Van Wert
Early Childhood Center
Education • Innovation • Tradition



LITTLE COUGAR CUBS

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS

KINDERGARTEN PARENT HANDBOOK

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ecc.vwcs.net @VWECC @VWECC @VWECC

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE 3

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS 4
- VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS VISION STATEMENT 4
- VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT 4
- VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS SLOGAN 4
- COUGARS 4
- VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS MASCOT AND COLORS 4

OUR SCHOOL 5
- KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL DAY 5
- ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS 5
- MULTIPLE BIRTHS 6
- ATTENDANCE 7
- RAPTOR VISITOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM 10
- KINDERGARTEN TRANSPORTATION 10
- BUS RULES 11
- AFTER SCHOOL CARE 12
- CODE OF CONDUCT 13
- PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES 15
- GRADE CARDS 15
- HOMEWORK 15
- MAKE UP WORK 15
- DRESS AND GROOMING 15
- NOTIFICATION OF STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION 16
- LOST AND FOUND 16
- RECESS 17
- SCHOOL FEES 17
- PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO) 17
- SCHOOL CAFETERIA POLICY 17
- BREAKFAST, LUNCH, AND SNACKS 18
- SPECIAL SERVICES 20
- SAFETY DRILLS 20
- BIRTHDAYS 20
- FOLDERS 20
- SCHOOL DELAYS AND CLOSINGS 21
- BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION 21

MEDICAL INFORMATION 22
- EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION FORMS 22
- MEDICATION POLICY 22
- SCHOOL NURSE 22

PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, and RETENTION 23

CURRICULUM 24

HANDWRITING 24

PHONEMIC AWARENESS 24

LITERACY/READING 24

WRITING 24

PHONICS 24

BIG IDEAS 25

SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES 25

BEHAVIOR PLAN 25

TITLE 1 - ANNUAL NOTICE TO PARENTS REGARDING TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS 26

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION 27

KINDERGARTEN WORDS 27

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT 28

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Greetings to you and your child! Welcome to Kindergarten at the Van Wert Early Childhood Center (ECC)! We are so very excited to be a part of your child's first educational experience! Our goal is to make it both positive and memorable for both of you, as we work together to set a strong foundation for lifelong learning and growth. We encourage communication between parents, teachers, and administration to ensure an understanding of our Vision, Mission, and the CORE goals of Van Wert City Schools (VWCS).

This Parent Handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions parents may have during the school year, and to provide information about the Van Wert City Schools Board of Education policies and procedures. Please take time to read this handbook and become familiar with the information included. You may also want to keep it close for any questions/issues that may arise during the school year.

This handbook replaces all previous handbooks distributed. Also, if you have specific questions about Board of Education Policies and Procedures, you may access them on the VWCS website (www.vwcs.net).

Thank you,
Mrs. Lori Bittner, Principal
Van Wert Early Childhood Center
419-238-0384, ext. 1331
l_bittner@vwcs.net

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS VISION STATEMENT

In partnership with our community, Van Wert City Schools will ensure that all students develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes they need to thrive in post-secondary education, careers, and civic life.

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

Van Wert City Schools will continue to be a source of Cougar Pride while providing each student a quality education through innovative methods and technology.

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS SLOGAN

COUGAR PRIDE IN ALL WE DO

COUGARS

We are Caring and compassionate
We seek Opportunities to be innovative thinkers and learners.
We are United in a desire to be collaborative with one another and our community.
We take Great pride in the tradition and excellence of our schools.
We have an Attitude that values determination, persistence and hard work.
We are trustworthy, Respectful, and responsible students and Citizens.
WE ARE VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS!

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS MASCOT AND COLORS

The Van Wert City Schools mascot is the **COUGAR**, and the district school colors are **SCARLET** and **GRAY**. At the Van Wert Early Childhood Center, we are the “Little Cougar Cubs”. We encourage our students to identify with these symbols as a representation of our school pride!

OUR SCHOOL

KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL DAY

The VWECC office is open from **7:30 a.m.** to **4:00 p.m.** each day that school is in session.

