

PANTHER CLUB



PARENT HANDBOOK *2025-26*

Adopted: February 19, 2025

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Director: Mrs. Jessica Romer / jromer@pitman.k12.nj.us / 856-589-2145 (ext. 6006)

Site Leader(s): Mr. Matthew Loveland / mloveland@pitman.k12.nj.us

General Contact Information

Telephone: 856-589-2145 (ext. 6006)

Fax: 856-582-5465

Website: <https://www.pitman.k12.nj.us/families/panther-club-child-care-program>

Note: *If you need to contact your child's Site Leader, please do so via the Brightwheel app.*

OVERVIEW & HOURS

Panther Club is a child care program for in-district students that is sponsored by the Pitman Board of Education. The program operates a **morning (AM) session** and an **afternoon (PM) session** at both ***Memorial Elementary School*** and ***Pitman Elementary School***.

The goal of the Panther Club is to provide families with a safe and nurturing place for their children to be actively engaged in enriching activities during before and after-school hours. Panther Club is not part of the educational program that Pitman Public Schools is required by law to provide to students. It is also not considered a co-curricular activity.

Panther Club adheres to the Pitman Public Schools Code of Conduct.

Session information for the 2025-26 school year is as follows:

Session	Memorial Elementary School	Pitman Elementary School
AM Session (Regular School Day)	6:45 AM - 8:30 AM	6:45 AM - 8:15 AM
PM Session (Regular School Day)	3:10 PM - 6:00 PM	2:50 PM - 6:00 PM
PM Session (Early Dismissal Day)	1:10 PM - 3:10 PM	12:50 PM - 2:50 PM

Note:

- *Panther Club is available on early dismissal days. If parents utilize both PM sessions, they will be charged **\$19.00 total** (\$7.50 for the early dismissal PM session and \$11.50 for the regular PM session).*
- *Panther Club is not available when schools are closed (including emergency closings).*
- *On delayed opening days (ie. 2-hour delay), the AM session will **not** be held.*

RATES

"Regular Rates" refer to fees applied for previously scheduled Panther Club sessions. "Drop-in Rates" refer to fees applied for Panther Club sessions that have **not** been scheduled.

The following rates will be used for the 2025-26 school year:

REGULAR RATES		
Session	First Child	Each Additional Child
AM Session (Regular School Day)	\$7.50	\$6.75
PM Session (Regular School Day)	\$11.50	\$10.35
PM Session (Early Dismissal Day)	\$7.50	\$6.75

DROP-IN RATES	
Session	Per Child
AM Session (Regular School Day)	\$9.50
PM Session (Regular School Day)	\$13.50
PM Session (Early Dismissal Day)	\$9.50

ADMISSION CRITERIA & PROCEDURES

Forms:

The following items **must** be completed and submitted to the Site Leader prior to admission to the program:

- Registration Form
- Monthly Calendar
- Brightwheel Registration
- Payment via the Brightwheel App
- All Necessary Forms and Permission Slips
- All Previous Balances Paid in Full

Registration forms can be found online at the following address:

→ <https://www.pitman.k12.nj.us/families/panther-club-child-care-program>

Fees & Billing Procedures:

Parents will be responsible for the number of sessions indicated on the Panther Club monthly calendar. Payment will be due as indicated on the bottom of the monthly calendar. Payments must be paid through the Brightwheel App. Cash will **not** be accepted. The Panther Club program reserves the right to terminate care in the event that a financial obligation cannot be fulfilled.

If the calendar and payment are not received by the third school-day of the month, it will be assumed that your child(ren) will no longer be attending the program and your child(ren) will be withdrawn from the program.

If a payment is returned for insufficient funds, the Panther Club reserves the right to require a money order or certified check for all future payments. Additionally, there will be a \$35.00 fee charged for any returned payment.

