



Family Handbook

First Step Preschool
7700 Malibu Drive
Parma, OH 44130

Phone: (440) 885-8645 Fax: (440) 842-9832
www.parmacityschools.org/pleasantview





Parma City School District Administration

Superintendent Charles Smialek, Ph.D.

Treasurer/CFO Sean Nuccio

First Step Preschool Administration

Principal Lara A. Svihlik, M.Ed., MA

Parma City School District Board of Education

President Steven Vaughn

Vice President Mark Ruda

Linda Kohar

Brittany Kurpik

Ashley McTaggart

The policies and procedures outlined in this Family Handbook have been board approved.

The Parma City School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, political beliefs, marital status, disability, or creed when hiring staff or enrolling children in the First Step Preschool Program.



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WELCOME

Welcome to Parma City School District's First Step Preschool. The program is for preschoolers ages 3-5 who reside in Parma, Parma Heights, or Seven Hills. We serve preschoolers with and without special needs. First Step Preschool has been designed to enhance and enrich the development of each child with the recognition of each student as a unique individual, worthy of the opportunity to reach their potential. We strive to provide a fun, safe, and enriching environment for all children in our care.

You are asked to refer to this Family Handbook as needed as its purpose is to provide consistency when dealing with situations as they arise.

PHILOSOPHY

Our goal is to provide a safe, enjoyable, enriching developmentally-appropriate learning environment, while supporting the emotional well-being of every child by offering opportunities for social interaction and learning experiences.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Our First Step Preschool is designed to meet the needs of young children, ages 3-5 via a continuum of least restrictive services. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) is a federal law that assures children with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

PRESCHOOLERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Preschoolers with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are found eligible by an Evaluation Team Report (ETR) under one of the following categories:

Autism, Blind and Visually Impaired, Deaf and Hearing Impaired, Deafblind, Emotional Disturbances, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Disability, Traumatic Brain Injury, or Development Delay (which is specific to preschool age). After an ETR team decision and agreement, the team develops an IEP. Parents/guardians play an integral part to the team.

Parents will be given a copy of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education. Translations of this document are available on the ODE website.

Preschoolers who are PCSD residents can transition from Early Intervention and/or parents/guardians can call for an Early Childhood Screening.

First Step offers a continuum of services by providing itinerant and inclusion preschool services, center-based services, and structured teaching services for students with IEPs.

First Step is responsible for Child Find; PCSD is in the process of identifying, locating, and evaluating children with disabilities from birth through age 21.

PEER MODELS

Preschool is not mandatory in the State of Ohio. Potential peer models can complete a Peer Model Application available on our Parma City Schools website if interested. Potential peer models are screened by the First Step Team. Peers are either accepted, not accepted, or are asked to return for additional screening at another time. Peers are required to be 3-5 years old, residents of Parma/Parma Heights/Seven Hills, toilet-trained, pay required tuition, and provide their own transportation. First Step Preschool can deny entrance to peers at any time. If sections are full for peer models, a waitlist will be initiated, and the order of the completion of the Peer Model Application and Contract will set forth the priority list.

COMMUNICATION

To keep you informed, a designated First Step Preschool bulletin board is physically onsite. Information including this First Step Family Handbook is available online via our Parma City Schools Website. Parents of First Step preschoolers have unlimited access to the program.

Teachers will communicate by a variety of means, which can include, but not limited to: in-person and/or virtual conference(s), phone calls, hard copy notes home, electronic communication. Per ODE Preschool Regulations, a child's developmental progress will be reviewed/reported to families and parent/teacher conferences will be held twice a year. We ask that you keep First Step Staff informed of situations at home that may require specific nurturing support from us. Preschool Daily Schedules are composed of daily circle time, motor time, center time, and snack/self-care time.

Should you have questions or concerns about our First Step Preschool Program, please bring them to the attention of our principal. If your issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may contact our office at 440-885-8645.

ODE LICENSING AND SUTQ

First Step Preschool is licensed and inspected by the Ohio Department of Education, and we are mandated to maintain compliance with all ODE Licensing Rules. Preschool Special Education staff:child ratios of 1:8 must be maintained.

All First Step Preschool Staff Members who are used in ratio are trained in First Aid and CPR. A percentage of First Step Preschool Staff are also trained in Child Abuse Recognition and Prevention and Management of Communicable Diseases. A full-time RN/LPN is onsite during preschool hours and have been trained on Administration of Medication. Please see the Health and Medical section for more information.

