

The Link

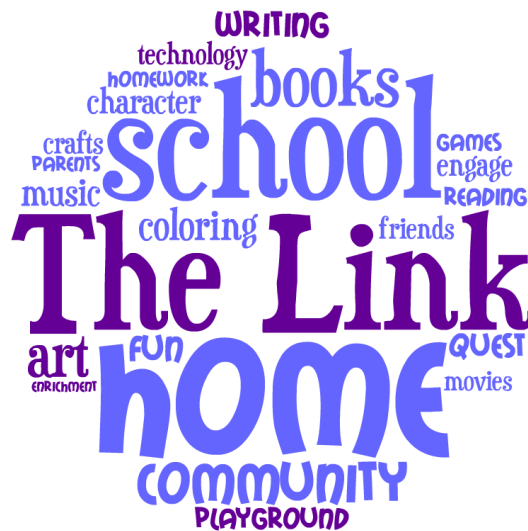
At Harding Avenue Elementary School

A Before and After School Childcare Program

For Students at Harding Avenue Elementary School

Parent Handbook

2024-2025



Harding Avenue Elementary School

The Link Phone: (540) 558-8499

Remind: Text @haelin to 81010 Class code: @haelin

Montgomery County Public Schools is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability and/or age in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504.

For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX Coordinator or the Section 504 Coordinator at 750 Imperial Street, Christiansburg, Virginia, 24073, telephone number (540) 382-5100.

For information regarding services, activities, and facilities that are accessible to and usable by disabled persons, contact the Director of Facilities at (540) 382-5141.

Program Director
Kelly Baranauskas

School Principal
Marcia Settle

The Link Philosophy

Montgomery County Public Schools and Harding Avenue Elementary School's The Link's mission is to provide a caring, safe, and engaging before and after school childcare program for children in grades K - 5. Our goal is to enrich your child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development through a fun, semi-structured before and after school program. It is important to us for children to have plenty of opportunity to unwind and enjoy being kids!

Activities @ The Link

- Instructional reinforcement
 - Designated homework time (with help if needed)
 - Time to work on unfinished work from class (teachers communicate with program director if there is work that needs to be completed)
 - Reading time
- Outdoor Play
- Arts and Crafts
- Board and Card Games
- Improv Games
- Group Games

Our Goals are to:

- Help children develop healthy self-esteem
- Allow children to learn through discovery and play
- Offer developmentally appropriate activities that help children develop physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially
- Provide space, equipment, and teachers that aid in children's development
- Increase families' sense of community with other families
- Communicate with parents on a regular basis to strengthen school/home relationships
- Develop opportunities for children to improve personal and social skills such as respect, honesty, responsibility, and caring
- Emphasize practices that are healthy and safe
- Encourage each child to have FUN!

The Link staff members have been selected based on their educational background, experience, and commitment to working with children.

ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Enrollment can be completed using [Link Signup](#) Google form. Upon completion of the Google form, you will be notified if your child is enrolled in The Link @ Harding Avenue Elementary. Enrollment is taken throughout the year in accordance with space availability. Children's records will be treated confidentially.

Legal Paperwork

For legal purposes, **The Link @ Harding Avenue Elementary School** must have legal paperwork on file regarding custody matters.

TIMES & SCHEDULE OF OPERATION

Before-school hours: 7:00 am - 8:45 am. **Do not leave your child without being signed in and The Link @ HAE staff being present and knowing you have arrived.**

After-school hours: 3:45 pm - 6:00 pm. **Please remember to sign your children out each evening.** Anyone other than parents must provide identification and be an authorized contact in order to pick-up children.

We will be open on teacher workdays @ 7:00 am, provided that enrollment reaches 12 children for the day.

Full Day Hours are: 7:00 am to 6:00 pm

The Link @ HAE **will be closed on the following days:**

- Labor Day - September 2
- Fall Break - October 18
- Thanksgiving Break - November 27 - 29
- Winter Break - December 23 - January 1
- Martin Luther King Jr. - January 20
- President's Day - February 17
- Spring Break - March 10 - 14
- Spring Weekend - April 18 & 21

In rare cases, we may be closed at other times for staff training or if staff are ill with a communicable disease and we are unable to obtain suitable substitutes. On these days, we will plan to notify parents using the Remind app by 6:00 am for the morning program and by 12:00 pm for the afternoon program.