Kindergarten students may begin arriving at school ***no earlier than* 7:30 a.m.**, and will be attended to by staff in the Commons area of the building. All kindergarten children must be in attendance by **8:10 a.m.**, or they are counted as tardy.

Kindergarten children are dismissed at **3:00 p.m.** (Parent Pickup) and **3:05 p.m.** (Buses).

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Ohio law requires students to enroll in the school district in which the legal parent(s) or guardian(s) reside(s) unless they are enrolling under a district's open enrollment policy.

All kindergarten children must be age 5 on or before the first day of instruction for Van Wert City Schools to be able to enroll in kindergarten. Kindergarten is mandatory before entering first grade. When parents/guardians enroll their child, they must provide copies of the following:

- A completed registration packet
- An original birth certificate (or similar document)
- A copy of current immunizations
- Custody Decree
- A copy of any court papers pertaining to custody as per Ohio Revised Code (should this apply)
- Address of parent and child (proof of residency)
- A copy of Photo ID (driver's license)

Students enrolling from another school must have an official transcript from their previous school in order to have grades and academic progress transferred. Office personnel will assist in obtaining the official transcript and other records needed by having the parent or legal guardian sign a *Request for Records* form to be mailed or faxed to the student's previous school.

Under certain circumstances, temporary enrollment may be permitted. In such cases, parents or legal guardians will be notified about documentation required to establish permanent enrollment. Temporary enrollment may not exceed 60 calendar days.

ALL KINDERGARTEN PARENTS MUST COMPLETE ALL KINDERGARTEN FORMS ONLINE THROUGH THE FINAL FORMS SITE. LINK IS ON THE VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS WEBSITE → **vwcs.net** (Parents tab → Final Forms).

MULTIPLE BIRTHS

It is the policy of the Van Wert Early Childhood Center to separate multiples (twins, triplets, etc.) in different preschool and kindergarten classrooms. While this decision can be met with apprehension on the part of parents, the administration and staff believe this could be best for children based on the following research.

In a study by Tully, Moffitt, Caspi, Taylor, Kierman, and Andreou; 2003, it was determined that separated twins "performed better" on cognitive (reading and math) and social-emotional measures than those of twins who were in the same classroom.

Other research by the **Twins Trust** and the **Multiple Births Foundation** give some of the following as a benefit to separating twins or multiples.

- If one child is more able, either socially or academically, than the other, separation can reduce the risk of comparisons and competition between the two.
- Multiples may display less disruptive behavior when they are separated versus when they are together.
- Multiples may find it easier to mix in with, and relate to, other children when they are separated, instead of becoming too dependent on each other if not separated.
- Twins can often strive to be the same. Separation can reduce the risk of a more able twin underachieving, or a less able twin struggling to keep up.
- Separation can reduce the likelihood of identical twins using their similarity to entertain other children or confuse teachers, therefore avoiding distraction and disruption.
- With male/female twins, the female twin tends to develop faster, which can sometimes lead to "mothering". Separation can reduce the possibility of this occurrence, which can also help prevent the male twin's relationship with his peers from being harmed.
- Separation can reduce the tendency of twins to become hyper-focused on their twin's actions, allowing them to focus and concentrate more on their own learning.

Twins and other multiple births need space to develop their own personalities, as well as their own cognitive and social-emotional skills. They also need to develop their own friendships and relationships.

As a parent, if you have concerns with our policy of separating multiples, please reach out directly to school administration for a conversation about your children's placement.

ATTENDANCE

Van Wert City Schools considers every school day to be important to a child's learning process, and is committed to working with parents/guardians to prevent absences and tardies from impairing a child's academic success. Arriving on time is important to a child's development of good work habits, and is also important to the classroom setting -- children entering the classroom tardy often interrupt the education process for other students.

It accordance with guidelines set forth by the Ohio Revised Code; the Ohio Department of Education and VWCS Board Policy the ECC-Kindergarten has established the following procedures for attendance:

1. **Attendance at school is compulsory (required and enforced) once a child is enrolled in Kindergarten.**

2. **Parents/guardians are responsible for providing the school with their name, telephone number and address.**
    a. This ensures that the school has contact information that can be utilized, if the need arises, during the school day. Updated information can be provided to the school by calling during school hours, or leaving a detailed message on the available after-hour voice message system. School email information can also be provided upon request.