All First Step Preschool Staff are required to have on file at First Step evidence of official documentation of the highest level of education, documentation of educator licensure/certification if applicable, orientation training completed within 30 days of staff's start date, access to our PBIS, CPI, and discipline policy, non-guilty/non-conviction statement on prescribed form signed annually, criminal record check that meets the requirements prescribed in section 3301-37-04-G-5 of the Ohio Administrative Code of the Revised Code, a medical statement signed by a licensed medical professional as stated in the rule, and annual in-service training for preschool staff members as stated in the rule.

First Step Preschool also follows ODE's Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) mandates. Staff are held responsible for these requirements and professional development. Families, community, and stakeholders are also asked to partner to support our preschool program.

Per ODE Licensing Requirements the following are posted onsite: most recent written compliance report, program license, procedures for emergency situations, medical and dental emergency procedures in each classroom and by each landline telephone, emergency phone numbers posted by each landline telephone, Ohio Department of Health's Communicable Disease Chart(s), and the annual fire inspection and approval of facility. A First Aid Kit in each classroom is available and visible.

To file a complaint, please contact our ODE Ombudsman 614-466-5203. To obtain a copy of First Step's most recent inspection report, please see https://oclhs.force.com/oclhs_home. Publicly, one can learn more about the most recent inspection(s) process that the Ohio Department of Education completed at the Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System (OCLQS) website.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Our First Step Preschool Calendar is available on our school website and is sent home in our annual orientation packet. Disclaimer: First Step Calendar dates/times are subject to change.

As part of PCSD, First Step follows the district calendar with modified days at the beginning and end of the school year. Our center-based program runs Tuesday through Friday, with two sessions: An AM Session from 8:30-11am and PM Session from 12-2:30pm.

Itinerant hours and location(s) are scheduled by the IEP team, complying with IEP services and minutes.

Although there is no truancy in preschool, daily attendance is recorded; admissions, placements, transitions, and withdrawals are logged within PCSD procedures. Please call our First Step Office Attendance Line at 440-885-8645 to report attendance. If your child receives a PCSD bus for transportation and will be absent, please call transportation at 440-885-8336 and inform transportation of your child's first/last name and bus number. Please see "Should I Keep My Child Home From School Today?" for a list of medical reasons not to send your child to First Step.

In the event the Parma City Schools are closed due to an emergency (i.e. inclement weather, power outages) First Step Preschool will close and all activities are canceled.

PCSD ATTENDANCE POLICY

The educational program offered by this District is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the schools during the days and hours that the school is in session. In accordance with statute, the Superintendent or his/her designee, shall require, from the parent/guardian of each student or from an adult student who has been absent from school or from class for any reason, a statement of the cause for such absence. The Board of Education reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each single absence. Medical documentation may be required by administration at any time to verify medical or excessive absences for illness. The following are the only reasons for being absent as defined by law and adopted by this Board: Illness of the child. (The approving authority may require the written statement of a physician/mental health professional if it is deemed appropriate.), Illness in the family necessitating the presence of the child. (The approving authority may require the written statement of a physician and an explanation as to why the child's absence was necessary, if it is deemed appropriate.), Quarantine of the home. (The absence of the child from school under this condition is limited to the length of quarantine as determined by the proper health officials.), Death of a relative. (The absence arising from this condition is limited to a period of three (3) days unless a reasonable cause may be shown by the applicant child for a longer absence.), Medical or dental appointment. (The approving authority may require the written statement of a physician or dentist if it's deemed appropriate.), Observance of religious holidays. (Any child may be excused if his/her absence was for the purpose of observing a religious holiday consistent with his/her truly held religious beliefs.), College visitation. (The approving authority may require verification of the date and time of the visitation by the college, university, or technical college.), Emergency or other set of circumstances in which the judgment of the Superintendent/designee constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school. Out of school suspension as assigned by appropriate administration. Attendance need not always be within the school facilities, but a student will be considered to be in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board. The school must notify the student's parent, guardian, or custodian that the student is missing school. After this notification, the school can start utilizing interventions with the student as laid out in school policy. If the student continues to miss school, the school must refer the student to an absence intervention team to create a specific intervention plan for that student and work

with the student for 60 days. This team must include an administrator, an individual in the school who knows the child personally, the student, and the student's parent or guardian and can also include a school psychologist, counselor, social worker, and representatives of local public or nonprofit agencies that can provide services to the student. If the student does not comply with the plan or continues to miss school, they can be referred to the juvenile court to participate in a diversion program. If the program is not successful, then the student can be formally processed under truancy charges. However, formal filing in juvenile court must be a last resort. Vacations are discouraged during the school year. However, in some cases family vacations may occur during the school year. In this case advanced requests to have an absence excused must be submitted five (5) school days prior to the vacation. Excused vacation days may not exceed five (5) school days during the school year. Students will be obligated to complete assignments to insure no interruption in education upon their return. Please refer to Policy #5200 to read it in its entirety.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

