

Smart Start Preschool Handbook

**Columbia Elementary
Developmental Preschool
2026-2027**



Director: Lukas Schoenhals
Building Principal: Jason Snyder
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Contact Information

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Smart Start Preschool

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Welcome to Smart Start Developmental Preschool!

We are very excited for your child to attend Smart Start Preschool at Columbia Elementary! The preschool offers a rigorous play-based curriculum geared toward the individual needs and learning styles of each individual student.

Curriculum

Our classroom will ensure that each child's individual educational needs are being met, and include research-based activities. The classroom is set up with different work/play areas: House, Toy, Book, Art, Block, Woodworking, Writing, and Sensory Table. During small and large groups, we will introduce and/or review key concepts. The classroom daily routine also provides structure and time to address individualized student needs. We will incorporate time to work on individual goals for students with IEP goals. The curriculum includes approaches to Learning, Language, Literacy and Communication, Social and Emotional Development, Health and Wellbeing, Arts and Sciences.

School Hours

AM Class (4-year olds) T, R, F 8:20–10:50 a.m., W 8:50-10:50

PM Class (3-year olds) M, T, W, R 11:50-2:20 p.m.

AM classes meet Tuesday through Friday and PM classes meet Monday through Thursday. Your child will attend based on the days decided in their case conference or as previously discussed with you.

Drop-off & Pick-up Procedures

Drop Off for A.M. Class: All students arriving by car will come to the front doors of the school. You will need to walk your child to the door where the preschool staff will greet your child. Drop off time is 8:20 a.m. on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Please do not arrive earlier than 8:20 a.m. On Wednesdays, drop off time will be 8:50 a.m. due to late start Wednesdays.

Drop Off for P.M. Class: All students arriving by car will come to the front doors of the school. You will need to walk your child to the door where the preschool staff will greet your child. Drop off time is 11:50 a.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Please do not arrive earlier than 11:50 a.m.

Pick up for Car Students A.M. Class: All car students will dismiss out of the front doors at 10:50 a.m. Parents should walk up to the door to pick up your child. It is important that you be on time for pick up. If you are running late, please call or text the teacher.

Pick up for Car Students P.M. Class : All car students will dismiss out of the front doors at 2:20 P.M. Parents should walk up to the door to pick up your child. Due to the school age children being picked up shortly after this time, it is extremely important that you be prompt when picking up your child. If you are running late, please call or text the teacher.

Students Riding the Bus: Parents of students who are riding the bus will be contacted by their child's bus driver. The bus driver will inform you of the time your child will be picked up and/or dropped off for the school year. Please be sure to write these times down and be prompt when getting your child out the door to the bus.

Delay Schedule

During a two hour delay, morning preschool class will be canceled and the afternoon class will follow the regular schedule. During a 3 hour delay, both morning and afternoon classes are canceled.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL DISMISSAL: There may be instances, especially in the winter, when it is necessary to either begin school late or close school early or for an entire day. In the event of heavy snow, severe fog, etc., parents should listen

to the radio station: WROI - Rochester, or watch one of two television stations in South Bend: WSBT or WNDU or Channel 4 on RTC. Announcements will be made only when schools are closed, dismissing early, or beginning late.

Parents/Guardians are requested to provide the most updated information so School Messenger, our automated calling system, can contact parents in the event of an unscheduled early dismissal, delay or closing, or other school information. If there is no announcement, then school will be in session as usual. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL OFFICE OR THE RADIO STATION.** These calls only tie up telephone lines which need to be kept open in order to handle the emergency. Parents can also look for postings on the school district website: www.zebras.net. In the case of early dismissal, preschool students will be dismissed ½ hour before school-age students. For example, if early dismissal is at 1:00 p.m. for Columbia students, preschoolers will be dismissed at 12:30 p.m.

Attendance Procedures

If your child will be absent from school, please call the school before 8:30 a.m. and leave a message for the attendance secretary. The 24-hour attendance telephone number is **574-223-0506** for Columbia. **If the office has not received a call by 9:00 a.m. or 12:30 p.m., a call will be placed to your home or work to verify your child's absence.**

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified and must make arrangements to pick them up.

Illness Guidelines

Nurse's Clinic

The goal of our nurse's clinic is to keep students comfortable, safe, and healthy as they learn. With this in mind, we may provide various first aid and/or hygiene products according to the student's needs. This may include over the counter itch creams, antibiotic ointment, redness relief eye drops, oral relief gel, burn gel, etc. You may contact your school nurse for further information on what products might be used in the clinic. If there are particular products that should not be used on your child, please inform the School Nurse in writing immediately.