FEES

All fees are due by the first day of the month (or the first Monday of the month). There will be a late charge of \$5.00 for payments received after the due date. Parents will be charged a \$1.00 late fee for **every minute** after 6:05 pm. If late pick up continues to be a problem, your child may be dismissed from the program. Delinquent accounts may result in dismissal from the program. There will be a \$25 fee for returned checks.

The annual budget is calculated by a certain number of full-time, paying customers making it necessary to charge a monthly fee regardless if a child is absent. **The program does not pro-rate.** This includes inclement weather days/snow days, early dismissal days, teacher work days, and early end to the school year.

1. Preferred payment method is MySchoolBucks.com. You will need to create an account using your child's student ID#.
2. Any additional fees such as late payment or late pick up will be applied to the following month's invoice.
3. The monthly fee is due by the first day of the month (or the first Monday of the month).

Monthly Tuition

Full Time (AM & PM)	\$300.00
AM Only	\$130.00
PM Only	\$170.00

- 10% sibling discount
- Teacher workdays are \$40.00/day with \$5.00 discount for siblings
 - 50% discount for MCPS employees
- Only one discount will be applied, which will be the greater discount
- If you are in need of financial assistance, please contact The Link Director

Flex Plan

20 Hour Flex Card	\$200.00
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Program Hours

Before- School 7:00 am - 8:45 am

After- School 3:45 pm - 6:00 pm

Teacher Workdays 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

Inclement Weather Policies

- All information in this section is subject to change at the discretion of MCPS, Harding Avenue Administrators, or the Link Director to ensure the safety and care of students.
- The Link Director will send a Remind message regarding inclement weather decisions. Messages will not come from the school principal.
- It will be the parent's responsibility to check local school closing listings or call the MCPS Information Line @ (540) 382-5102. Parents may also call The Link phone for a message concerning closings or changes in openings.

Code A: Two Hour Delay, The Link @ Harding Avenue Elementary opens at **8:00 am**.

Code B: Closed for Students, The Link @ Harding Avenue Elementary School will be **CLOSED**.

Code C: Buildings Closed, The Link @ Harding Avenue Elementary School will be **CLOSED**.

MCPS Early Dismissal due to inclement weather: The Link @ HAE will remain **open** unless otherwise directed by MCPS or Harding Avenue Administration.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

1. The Link serves Harding Avenue Elementary students currently in grades K – 5.
2. It is the responsibility of the parents to keep proper registration information and current phone numbers in their child's The Link permanent records. Services may be withheld if this information is not provided.
3. Children are not permitted to carry personal cell phones.
4. If you wish to contact The Link, you can call the program's cell phone at (540) 267-5332. During program hours, please try more than once if the staff are unable to answer at that time.
5. Parents who have children who require medication for serious medical conditions *must* provide medications for The Link (in addition to medications provided during school hours). The parent must complete an "Authorization to Give Medication" form if the child requires medication while at the program. Medicines must be in original containers. Please give specific instructions. *If medication is to continue for more than 10 days*, a letter from the physician is required along with the form. When needed, medication shall be refrigerated. Staff will keep records about the administration of medication and will inform parents of any adverse reaction to medication administered and any medication error. Medication shall be returned to the parents as soon as it is no longer needed.
6. Students are not permitted to attend The Link if they have:
 - fever over 100.4 degrees
 - contagious illness
 - vomiting and/or diarrheaParents are required to pick-up their child as soon as possible if he/she becomes ill while in The Link. As with MCPS school policy, students will not be allowed to return to The Link until the student has been fever/vomit/diarrhea free without the use of medication for 24 hours.
7. Whenever possible, the parent(s) should call the program at (540) 267-5332 when he/she will be late for pick-up. Alternate arrangements should be considered. Continued late pick-up may result in suspension or termination of services. It is The Link policy that when a child is not picked up by 6:05 pm, a call shall be made to the parents and those authorized to pick up the child. If no one can be reached, The Link Director will be notified and a staff member from The Link will stay at the school until a parent or authorized person arrives. After 6:30 pm the proper authorities will be notified to ensure the child's safety. This will result in immediate termination from The Link unless it was an unavoidable emergency.
8. Children are to be signed out by a parent(s), guardian(s), or authorized person(s). They are not allowed to leave alone or without accompaniment of an authorized adult. The Link staff will only release your child(ren) to individuals listed on the application form. **If someone not listed in the child's permanent file is to pick up your child, you must send a note to The Link Director via the office, authorizing this person by name.** We will ask for proper identification and then release your child.
9. Children must be signed in to morning school care. Children will then be released into the public school supervision at 8:45 am.
10. Afternoon children will come to the music room at 3:45 pm and will be checked in by The Link staff person.