PCSD Board-Adopted Preschool Academic Curriculum

First Step Preschool implements the Creative Curriculum, which is aligned with the ODE Early Learning and Development Standards. This developmentally-appropriate curriculum was board-adopted. All First Step Preschool Staff are trained in the curriculum and families are encouraged to support the "big ideas". Each study is child-led and embedded into hands-on learning centers. With the exception of Related Services (speech, occupational therapy, etc.), worksheets are not utilized in our program. Safe manipulatives and play-based materials are implemented. Classroom set-ups are designed following the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERs) monitored by First Step Teams. Staff will follow the board-adopted curriculum map designed by building leaders.

Second Step Social Emotional Curriculum

Each preschool classroom follows our Early Learning Second Step Social-Emotional Curriculum which includes simple activities that preschoolers practice throughout the day. Staff are trained to support preschoolers with listening, paying attention, managing their behavior, and getting along with others. HomeLinks are designed for families to support these steps at home. Staff will follow the scope and sequence of this social-emotional curriculum put in place by building leaders.

Outdoor Play and Screen-Time

Per our curriculum, center-based preschoolers will go outside for gross motor play for a minimum of 20 minutes when it is not raining, no local heat/wind/air quality advisory in effect, and over 35 degrees. First Step has access to our playground, courtyard, and school boundaries for nature walks. Gross Motor Play will be held in the gymnasium when weather is uncooperative.

Screen-time is very limited at First Step and will only be used for interactive play for less than 10 minutes per school day (*this excludes assistive technology/augmentative devices when documented in section 2 in the IEP and PBIS visuals*). Per ODE Preschool regulations, screen-time is not permitted during snack time.

Specials

Preschoolers will have Art Class taught by a PCSD Art Teacher. Art lessons and activities align with our hands-on Creative Curriculum studies, focus on a famous artist, and are developmentally appropriate. STEM Lab/Library will be accessed for preschoolers. Stations are set-up by building leaders to ensure students are enriched with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through play. Books can be checked out to preschoolers and First Step asks that books are returned in order to receive another book. No library fines will be instituted at First Step. Most books have been donated by families and building leaders ensure that books are sensitive to cultures, contain respectful language, and do not discriminate.

Related Service Providers (RSPs)

Preschoolers with IEPs will receive related services (Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Orientation & Mobility, Vision, Hearing, etc.) if applicable. As part of the child's plan, students may receive services as a push-in and/or pull-out, combination methodology, group or individual treatment session(s). First Step RSPs must have a parent signature on the Consent for Release and Exchange of Information Form for 2-way communication with private providers. For Medicaid questions, please contact PCSD's Office of Exceptional Students.

Snack and Food-Free Celebrations

Center-based preschoolers can bring in a water bottle and a nut-free snack to school. No glass is allowed in our preschool classrooms due to safety. Please let your child's teacher know if they did not bring a snack, so First Step can provide one. While snack is not required per ODE due to our operating hours, 2 food groups will be served (i.e. raisins and crackers) if a snack is not sent in. Parents are encouraged to send in snack from 2 food groups. Healthy snack suggestions are cut-up fresh fruit and/or vegetables, fruit bars, raisins, dried fruit/veggies, pretzels, or crackers. If a snack contains nuts and/or processed in a nut facility, it will be sent home and a First Step snack will be provided.

First Step encourages celebrating preschoolers' birthdays and other celebrations family-permitting; however, First Step celebrations will remain food-free while students are at preschool due to food/skin restrictions/allergies/wellness. A class set of non-edible treats can be sent to school via the child's family (i.e. stickers, pencils) to help celebrate a special day. Cooking is part of our Creative Curriculum, however due to the food-free safety protocols, alternative activities which align to the standards may be implemented.