3. **Parents/guardians are responsible for providing the school with the names and telephone numbers for emergency contacts**.
    a. This is important should the parent/guardian not be available for contact during the school day.

4. **Parents/guardians are responsible for contacting the school, at the beginning of the school day, when their child will be tardy or absent, AND providing the specific reason for the tardy/absence. The Van Wert County Health Department requires parents/guardians to identify specific health-related reasons for tardy/absence → cold, flu, earache, hospitalization, etc.**
    a. Parents/guardians are to call the school at **(419) 238-0384**, at the beginning of the school day, to report the tardy/absence and explain the reason for

tardy/absence. Parents/guardians may also leave a voice message with (a) the parent/guardian name, (b) the child's name, and (c) the specific reason for the tardy/absence.

5. **When a parent/guardian fails to report their child absent/tardy by the beginning of the school day, it is the school's responsibility to make 1 attempt to contact the parent/guardian and determine the reason for tardy/absence.**
    a. The school is responsible for making this contact within 2 hours of the beginning of the school day on the date of the tardy/absence.

6. **It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to sign a child in and out of the school office, should the child report to school after the beginning of the school day or leave school prior to the end of the school day.**
    a. The child's parent/guardian must sign the child in or out of the school office, and provide a specific reason for the child coming to school after the beginning of the school day or leaving school prior to the end of the school day. When a parent signs their child into school after the beginning of the school day, the child will be given a tardy slip to give to their teacher.

7. **The reason for a child's tardy, early dismissal, or absence will determine if the missed time is considered excused or unexcused.**

Definition of Terms for Attendance

The Board has adopted the following terms and definitions that will be consistently utilized in our attendance-related work and reporting.

- **Compulsory school age:** A child between 6 and 18 years of age is “of compulsory school age” and must attend school each day. A child under 6 years of age who has been enrolled in kindergarten also shall be considered “of compulsory school age.”
- **Average Daily Attendance (ADA):** a schoolwide measurement that shows the total hours all students attended school divided by the total hours all students could have attended the school year. It is an indicator of how many students typically show up each day. Average Daily Attendance tends to mask chronic absence and can make it difficult to see when a school or district has an attendance issue.
- Excused Absence: The Board acknowledges there are times when a student simply cannot be at school. The Board considers the following factors to be reasonable excuses for the time missed at school:

- Illness of the child, which may require a written physician's statement
- Illness in the family necessitating the presence of the child
- Quarantine in the home
- Death of a relative
- Medical, behavioral, or dental appointment. Coming to school before and/or after the appointment is recommended
- Observance of religious holidays, when outside "Religious Expression" below
- Pre-enlistment reporting to military enlistment processing station, unless used to help fulfill graduation requirements and will be counted as "present" for school
- Absences due to a child's placement in foster care or change in foster care placement or any court proceedings related to the child's foster care status
- Absences due to a student experiencing homelessness, defined as a student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
- Children of military families. Absences due to deployment activities of a parent, legal guardian or custodian
- Emergency or other set of circumstances in which the judgement of the superintendent of schools constitutes a good and sufficient cause of absence from school
- **[Local board can add additional reason that may be applicable to the families enrolled in the district or school]**

The parent, legal guardian or custodian must provide an explanation for the absence, which shall be recorded by the approving authority of the school and shall include the date and time of the absence according to local policy.

- Habitual Truancy: Any student who is absent without legitimate excuse from the public school the child is supposed to attend for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one school month, or 72 or more hours in one school year, unless the student's district or school determines the student and student's family are making satisfactory progress in improving the student's attendance at school. However, if the student and the student's family cease to continue making progress in improving the students attendance, a complaint in the juvenile court shall be filed.