Students must obtain a pass from class in order to see the Nurse. In most circumstances, students will be treated and return to class promptly. If seriously ill or injured, a parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified that the student

needs to be sent home from school. If a student contacts their parent/guardian during the school day to be picked up for illness but has not reported to the school nurse for assessment, the occurring absence will be unexcused. All communicable diseases will follow the RCSC policy, per the IDOH guidelines outlined in the “Communicable Disease Reference Guide for Schools”. This may be viewed online at in.gov. A paper copy will be provided upon request.

Immunizations: Students need to be immunized as required by the state of Indiana in order to attend school. Parents/guardians will be notified of requirements in advance. Proof of immunization is required on or before the first day of school.

Medications: All medications taken at school need to be administered through the nurse’s clinic. Only FDA approved medications will be administered. Students may not carry any medications including cough drops with them at school or in lockers, backpacks, etc. A parent/guardian will need to sign a medication consent form in order for medication to be administered at school. All medications must be in the original bottle/container. Students are not permitted to transport medication to/from school.

Care Plans: Certain medical conditions such as Diabetes, Epilepsy, Asthma, etc. require a care plan to be on file with the School Nurse. After reviewing health conditions provided by the parent/guardian, the School Nurse will contact the parent if a care plan is needed from their physician.

Emergency Medication: Each school is equipped with automatic external defibrillators (AED) in case of cardiac emergency, stock epinephrine (EpiPen) in case of anaphylactic allergic reaction, and Narcan in case of drug overdose.

Allergies: If your child has an allergy, a physician’s order is required in order for accommodations to be made. This order remains in effect for the entirety of the student’s time at Rochester School Corp. If the allergy has resolved, another physician’s order is required to stop accommodations. We cannot solely accept parent requests due to new laws and regulations.

The school nurse is available for consultation and recommendations. Diagnosis and treatment are prescribed only by the student’s physician.

Fever: The child should remain home with a fever greater than 100 degrees. The child may return to school once they have been fever free for 24 hours, WITHOUT the use of fever-reducing medications.

Strep Throat: After diagnosis from a licensed practitioner, the child may return 24 hours after the start of antibiotic therapy AND are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Vomiting/Diarrhea: A child with vomiting/diarrhea due to norovirus should remain home until they are symptom free for 24 hours.

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): After diagnosis from a licensed practitioner, the child may return to school 24 hours after antibiotic eye drops have been administered.

Rashes: Common infectious diseases are often contagious in the early stages. A child with a suspicious rash should not return to school until a licensed practitioner has made a diagnosis and authorized the child's return to school.

Flu Symptoms/Cold: A child with thick or constant nasal drainage or productive cough should remain home. Young children are often unable to blow their noses and wash their hands. Thus, they are prone to spreading illness rapidly with the above symptoms.

Head Lice: Students must be free from live lice as well as nits (louse eggs) in order to return to school.

Change of Address/Telephone

Please be sure to notify the office promptly if your address or phone number changes. This is the only way we will be able to contact you if your child is sick.

Snack

Each month you will receive a snack calendar. Please provide one of the following items for snack on the day indicated. Please also provide a 100% juice drink on your child's snack day. All snacks must be store bought and sealed when brought

in. We are unable to accept homemade snacks, etc. Please see our school board policy for more details.

Snack ideas:

Goldfish Crackers
Teddy Grahams
Graham Crackers
Animal Crackers
Crackers/Cheese
Dry Cereal
Yogurt
Pudding
Applesauce
Fruit/Dip
Vegetables/Dip

Birthday Policy

You may provide unopened store bought cupcakes or cookies for your child's birthday. They will be distributed during snack time. As per school policy, we are not allowed to hand out birthday invitations at school.

Parent /Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences will take place in the Fall. If your child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), you will also have an annual case conference, which will be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time.

Backpack Suggestions

All students will need a backpack large enough to hold a 9x12 inch notebook inside without folding or bending.

Many backpacks look alike, please label your child's backpack with his/her name visible on the outside.

Please make sure your child brings a backpack to school every day!

Communication Folder

Each child will be given a communication folder at the beginning of the school year to provide parents with information on your child's school day activities and preschool happenings. It will go home with your child every day and will include all papers, artwork, notices, newsletters, etc. It needs to be returned daily in your child's backpack. All monies sent in the folder must be in an envelope and it must be labeled with your child's name and what is in the envelope such as field trip, breakfast money, etc.

Medication

All medication must be turned in to the nurse. Medication must be brought by a parent to school in the original container. Before medication of any type will be administered, a form from the nurse must be filled out when medication is brought in.

Toileting

For students who are working on toileting at home, the teacher will speak with parents on an individual basis to create a toileting schedule for your child while they are at school. Parents will need to provide pull ups or diapers and wipes for their child. We will keep them at school and notify you when more are needed.

Special Services

Special services may include occupational therapy, physical therapy and/or speech therapy. These services are provided as outlined in your student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) at school during your child's preschool class time.