11. Parents are required to notify the Program Director of any changes in the child's health history and immunizations that are received after enrollment.
12. Parents who wish to withdraw their child are required to give a two-week, written notice and are responsible for the two weeks of fee payments for childcare.
13. If the student is arriving late to the program for the day, it is your responsibility to find the group. You may not leave your child unattended. Areas you may find the group may include the playground, library, art room, stem room, music room, or multipurpose room.

SAFETY FIRST!

- An "Accident/Incident Report" form is used for any serious injury, accident, or occurrence. The information is recorded, signed by staff and a parent, and filed. Two copies will be made; one for the parent and one to be placed in the child's file by the attending staff member.
- A CPR and first aid staff member will be on site.
- All staff will actively supervise children outside. All staff have been trained to cover the areas of outside play. A designated person will accompany all children when entering or exiting the school.

ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY SITUATION POLICY

If your child is involved in an accident or exhibits severe physical distress at The Link, these steps will be taken:

1. An accident report will be completed for all serious injuries. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible.
2. Missing Child: If a child is missing, immediate action will be taken to locate the child. Parents, school administration, and the police will be contacted immediately.

Safety is everyone's concern. Please review the following points with your child(ren)

- There will be a consistent set of rules for children to follow concerning clothing, toys, and expected behavior. These rules will be established with each child at the beginning of his/her attendance.
- Personal toys and electronic devices are *only* allowed when scheduled in advance by the program director.

PLAYGROUND POLICY

1. Children will only be allowed to play in designated areas of the playground within supervision of staff.
2. Children are not allowed to have any toys or balls on the playground equipment.
3. Children are not allowed to climb on the tops of playground equipment.
4. Rules of the school are in place during The Link @ HAE

Safety procedures for the swings

1. Children should be seated and should hold on to the swings at all times.
2. Children are not permitted to jump off the swings.
3. Children are not permitted to swing side to side, or bump other children.
4. Children will be instructed not to walk close to the swings to avoid the danger of being hit or knocked down.

FOOD POLICY

1. The Link will provide healthy snacks for the children during the afternoon session compliant with standards of the Health Department. Children are welcome to bring their own snacks as well.

2. During full-day care, parents should have their child bring a bag lunch to school in a container or lunch box, clearly marked with the child's name. Items will not be refrigerated and should not require microwave heating.
3. During the summer program, children are required to bring lunch from home.
4. When necessary, a special "Allergen Free" table will be provided for children with peanut and other food allergies.

DISCIPLINARY AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Basic rules of safety and conduct will be communicated to the child by the parent and staff. Parents will be informed by phone, in writing and/or through parent conferences if their child displays difficult or inappropriate behavior.

A set of guidelines has been developed to help eliminate behavioral problems before they occur. It is our hope that these guidelines will strengthen the lines of communication between staff and parents and help solve problems that occur.

1. A problem is cited or made evident to the staff.
2. The staff/or staff member will consult with the child to correct the behavior.
3. The child will be given a warning.
4. If the behavior continues, the child will be given the following consequences:
 - a. Loss of 5 minutes of free play.
 - b. Loss of 10 minutes of free play.
 - c. Child fills out a think sheet for parents to sign.
5. If the problem continues, the staff member talks with the child and parent together.
6. If the problem continues, a meeting is called between the child, parent(s), staff member, program director, and a building administrator to devise a plan to correct the behavior.
7. If correction of the behavior does not occur, the child may be suspended or dismissed from the program.

If termination from the program is necessary, the parents will be given a one-week period for obtaining new services. Immediate termination may occur if Montgomery County administrative staff determines the children's safety and welfare is at risk. Should termination occur, the parent is responsible to pay fees only through the last week of their child's enrollment.