Supplies

Our supply list can be accessed on our PCSD website. Families will provide diapers/wipes/pull-ups for students learning to use the toilet. First Step asks that all center-based students send in a spare change of clothes labeled in a bag. Tennis shoes/sneakers are encouraged to wear due to our active curriculum. Be certain your child has suitable clothing based on weather conditions as we go outside daily weather-permitting. Crocs, flip-flops, and slippers are not safe, nor permitted at preschool. If you are in need of supply support, please contact our school office.

Fees

There is an annual required supply fee of \$20.00 for all center-based preschoolers. Checks can be made out to Parma City Schools and these funds are used to purchase instructional/consumable supplies. The fee is due the first week of school; if unpaid, the PCSD Treasurer's Office can record this to follow throughout the child's education experience. Peer Models must pay \$600.00 for preschool tuition, and it can be paid in quarterly installments. Failure to pay peer model tuition can result in removal of the program. PCSD's First Step Preschool does not accept Cuyahoga County Child Care Vouchers as payment for service.

AEPSi Assessment

Our Assessment Evaluation and Programming System (AEPSi) is our curriculum-based comprehensive assessment for our preschoolers designed to evaluate a young child's development and learning, as well as provide next steps and intervention. Center-based students with and without disabilities will receive an AEPSi Report Card twice a school year. Staff are trained to measure students' progress in the developmental domains.

ELA Assessment

ODE requires all preschoolers with disabilities to complete the Early Learning Assessment (ELAs) twice a year. Staff are trained to identify the preschooler's current level of skills in the developmental domains.

IEP Progress Reports

Students with IEPs will receive quarterly progress reports based on their goals, objectives, and data taken. Please contact your child's Case Manager and/or Related Service Providers for questions and clarity.

COS

Preschoolers with IEPs will have Child Outcome Summaries (COS, formerly titled Early Childhood Outcomes/ECOs) for staff to report to the state. These ratings are reported to ODE and parent input is required. AEPSi also helps teams generate a rating.

Brigance Screening

Center-based preschoolers will be screened within 60 days of their start date by the Brigance Early Childhood Developmental Screener. This is an ODE SUTQ mandate and helps teachers address students' baseline academically.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

First Step school doors will remain locked for the safety of all. Access to the building during preschool sessions will be granted once the visitor's photo identification is presented, visitor signs-in, and obtains a badge by our door monitor.

All Preschool Staff are trained in Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (ALICE) and your child will practice safety drills, evacuation drills, tornado drills, and fire drills. Drills will be conducted and logged for ODE.

The First Step Emergency Contact/Release form is to be completed using emergency contacts other than parents, in the event the parents cannot be reached. These contacts must be different households, addresses, and phone numbers and kept current. Preschoolers will only be released to the person(s) listed on the form.

To encourage playdates, families will be asked to include their contact information in a class roster for the directory. You may decline/accept this request on the First Step Emergency Contact/Release Form. Per ODE Regulations, class rosters shall be available upon request to each parent.

Due to safety, itinerant sessions will be held at the child's attending community preschool if applicable, at First Step, or at a local library. Due to health and safety, home sessions may not be recommended as of late.

First Step will provide any curriculum materials, unless requested by staff. Our policy is that preschoolers do not bring in their own toys, make-up, nail polish, batteries, perfume, or other potentially harmful materials. If transition tools are required, sending in pictures of the object is encouraged. It is preschool policy that no buying, trading, or selling of items is permitted on school property. First Step cannot be responsible for lost, damaged, stolen, vandalized, or traded items that children bring to preschool. Students may not use cellular phones or personal electronic communication devices (ECD) while at preschool; *if documented in section 2 of the child's IEP, assistive technology/augmentative devices are permissible.*

PCSD Care of Property Statement and Suspension Policy

The PCSD Board of Education believes that the schools should help students learn to respect property and develop feelings of pride in community institutions. The board charges each student with responsibility for the proper care of school property and the school supplies and equipment entrusted to the child's use. The Parma Board of Education hereby established categories of misconduct as those which may result in disciplinary action(s) which are not limited to and may include: detention, parental contact, referral to legal authorities, emergency removal, disciplinary removal, suspension, expulsion, or permanent exclusion from the Parma City School District. Appropriate due process will be followed according to Ohio Revised Code 3313.66

PCSD Parent Right to Know

You may request information regarding the professional qualification of your child(ren)'s classroom teacher and paraprofessionals. This information is also available on the Ohio Department of Education's website www.ode.state.oh.us. Click on Teaching in Ohio.