8. **Per VWCS Board Policy, personal illness is an excused reason for missed hours, should a parent comply with the <u>following guidelines</u>.**

a. Parents are allowed to "call in" and report their child absent for a personal illness **up to 3 times per trimester** without providing the school with an accompanying written medical excuse.
b. HOWEVER, **after the 3rd parent "call in" in one trimester** (without an accompanying medical excuse), the **parent MUST provide the school with a written medical excuse** for any future illness related absence reported for that child for the remainder of that trimester.
c. If a parent/guardian fails to provide a written medical excuse for their child after the 3rd parent "call in" for illness in any one trimester, the school will record the absence as unexcused.

9. **Per VWCS Board Policy, parents/guardians may request permission for their child to be absent from school for up to 5 school days, per 1 calendar school year, in order to accompany the parents on a family vacation.**
   a. In order for these 5 days to be marked as excused absences, **the parent MUST seek and obtain permission for their child to be absent, from their child's school principal, PRIOR to the family vacation.**
   b. Notifying a child's teacher of an upcoming family vacation or emailing the school that the child is leaving on a family vacation does ***not*** meet the guidelines for these 5 days to be considered excused.

10. **When absences are unavoidable, parents/guardians are encouraged to consult with their child's teacher in order to identify ways that they can supplement their child's learning process at home.**

RAPTOR VISITOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

To strengthen our campus safety program for students and faculty in all buildings, all visitors are now required to check in using the **Raptor Visitor Management System**. Upon arrival, visitors will be asked to present a form of identification, such as a Driver's License, which may be scanned or manually entered into the system. If a parent or guardian does not have a U.S. government-issued ID, school staff can manually enter a person's name using an alternative form of identification.

KINDERGARTEN TRANSPORTATION

Parents/guardians will be asked to fill out a transportation form at the beginning of the school year so that we can better assist you with your child's transportation needs.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Kindergarten children in the Van Wert City School District are picked up and dropped off at "bus stops" around the city. It is your responsibility to get your child to and from these bus stops. School district staff are stationed at the stops to assist with your child's safety. The following "bus stops" are:

- Goedde Building
- Global United Methodist Church
- Jubilee Park
- Wesley United Methodist Church
- Prospect Ave. Site
- Trinity Friends Church
- Olympic Lanes
- Ohio City Church
- Wee Care Day Care (only if child is enrolled there)

PARENT DROP OFF/PICK UP

You, as the parent/guardian, may also provide your own transportation for your child. If you choose to do so, you may drop your child off beginning at 7:30 a.m. When dropping your child off, please pull up in the first lane only – closest to the building. Always have your child get out of the car on the building side. We do not want any child getting in or out of a car on the parking lot side of your car. This will keep your child as safe as possible as they will not be crossing in front of or behind your vehicle.

You will need to be here at 3:00 p.m. to pick your child up. You may come into the lobby to get your child, or you may drive up to the front door and kindergarten staff will assist you in getting your student inside your vehicle.

When picking up your child, please pull up in one of the two closest lanes to the school. You will be given a sign with your child's name on it to place in your front car window. This will help us in putting your child in the car safely.

Again, if you have questions about transportation, please do not hesitate to contact the school secretary in the school office, your child's teacher, or myself with any questions or concerns you may have. Our goal is safety first for all children enrolled in our kindergarten program.

BUS RULES

If your child is riding a bus, the following safety rules need to be applied.

- At all times, the bus driver is in full charge of the bus, and the students who ride it.
- All children are to listen to the bus driver's directions.
- Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
- Keep your book bag closed at all times.
- Stay in line at all times.
- You may talk in a quiet voice to those in your seat.
- Use kind words and polite manners when interacting with others.
- Encourage others to follow the rules.
- Stay in your seat at all times.
- Please be quiet at all railroad crossings.
- Keep the bus aisles free of all objects.
- Keep all objects and body parts inside the bus at all times.
- To avoid the possibility of choking, please keep all food and/or drinks in your book bag.

