needed throughout the school year. Any requests will be communicated to families.

Only students with special needs who are not toilet trained need to provide diapers/pull-ups.

Your child will also need a backpack large enough to place a change of clothes and take home folder inside.

Health Precautions

MCS PreK Program has established the following procedure to ensure the health of students and teachers and decrease the spreading of germs. If your child has had any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours, please keep him/her at home:

- Diarrhea
- Severe cold symptoms (with significant coughing and/or nasal discharge).
- Fever above 100 degrees
- Unexplained rash
- Conjunctivitis
- Vomiting
- Flu

- Lice
- Any contagious illness (impetigo, ringworm, pink eye, scabies, chicken pox, etc.)
- Rapid or labored breathing

If your child develops any of these symptoms at school, we will call you or your emergency contact person to pick up your child. Your child will need to be fever and symptom free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. We ask that you respect this procedure to ensure a healthy environment for everyone.

The staff, volunteers, and children will adhere to proper hand washing practices. This will cut down on the spread of germs in and out of the PreK classroom environment. Students will wash hands at designated times such as before entering their classroom, after toileting, and before meals.

Administration of medication at school will follow Murfreesboro City Schools policies and procedures. Your child's school nurse will have the necessary forms. Please contact your child's teacher with any medication / health concerns.

Parent-Teacher Conferences and Communication

During the school year, teachers will have two conferences to meet individually with parents/guardian of each child. Conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring. Written progress reports are also provided during the school year as well. Parents/guardians may request additional conferences if the need arise. You may communicate any questions or concerns you have with the teacher through email or telephone. Parents who wish to contact their child's teacher should call the school office and leave a message. The teacher will return the call as soon as possible. (Teachers will not receive calls during the instructional day, unless it is an emergency.)

Students will have a "take home" folder, and parents will receive daily communication about your child's day from classroom teachers. Parents and teachers can use this folder as a way to communicate any needs or concerns. Any changes in telephone numbers, address, emergency contact information, etc. should be communicated with the classroom teacher as soon as possible.

Teachers may also communicate with families through Class Dojo, school website, school Facebook page, or newsletters.

Transportation

Transportation is available only for children with special needs. Transportation needs will be discussed at the student's IEP meeting.

Extended School Program (ESP)

ESP will be available for students 4 years and older in the morning and in the afternoon. ESP will not be provided school hours. Please contact the school's ESP office for additional information.

Behavior Management and Discipline

One of the primary objectives of Pre-K is to support the social and emotional development of every child. The overall goal of any behavior intervention is to help children manage their own emotions and behavior. Positive behavioral interventions and supports will be utilized by classroom teacher, such as modeling, encouraging expected behavior, redirection, establishing clear and consistent expectations and teaching expectations, implementing preventative strategies and teaching replacement skills for unacceptable or harmful behavior. MCS will use a multi-tiered system of intervention to allow for all children to have the opportunity to develop healthy social, emotional, and behavioral skills. Discipline will not be related to food, rest, or toileting. The use of physical or corporal punishment is never permitted.

In instances where unsafe or harmful behaviors are repetitive, MCS may use a specific restorative practice discipline intervention plan that will be developed to identify the challenging or unsafe behaviors exhibited and provide a set of targeted interventions for adults interacting with the child. If challenging or unsafe behaviors continue to persist following the intervention plan, MCS will look to alternative intervention methods that will be determined by the needs of the individual child. Use of suspension from the program will be limited and only used temporarily and in exigent circumstances where there is a serious threat of harm or safety that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the implementation of reasonable modifications. Furthermore, it a temporary suspension is deemed

necessary, the program will help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety.

Withdrawal and Dismissal

Participation in the Pre-K program is voluntary, and parents can withdraw their child at any time. However, voluntary Pre-K programs cannot dismiss a child due poor attendance or inappropriate behavior without submitting documentation of the attempted communication with families regarding attendance or development of behavioral intervention plans to address inappropriate behavior to the Tennessee Department of Education, Office of Early Learning. Children with Individual Education Plans (IEP's), receiving services through voluntary Pre-K, may not be dismissed unless the IEP Team convenes to discuss and approve a change to provide a more appropriate program or services.

Tobacco-Free Schools

All uses of tobacco and tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes, and personal vaporizers are prohibited in all school district buildings. District employees will not be permitted to use tobacco or tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, while they are participating in any class or activity in which they represent the school district. Signs will be posted throughout district facilities to notify students, employees and all other persons visiting the school that the use of tobacco and tobacco products is forbidden.