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITIONS

Families are encouraged to attend one of our required SUTQ Family Engagement Workshops to learn about the transition from preschool to kindergarten. PCSD Representatives from our various kindergarten programs will present information about this vital step.

Most center-based preschoolers are grouped in classrooms with their neighborhood classmates; this not only ensures a smooth transition to kindergarten, but also supports the social-emotional domain for building long-lasting friendships.

Meeting(s) will be held to discuss kindergarten transitions and all families who have prekinders will be asked to complete the First Step Transitioning to My New Classroom Pamphlet so teams have family feedback. Per SUTQ and ODE, this pamphlet is used to support transitions to/from programs.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND PTA

The Early Childhood years are the vital years for family engagement. Per SUTQ, we will have two family engagements per school year.

Volunteers are crucial to First Step. Volunteers are required to complete a form designed by building leaders prior to volunteering. These forms will be kept on file with our office and replaced annually. Volunteers must sign in/out of our building each time, showing photo identification. Class celebrations, spirit week, and other ways to donate time and be involved will be communicated by First Step.

Due to meeting required IEP minutes, Field Trips will be volunteer and planned by PTA on Mondays or days when students are not in session. Per ODE Preschool Regulations, written permission is required from the parent to swim or participate in water play activities in bodies of water two or more feet in depth if on school hours of operation.

First Step is very fortunate to have an active, positive and supportive Parent Teacher Association. First Step's PTA has won state awards for their involvement. Monthly meetings are held, family engagement activities are organized, and involvement is highly encouraged. PTA information is dispersed via social media platforms, hard copy school flyers, and staff communication.

DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

List of Community Preschool Providers

Per our interagency agreement, First Step partners with community programs. A list of Preschools in our community is accessible on our website. Other agencies include Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Cuyahoga County Local Education Agencies, Family and Children First Council of Cuyahoga County, Bright Beginnings, Starting Point for Child Care and Early Education, Step Forward - Early Head Start & Head Start, and The Centers - Head Start and Early Head Start Grantee for Catholic Charities. Per PCSD Policy, to share information with these agencies, First Step parents are required to sign a PCSD Consent for Release and Exchange of Information Form for 2-way communication and any relevant preschool information.

Partnerships

First Step has partnerships with various stakeholders in our community. Information from our Cuyahoga Community Libraries, local colleges and universities, and food pantries will be distributed to families electronically and/or via hard copies.

PCSD Supports

Parent Mentor and Home Liaison supports are also available. Please contact our First Step office and/or PCSD Office of Exceptional Students for more information.

NOTIFYING OF AUTHORITIES

First Step Preschool will follow ODE and District Policy requiring all professional school staff to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. A percentage of First Step Preschool Staff are trained in Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting. Staff will also notify the police if they suspect a person is under the influence or impaired when dropping off and/or picking up children from the program.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Non-discrimination including Title II, IV, VII, IX, and Section 504. The Parma City School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies. (See Policy #'s 2260, 2260.01, 2260.03 for entirety).

Director of Human Resources 5311 Longwood Ave., Parma, Ohio, 44134 (440) 885-2320

Director of Exceptional Students 5311 Longwood Ave., Parma, Ohio, 44134 (440) 842-5300

REGISTRATION AND RECORDS

All preschool students must be registered with PCSD.

PCSD The Rights of Homeless

Students entering the district and those currently enrolled who have changed living conditions, arrangements or locations are entitled to special services and permission to attend under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act. Contact the Office of the Homeless Liaison at 440-842-7022 or the Ohio Department of Education website (www.ode.state.oh.us /keyword: homeless students) for more information. Please refer to PCSD Policy # 5111 to read it in its entirety.

PCSD Right to Privacy

In order to provide appropriate educational services and programming, the Board of Education must collect, retain, and use information about individual students. Simultaneously, the Board recognizes the need to safeguard students' privacy and restrict access to students' personally identifiable information. Student "personally identifiable information" ("PII") includes, but is not limited to: the student's name; the name of the student's parent or other family members; the address of the student or student's family; a personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student number, or biometric record; other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name; other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or information requested by a person who the District reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates. The Board is responsible for the records of all students who attend or have attended schools in this District. Only records mandated by the State or Federal government and/or necessary and relevant to the function of the School District or specifically permitted by this Board will be compiled by Board employees. In all cases, permitted, narrative information in student records shall be objectively-based on the personal observation or knowledge of the originator. Student records shall be available only to students and their parents, eligible students, designated school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information, or to other individuals or organizations as permitted by law. The term "parents" includes legal guardians or other persons standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the child). The term "eligible student" refers to a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, or a student of any age who is enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Both parents shall have equal access to student records unless stipulated otherwise by court order or law. In the case of eligible students, parents may be allowed access to the records without the student's consent, provided the student is considered a dependent under section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code.