In extreme cases of misbehavior, a student may be denied transportation by the building principal or the Director of Transportation for a limited time. Parents will be notified when students may be suspended from the bus.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

We understand some parents need a few more minutes at the end of the day in order to pick up their child. For kindergarten students, we do have an "after school care" program where children can stay in the care of paraprofessionals until you are able to be here. This service is for working parents who may not get off until 3:30 p.m., or so. All children who need after school care must sign the form stating the need for this program, so we have staff here to supervise. This is not designed to be "babysitting" while parents run errands, etc. This is designed to help working parents with transportation and timing needs.

ALL CHILDREN NEED TO BE PICKED UP BY 3:45 P.M. NO EXCEPTIONS, AS THERE WILL NOT BE STAFF HERE TO SUPERVISE THEM. PLEASE MAKE SURE TO HONOR THIS TIME COMMITMENT.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A violation of any rule herein may result in disciplinary action including suspension and/or expulsion.

A. Fighting

a. Students have many opportunities to solve differences without resorting to fighting. Teachers, social workers, and school administrators are available for discussion of differences. Fighting is not permitted in the building, on school grounds, or on the school buses.

B. Hazing

a. It is policy of the Van Wert Board of Education that hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and shall be prohibited at all times. No administrator, staff member, or other employee of the school district shall encourage, permit, condone, or tolerate any hazing activity. No student, including leaders of student organizations shall plan, encourage, or engage in hazing activities of any kind.
b. Hazing is defined as doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person.

C. Disruption of School

a. A student shall not, by use of violence, force, fear, coercion, threat, intimidation, noise, passive resistance, or through any conduct intentionally cause the substantial and material disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, process or function of the school. Neither shall he/she engage in conduct or urge another student to engage in conduct which would result in a material disruption of school.

D. False Alarms

a. A student shall not initiate a false alarm or bomb threat that may place in danger the lives of those associated with the school.

E. Insubordination

a. Insubordination is the refusal of a student to cooperate with a reasonable request by a staff member of the school system. Any action judged by the school officials to involve misconduct or misbehavior and not specifically mentioned in other sections will be dealt with as insubordination.

F. Narcotics, Drugs, Alcoholic Beverages

a. A student is prohibited from using, possessing, or transmitting any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind.

G. Tobacco

a. The use of tobacco products by students is prohibited on school property or in the vicinity of the school. Possession of any tobacco product is prohibited. The penalty for any tobacco use may result in a suspension/expulsion, and notification to the local law enforcement agency.

H. Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

a. A student shall not knowingly possess, handle, or transmit any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon or a look-alike weapon either on the school grounds during and before or after school hours, or off school grounds at the school activity or on school buses.

I. Theft

a. Theft of school or other person's property will not be tolerated. Legal steps may be taken against a person found guilty of theft.

J. Assault on an Employee

a. A student shall not intentionally cause or attempt to cause physical injury or intentionally behave in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to a school employee.

K. Responsibility

a. Students and their parents (guardians) will be held financially responsible for any vandalism that the student commits on school property. Court action may be taken if deemed necessary.

L. Repeated Violation

a. A student shall not repeatedly fail to comply with the regulation necessary to operate the educational system.

M. Threatening, Degrading, or Disgraceful Acts

a. A student shall not engage in any act which threatens, degrades, disgraces or tends to threaten, degrade, or disgrace another person, by written, verbal, or gestural means.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

For the 2026-2027 school year:

- November 23, 2026 (Evening)
- November 24, 2026 (Morning, Afternoon, and Evening)

GRADE CARDS

For the 2026-2027 school year:

- End of Trimester 1: November 6, 2026 *(Grade Cards at Parent-Teacher Conferences)*
- End of Trimester 2: February 19, 2027 *(Grade Cards sent home February 26, 2027)*
- End of Trimester 3: May 26, 2027 *(Grade Cards sent home on May 26, 2027)*

HOMEWORK

Homework is not routinely given in Kindergarten, but there may be times when your child may bring homework home. Parents can help their child by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for the student to work, and see that the assignment has been completed.

MAKE UP WORK

When students are absent, make-up work may be given by teachers.

DRESS AND GROOMING

The basic responsibility for the dress and grooming of students attending Van Wert City Schools rests with the parents and students. The continued cooperation and good taste shown by the large majority of parents and students of the Van Wert City School District is desired.