Check-in & Check-out Procedures:

During registration, each family member and approved pick-up person will be assigned a code through the Brightwheel App. It is important that each person use their own individually assigned code. This is to ensure that students are picked up by the authorized person. Please do not share your Brightwheel code with another individual.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Logistics:

Drop-off and pick-up will take place at the following locations:

- Memorial Elementary School: Panther Club will utilize the main entrance of the school. Parents should ring the bell that is located on the right side of the doors.
- Pitman Elementary School: Panther Club will utilize the entrance to the left of the gym doors (on Woodlynne Avenue). The walking path can be followed until one reaches the doors marked, "Panther Club Entrance."

During pick-up, a parent must ring the bell. A child may be released only to the child's custodial parent (or person authorized by the parent) using the four-digit Brightwheel code. Any person authorized by the parents assumes responsibility for the child in the event of an emergency if the parents are not able to be contacted. These authorized persons are to be listed on the child's registration form. Authorized persons must be 18 years of age or older. If the person is unfamiliar to the staff member, identification will be required.

Using the Brightwheel App to Identify Approved Pick-Up Persons :

During registration, each family member and approved pick-up person will be assigned a code through the Brightwheel App. It is important that each person use their own individually assigned code. This is to ensure that students are picked up by the authorized person. Please do not share your Brightwheel code.

Note: *If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access by a court order, the site leaders must be given a copy of the court order for verification purposes.*

LATE POLICY

If a student is going to be picked up late, the student's Site Leader must be contacted in a timely manner. Contracted pick-up times are up to 6:00 PM. After 6:00 PM, a late fee of \$10.00 per every fifteen minutes of overtime care will be assessed. Please note that if a parent does not pick-up a child at 6:00 PM, the Panther Club staff will begin calling other individuals who are authorized to pick-up the child. We understand that traffic issues may arise and we will do our best to work with parents.

Panther Club reserves the right to remove a student from the program if the student is picked up after 6:00 PM three or more times during the school year.

CREDIT POLICY & SCHEDULING CHANGES

Changes to the Schedule:

If a child is scheduled to attend Panther Club on a given day but the parent no longer requires child care services, the parent must contact Panther Club by 8:00 PM the evening prior to the canceled day in order to receive a full credit. This notification must happen through the Brightwheel app. Email notifications will not be accepted. Additionally, credits for sickness will only be issued when a child has been absent from Panther Club for three or more consecutive days or more days due to an illness, as documented by a doctor's note.

Children who are absent from school are not permitted to attend Panther Club on that given day. It is very important that Panther Club is notified in a timely fashion if changes to your original schedule need to be made. If a date is circled on a submitted calendar, the child is expected to attend on that day, unless written notification (via the Brightwheel app) is received noting the change.

School Closings & Delayed Openings:

In the event that school is closed due to inclement weather or any other emergency, child care will not be provided. Therefore, parents are reminded to have contingency plans in place for such events. If a school closing takes place that necessitates the closure of Panther Club on a given day, any fees paid by parents will be applied to the following month's fees.

In the event of a delayed opening, the AM session will be canceled.

In the event of an early dismissal due to inclement weather, the PM session will be canceled.

HOMWORK & SCHOOL-ISSUED DEVICES

Completing Homework During Panther Club:

There is an allotted thirty-minute time period for homework. ***If you would like your child to complete homework at home, Panther Club must be notified in order to initiate an alternate plan.***

The Panther Club staff will also work to accommodate children who may require more than thirty minutes on a given day.

Parents must complete the required homework permission slips in order for homework completion to take place during Panther Club. Site leaders and counselors are available to assist children with homework. It is expected that the parent will review their child's homework and sign homework books as needed.

Chromebooks and Other School-Issued Devices:

We understand students have school-issued electronic devices that they are to bring back and forth to school each day. With that said, these devices will only be used in Panther Club for homework purposes. In the event of inclement weather or a disruption of normal Panther Club practices, students may be given the opportunity to use the devices for "free time." During this time, only school appropriate sites may be accessed. Students who do not follow these guidelines may be prohibited from using their Chromebook during Panther Club. Cell phones and cell phone games will **not** be permitted in Panther Club.