TRANSPORTATION

Safety is our number one priority. Preschoolers with IEPs may receive PCSD transportation if agreed to section 8 in the IEP. Case Managers will complete a PCSD bus form. Peer models are responsible for their own transportation. Students with and without disabilities can be car-riders. First Step Staff practice safety and efficiency with our arrival and dismissal process.

If your child is a bus rider, please have your preschooler ready 10 minutes before scheduled pick-up time. Maintain a cleared passageway between home and bus, especially during winter weather. Please review “safe bus behavior” with your child. For the first two weeks of school, please have your child’s nametag visible for bus drivers/monitors. As stated in “hours of operation”, if your child is absent and accesses PCSD transportation, please call 440-885-8336 and inform transportation of your child’s first/last name and bus number.

Our center-based program runs Tuesday through Friday, with two sessions: AM Session from 8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and PM Session from 12:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Please be patient and respectful with our First Step Staff during arrival and dismissal. We have collaborated with PCSD Safety and Security to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and drivers. Please follow the lines designated by staff. Never cross over lines and please stay off cell phones; be attentive to this process. Please make sure the provided car-tags are visible and displayed. Please avoid blocking driveways, only release a car-rider to a staff member, it is the parent responsibility to buckle/unbuckle their child. First Step Staff is not liable, nor permitted to buckle or unbuckle students. City ordinances require all parents to turn off their car before entering the school. Parents who violate the ordinance and/or leave children in cars unattended will be reported to the police department.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

Physicals

Per ODE requirements, **EVERY PRESCHOOLER** must have an annual Child Medical Statement and/or Physical on file. Per ODE, Child Medical Statements are required no later than 30 days of the preschooler’s start date and every 13 months from the date of examination thereafter. A medical form will be provided in our orientation packet. Screenings are very important in early childhood; these include, lead, vision, hearing, dental, and hemoglobin. If you have questions, please contact our health clinic.

Dental Exams

Dental exams are encouraged for preschoolers. Per ODE, dental exams can be waived; if waived parent/guardian signature must be on the provided dental form.

Administration of Medication

For purposes of this policy, “medication” shall include all medicines including those prescribed by a physician and over-the-counter remedies. For children who must take medication while in our preschool, parents/guardians must follow the Board policy for administration of medication during school hours. A written prescription from the physician as well as written authorization from the parent is required. Forms are available in our First Step Clinic and required to be completed and returned to the First Step Clinic. First Step will not administer the first dose of any medication. Medication must be in its original container, labeled with the date, the student’s name, and exact dosage. “To be given as needed” will not be considered acceptable medical instructions. Documented Seizure Plans and Feeding Tube Forms may be on file with our clinic.

Handwashing Policy (per the Center of Disease Control CDC)

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Sunscreen and Instant No-Rinse Hand Sanitizer

First Step Preschool Staff cannot apply sunscreen to preschoolers, thus please do so at home. Preschoolers are required to wash their hands several times a day. A variety of instant no-rinse sanitizers are available at First Step but does not take the place of handwashing. Please contact your child’s teacher if your preschooler will not use no-rinse hand sanitizer.

Healthchek

Did you know Ohio’s Medicaid program includes **Healthchek** services for children up to 21 years of age? (These services are also called EPSDT sometimes.) **Healthchek** services help children stay healthy and reduce the chances of sickness by treating health problems early. All **Healthchek** services are free. You can get help and information by contacting your county Healthchek Coordinator or your managed care plan and by going to <http://medicaid.ohio.gov/FOROHIOANS/Programs/Healthchek>

Incident Reports

Parents will be notified on the day of the injury/incident if their preschooler had an incident, including a serious risk incident. All incidents will be documented and brought to school clinic; serious incident reports will be sent to the state via Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System (OCLQS), however, confidentiality of the students’ name and contact information will be maintained.