The guidelines set forth in this dress code for Van Wert Early Childhood Center students have been approved by the Van Wert City Schools Board of Education.

Articles of clothing that become disruptive and distracting to the educational process will not be allowed. Clothing with offensive language or illustrations, drugs and alcohol, tobacco, sexual slogans, illustrations and innuendos, and/or bizarre or unusual clothing are considered in violation of the school district's dress code policy.

See the following page for a list of guidelines for articles of clothing.

Guidelines for articles of clothing:

Pants: Appropriately worn at/above the waistline for all students. Legged garments should be no shorter than mid-calf.

Shorts: Must be fingertip length, and are only permitted during the months of August, September, October, April, and May (weather permitting).

Skirts, Dresses, Split Skirts: Must be fingertip length.

Shirts: Tank Tops (Less Than 3 Inch Straps), Strapless, Bare Midriff, Muscle Shirts, See-Through Blouses are not permitted.

Shoes: All shoes must be closed-toe for safety purposes both inside and outside of the building.

Hats: Hats, Bandanas, Scarves, or other Headgear are not permitted in the school building during the school day (unless worn for planned special occasions).

Coats/Jackets: These are not to be worn in the school building during the school day. They are needed at all times during the school year for indoor and outdoor recess.

Tattoos: Temporary tattoos are not permitted to be visible during the school day.

Undergarments: Any visible undergarment is considered a violation of the school dress code.

Soiled, Torn, or Cut-Off Clothing: Not permitted at any time.

School officials and the Board of Education reserve the right to make final decisions regarding changes in the dress and grooming of students.

NOTIFICATION OF STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Parents may refuse to allow the district to disclose any, or all, of such directory information upon written notification to the district within twenty (20) days after the receipt of the district's public notice.

LOST AND FOUND

A place for lost and found items is maintained in the school office. Items will be disposed of if not claimed in a reasonable amount of time. Every year, articles of clothing, purses, and equipment are left in the lost and found, so be sure that your child checks this location first if she or he has lost any item.

RECESS

Every kindergarten classroom will have two (2) recesses each day. The first is joined with your child's lunch time, and the other one is during the afternoon. A third recess is optional for the teacher in the morning should the teacher deem it necessary. If the weather (or wind chill) is 20 degrees or lower, then children will stay inside for recess. Otherwise, all children will go outside for a scheduled recess time.

PLEASE DRESS YOUR CHILD TO GO OUTSIDE EVERY DAY!

SCHOOL FEES

Kindergarten Fees are $85.00 for the year. You are required to pay this fee within the first month of school. Payments should be turned in to the school secretary in the school office. Make checks payable to Van Wert City Schools.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

The Van Wert ECC and the Van Wert Elementary have a joint and active PTO group. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the Elementary Cafeteria. Please consider being a part of the PTO.

SCHOOL CAFETERIA POLICY

Van Wert City Schools participates in the National School Lunch Program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which permits the school to offer free and reduced price meals to students who qualify.

Students may purchase their lunch at school, or bring their lunch with them; however, "FAST FOOD" lunches to school are prohibited.

Free or reduced price lunches are available to children who are determined eligible following the return of applications, which will be made available to all families at the beginning of the school year. Applications can also be found in the school office or on the school's website. Applicants are responsible for meals until a free or reduced application is completed and approved.

The cafeteria uses a computerized debit system to purchase lunches.

Money can be deposited into the account whether the student is free, reduced, or a full-paying student. Money will only be deducted when the student uses the account. Checks should be made payable to Van Wert City Schools and the student's name and/or

ID# should be on the check. The student may use this account for meal or a la carte purchases.

This is a completely confidential system. All students access the system in the same manner regardless of whether they receive free, reduced, or full price meals. The computer will deduct a meal charge from the student's account according to their pay status.

Van Wert City Schools provides breakfast daily in each of our buildings except when school is delayed.