Note: *If you would like your child to not be allowed Chromebook access during Panther Club, please contact your child's Site Leader.*

SNACKS & FOOD ITEMS

Panther Club does not provide a snack. If you wish for your child to eat a snack, please send this in with your child and label it "Panther Club." We do allow a thirty-minute period for snack consumption if a child packs a snack.

ACCIDENTS, ILLNESS & MEDICATIONS

Accidents:

The Panther Club staff will ensure your child is safe; however, children fall and accidents do happen. Staff members are trained in proper first aid for minor cuts, bumps, and bruises. Staff members are also trained to administer CPR. All injuries will be recorded on an Accident and Injury Record form. Should an injury require professional medical attention, every effort will be made to contact a parent or guardian of the child.

In the event of any emergency, the following procedures will be enacted:

- First aid will be administered.
- 9-1-1 will be called.
- A parent will be contacted.
- School administration will be contacted.
- A Panther Club staff member will accompany the child in an emergency vehicle (if transportation to the hospital is required).
- A student accident report will be completed and filed with the business office.

Illness:

Children are urged to remain at home if they are ill. Children who are ill during the school-day will not be permitted to participate in Panther Club. The district's Parent Handbook should be referenced for health guidelines. If your child is ill and will not be attending Panther Club, you must send a message via the Brightwheel app by 8:00 PM the night prior in order to receive a credit.

Medication:

Absolutely no medications will be dispensed by the Panther Club staff. Arrangements must be made to have medication handled through the school nurse during school hours. Asthma inhalers may be used only if the child has a self-medicate order issued by their doctor and approved by the school nurse's office.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Panther Club operates under the principle that all children are entitled to a pleasant and congenial environment. The program is intended to be more relaxed and less structured than the school day. Positive behavior is encouraged through consistent expectations, realistic limits, and predictable routines. Limits are set to ensure the safety of the children and provide an atmosphere where children learn responsibility for their actions when acting alone or as part of a group.

The following rules and behavioral standards apply to all students who participate in Panther Club:

- Treat everyone with respect.
- Return all items that are used.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Do not rough-house, hit, kick, shove, fight, and/or wrestle.
- Directives from the Site Leaders and Counselors must be followed at all times.
- Students must talk politely to adults and respect proper authority.
- Inappropriate language is not permitted.

Depending on the severity of the incident, the Pitman Public Schools reserves the right to suspend and/or remove a child from the program.

If a child breaks a rule, the following consequences will be administered:

- Step 1 - Warning
- Step 2 - Warning and Time-Out
- Step 3 - Discuss the Incident with a Parent
- Step 4 - Formal Disciplinary Write-Up

If a child receives three total write-ups, he or she will be suspended from Panther Club for three (3) scheduled days. If a child receives a fourth write-up, he or she will be suspended from Panther Club for five (5) scheduled days. Lastly, if a child receives a fifth write-up, he or she will be removed from the program altogether.

Note: If a disciplinary action is severe, the Panther Club Director, in conjunction with district administration, may remove the child from the program altogether.

OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION

Please be advised of the information below:

- All of a child's personal belongings should be labeled.
- Children are **not** permitted to bring toys and/or electronics from home unless it is a specified "activity day."
- Children may not use a device to take photographs of themselves or other individuals.
- Music must be listened to through headphones.
- YouTube and social media sites are **not** permitted.
- Cell phones must be kept in backpacks.
- Children must be fully potty trained.
- A student may **not** attend Panther Club if he or she is wearing pull-ups or diapers.
- Panther Club staff are **not** permitted to change diapers or pull-ups. If a child has an accident, a student must be able to change him or herself. If the student is not able to do this, a parent will be notified to pick-up the child. If a student does not have clothes to change into, a parent will be called to pick-up the child.