Illness

A full-time RN/LPN is onsite during First Step Preschool Student hours. In addition to our clinic, per ODE preschool mandates, a percentage of First Step Preschool Staff are trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease or other illness shall observe each child daily as the child enters the group. Please do not bring a sick child to our preschool program. If your child becomes ill, it will be necessary to call you immediately to pick up your child from our preschool clinic. A child with signs or symptoms of illness shall be isolated and made comfortable within sight and hearing of a staff member. Parents will be notified promptly, and the child will be observed for worsening symptoms. If used, cots and mats will be disinfected before use by another child. Cleaning and sanitizing supplies are stored in a space that is inaccessible to children. Please notify First Step Staff personnel if your child contracts a communicable disease or condition (i.e. pink eye, strep) so a notification of exposure can be given to other families. Per ODE Preschool guidelines, First Step Clinic Staff will immediately isolate and discharge students who have vomited at school and/or demonstrate a sore throat at school. Contacting parents/guardians is First Step's policy for preschoolers who demonstrate mildly ill symptoms. If a preschooler has been exposed to a communicable disease, First Step Health Clinic will contact parents/guardians of those impacted and follow-up with the current guidance from the Cuyahoga Board of Health.

SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL TODAY?

YES, if my preschooler has:

- Temperature of 100° or higher within the last 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or Motrin
- Persistent cough
- Severe cold with symptoms of nasal discharge
- Diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Severe sore throat with difficulty swallowing
- Skin rash itching, spreading or worsening or accompanied by sore throat
- Red, watery, burning, itching eyes
- Headache caused by injury or fever
- Nits in hair
- Stiff neck
- Evidence of scabies or other parasitic infestation
- Red, irritated, itching or painful eyes; Conjunctivitis
- Unusual spots
- Untreated infected skin patches
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool

First Step Preschool Staff will notify you if your child develops any of the above signs or symptoms while in care. Authorized emergency contacts should be available in case you are unable to pick up your ill child from preschool.

Please notify our First Step Preschool Clinic the same day if your child has been excluded from school for a suspected communicable disease.

The above symptoms/conditions may mean the start of a communicable disease or condition that could affect many of the other children at First Step. Also, your child may be too sick to participate in school that day. In consideration of ALL children, keep your child home until you can determine what else may be developing. Preschoolers can return to school once they are symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of medication. Preschoolers on antibiotics should not attend preschool until they have received their antibiotics for 24 hours.

Thank you for your cooperation and please contact our First Step Preschool Clinic if you have any questions.

Management of Communicable Disease

A person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease or other illness shall observe each child daily as he enters a group. A "person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease" means any person trained in prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases as required by paragraph of rule 3301-37-07 of the Administrative Code. 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 a parent or guardian: Diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools 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; Difficult or rapid breathing; Yellowish skin or eyes; Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) eye discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain; 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; Stiff neck with an elevated temperature; Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation; Sore throat or difficulty swallowing; or Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness. 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 this rule as well as the following: Unusual spots or rashes; or Elevated temperature. Programs shall follow the Ohio department of health's posted "communicable disease chart" 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/mat or crib for

infants. 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. Each program shall have a written policy concerning the management of communicable disease. The policy shall include, at a minimum: The program's means of training all preschool staff in signs and symptoms of illness and in hand-washing and disinfection procedures; Procedures for isolating and discharging an ill child and policy for readmitting such child; Procedures for notifying the parent or guardian immediately when a child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness or has been exposed to a communicable disease; and Procedures regarding the care of a mildly ill child. "Mildly ill child" means a child who is experiencing minor common cold symptoms, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in this rule or a child who does not feel well enough to participate in activities, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph of this rule. Procedures for notifying all parents of enrolled children when children are exposed to a diagnosed communicable disease such as pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox, or lice.

DISCIPLINE AND BULLYING POLICY, AND CPI/PBIS

PCSD Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior

The Ohio Department of Education states, harassment, intimidation or bullying means either of the following: Any intentional written, verbal, graphic, or physical act that a student or group of students exhibited toward other particular student(s) more than once and the behavior both: Causes mental or physical harm to the other student(s); and is so sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student(s).

The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. The Board encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse. The Board of Education will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. This policy applies to all activities in the District, including activities on school property, and those occurring off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, or where an employee is engaged in school business. Please refer to Policy #5517.01 to read it in its entirety.