OFFER vs. SERVE POLICY (This policy does not apply to Preschool or Kindergarten)

Offer vs. serve provision of the school lunch program means students are offered five food components each day from within the federally-required traditional lunch pattern. Van Wert City Schools offers this to students in grades 1-12. All students are encouraged to take all items offered, however, under offer vs. serve, students need only take a minimum of three of five components offered, one of which must be a fruit or vegetable. This allows students to refuse a food item they do not like, encourages freedom of choice, and helps eliminate waste.

All menus are subject to change.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

CHARGING POLICY

In grades Preschool - 5, a student may charge up to 5 lunches. Charge slips are sent home weekly. A phone call will also be placed to the parent/guardian to resolve the issue.

In grades 6-12, charges for lunch only (no a la carte) may not exceed $10.00. A phone call will also be placed to the parent/guardian to resolve this issue. During the last three weeks of the school year, there will be NO CHARGING allowed.

BREAKFAST, LUNCH, AND SNACKS

<u>BREAKFAST</u>

Breakfast is offered every day from 7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. for those students who wish to take part in the breakfast program. It is required that all breakfast meals be eaten in the Commons area. You must sign up for this program. The school secretary, in the school office, can assist you with this.

The prices for the breakfast program for the 2024-2025 school year are:

- Full Price Breakfast: $1.75

- Reduced Price Breakfast: $0.30
- Free Breakfast: FREE

LUNCH

Lunch is served every day to all children who choose to purchase lunch. It is required that all lunch meals be eaten in the Commons area. Children are expected to be kind, courteous, and to help clean up their space after eating.

Each student will have a lunch account set up through the school's meal computer program. The money you send in to purchase their lunch will be applied to their account. You may put any amount into this account. It is also possible to set up payments electronically. Please contact the Head Cook in the cafeteria with any questions about this system.

Children may also choose to bring their own lunch. Please do not send any lunches in glass containers, as it could be a breakage and safety concern. Milk can be purchased daily if you choose to pack your child's lunch. You can choose to pack your child a juice drink. However, no carbonated drinks (soda pop) are to be packed.

If your child forgets his/her lunch money, or packed lunch, you can "charge" as a temporary solution.

Charges need to be "paid off" as soon as possible. Lunch prices for the 2024-2025 school year are:

- Full Price Lunch: $2.75
- Reduced Price Lunch $0.40
- Free Lunch FREE
- Milk Price $0.50

Please send your child's lunch money in a baggie or envelope marked with their first and last name on it.

SNACKS

Snacks are given daily to our kindergarten children. We use parents to help us provide snacks. Please read the Kindergarten weekly newsletter for a snack schedule. Please send in for twenty (25) students. Please check with your child's teacher to know if there are any dietary concerns (such as peanut or gluten allergies, etc.) in your child's class.

Snack Ideas

●Teddy Grahams ●Graham Crackers ●Animal Crackers ●Goldfish Crackers
●Cereal ●Fruit Snacks ●Popcorn ●Pretzels ●Rice Krispie Treats

SPECIAL SERVICES

In addition to the regular classroom experience, Van Wert ECC students will have the opportunity to participate in some, or all, of the following specials/special services:

●Art Education ●Physical Education ●Music
●Social Work Services ●Special Education ●Title 1
●Therapies – Speech and Language, Occupational and/or Physical

All kindergarten children will receive art education, physical education, and music. It is important that your child have shoes for the gym with them at school every day. You can choose to have them keep a pair of shoes for gym class in their locker every day so they can change into them.

SAFETY DRILLS

Fire drills, tornado drills, and other safety drills are required to be completed every year in public schools. The Van Wert Early Childhood Center must participate in these drills. During the drills, teachers will instruct the children on where to go and what to do. It is very important that all children follow the directions/instructions carefully and quietly.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are very important to children in kindergarten. We will be celebrating each child's birthday with a song and a birthday treat. You are welcome to send in a simple birthday treat for your child.

FOLDERS

Every child in kindergarten will have a red folder that will come home every afternoon. This is an easy way for us to send home important information and papers for you to see. Please make sure to check your child's red folder every day, remove papers that are to be read and/or checked by you as the parent, and make sure the red folder comes back to school every morning.