First Step Written Discipline Policy

First Step utilizes several strategies to assist preschoolers to communicate their wants/needs appropriately with peers and adults. Methods of discipline at the preschool shall be restricted as outlined in the Ohio Department of Education Preschool Licensing Rules 3301-37-10: A preschool staff member in charge of a child or a group of children shall be responsible for their discipline. The center shall have a written

discipline policy describing the center's philosophy of discipline and the specific methods of discipline used at the center. This written policy shall be on file at the center for review. The parent of a child enrolled in a center shall receive the center's written discipline policy. The center is to communicate and consult with the parent prior to implementing a specific behavior management plan. This plan will be consistent with this rule and in writing and signed by the parent. All preschool staff members shall receive a copy of the center's discipline policy for review upon employment. Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are to be used at all times, and shall include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation, and positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. The center's written discipline policy is to comply with this rule, section 3319.46 of the Revised Code and rule 3301-35-15 of the Administrative Code. Behavior management/discipline policies and procedures shall ensure the safety, physical, and emotional well-being of all individuals on the premises. If suspension, expulsion, and removal policies exist, they are to be written in accordance with section 3313.66 of the Revised Code. The center's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises. In addition to the restrictions outlined in rule 3301-35-15 of the Administrative Code, the following apply:

1. There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
2. No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
3. No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, so the child may regain control.
4. 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.
5. No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
6. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
7. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
8. Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use, and food shall not be used as a reward for behavior.
9. 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.
10. The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

11. A staff member who suspects that a child has been abused or neglected is to immediately notify the public children services agency and a serious incident report is to be completed and submitted to the department in accordance with section 2151.421 of the Revised Code.

CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention) and PBIS (Positive Intervention and Supports)

Preschool Staff support prevention strategies (pre-teaching of expected behaviors), intervention strategies (replacement and redirection), and post-intervention strategies (praise and recognition for desired action). Preschool Staff have access to Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI). This nonviolent crisis intervention program is a safe, non-harmful behavior management system designed to help staff members provide for the best possible care, welfare, safety, and security of behaviors.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) are also implemented at First Step. Various First Step Staff participate in our Resilient Learner Committee (RLC) to support our First Step community. First Step is rated by ODE on our PBIS implementation. Below is our universal PBIS Matrix and Behavior Flowchart (these visuals are also posted throughout our preschool):

Pleasantview First Step Preschool Tier 1 Behavior Matrix				
	Classroom & Therapy Room	Gym	Hallway	Playground
Be Respectful	*Share *Take turns *Follow Directions 	*Share *Take turns *Follow Directions 	*Voices quiet *Nice Hands *Follow Directions 	*Take turns *Nice hands 
Be Responsible	*Clean up *Share *Follow Directions 	*Park your vehicle *Clean up *Line up 	*Wait *Voices quiet *Follow Directions 	*Keep mulch on ground *Line up 
Act Safely	*Walking feet *Body is calm *Follow Directions 	*Stay on the road *Nice hands and feet *Run on mats only 	*Walking feet *Eyes forward *Body calm 	*Walking feet in the parking lot *Walk on yellow line *Look both ways *Gate closed 

First Step Preschool

Observe Problem Behavior

Warning/Conference with Student

NO

YES

**Is behavior
office
managed?**

**Reinforce
Appropriate
Behaviors**

**parent
communication
as needed**

**5+ classroom
managed
incidents (same
infraction)**

**Provide
Additional
Behavior
Supports**

phone call home

**Request for
Assistance**

Staff Managed Behaviors

- Not following direction
- disruption
- Inappropriate language
- elopement
- throwing objects
- unkind words
- playground conflicts (depending on severity)
- instances of not keeping hands to self (depending on severity)
- Mildly aggressive behaviors
- Crying/Whining/Screaming
- Biting others or self
- Mild self-injury
- Interfering classroom behaviors

Office Managed Behaviors

- Threatening behavior to others
- threats of bringing/using weapons
- Excessive physical aggression
- intimidation
- sexual harassment/sexual offense
- Excessive elopement
- Theft
- verbal abuse/threat of violence
- vandalism/property damage
- false fire alarm
- Arson
- possession/distribution/use of OTG medications, controlled substance, tobacco, or alcohol
- possession/use of imitation weapons
- possession/use of imitation drugs
- possession of drug paraphernalia
- chronic violation of teacher-managed behaviors

**Contact
Administration**

**Documentation of
behaviors**

**Administrator
contacts parents**

Team Debriefing

Updated 8/24/23
BOE Approved 9/14/23

*Page 2 Board Members & Page 24 Central Office
Address Updated 9/5/24; Page 2 Board Members
Updated 1/3/25*

PARMA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
6800 COMMONWEALTH BOULEVARD
PARMA HEIGHTS, OH 44130
440-842-5300