SCHOOL DELAYS AND CLOSINGS

School delays, early closings, and cancellations of school, due to weather or other emergency conditions, do happen and are communicated to parents/guardians as soon as possible.

The easiest and fastest way to be notified of these delays and closings is to sign up for text messages/emails through the district website. You may sign up through the Van Wert District website at www.vwcs.net → PARENTS → ALERTS SIGN UP.

You may also check with the following radio and television stations:

- Radio
    - AM 1190 WOWO
    - AM 1220 WERT
    - FM 99.7 WKSD
- Television
    - Channel 15 CBS
    - Channel 21 ABC
    - Channel 35 WLIO

BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

The Van Wert Early Childhood Center participates in the Box Tops for Education Program. We will be collecting Box Tops throughout the school year. This is an easy way for us to raise funds to use in our building by providing services to the children and teaching staff. We so appreciate your help in this collection endeavor!

MEDICAL INFORMATION

EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION FORMS

Each student must have an Emergency Authorization Form on file in the school office of the attended building. This form will give the needed contact information if and when an emergency should arise. It also allows or permits a doctor(s) to give medical attention to students when parents cannot be contacted. This form must be signed by the parent or guardian. Parents are asked to notify the school with any medical changes that may occur throughout the school year. These forms should be updated with address and phone number changes as they occur. This form is part of the Final Forms online process.

MEDICATION POLICY

School personnel are not permitted to dispense medication without the written authority of a doctor. Any parent with a child who needs to take medication, on a temporary or regular basis during the school day, must have this set up with the school nurse prior to beginning the medication. Please contact the school nurse with any medication concerns or questions.

SCHOOL NURSE

The school nurse is responsible for the maintenance of all health records, routine health checks, and hearing and vision screenings. If you have any questions or concerns with your child’s health and medical condition, please contact her by calling the school office.

PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, and RETENTION

- A student will be **PROMOTED** to the succeeding grade level when he/she has:
  - Completed the course and state-mandated requirements at the present assigned grade level.
  - In the opinion of the professional staff, achieved the instructional objectives set for the present grade level.
  - Demonstrated sufficient proficiency to permit a child to move ahead in the educational program of the next grade.
  - Demonstrated the degree of social, emotional, and physical maturation necessary for a successful learning experience in the next grade.
- If the child does not meet the above stated educational objectives, he/she will be **RETAINED**.
- A student will be **PLACED** at the next grade level when retention would no longer serve the educational good of the student.
- Following sound principles of child development, the Board of Education discourages the “skipping” of a grade level.
- The superintendent, in connection with the building principal, shall develop administrative guidelines for PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, AND RETENTION of a student which:
  - Require the recommendation of the relevant staff members for promotion, placement, or retention.
  - Require that parents are informed in advance of the possibility of retention of a student at a grade level.
  - Assure that efforts will be made to remediate the student’s difficulties before he/she is retained.
  - Assign to the principal the final responsibility for determining promotion, placement, or retention of each student.

CURRICULUM

HANDWRITING

We will be learning the modern manuscript style of handwriting. This type of writing does not have the tails at the end of the letters that have been used in the past. We will emphasize top to bottom and left to right strokes with our letters. We will practice writing our names using a capital letter at the beginning and the rest of the letters being lowercase.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

We will be using Heggerty Phonemic Awareness:The Skills That They Need to Help Them Succeed! Program. Phonemic awareness is the basis for literacy and reading instruction. Phonemic Awareness is the most potent predictor of success in learning to read (Stanovich, 1984, 1996). It is an auditory training process. It is the awareness of letters, the sounds those letters make, and how those sounds are put together to make the words that we speak (and eventually write).

LITERACY/READING

Our district has selected new literacy instructional materials, called Being A Reader. We, also, will continue to use the reading framework of The Literacy Collaborative to teach reading and writing skills. This includes Interactive Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Writing About Reading, Interactive Writing, Shared Writing, Word Study, and Guided Reading. Staff are also being trained in the Science of Reading.

WRITING

Children will spend the year learning and producing different styles of writing (narrative, informational, and opinion). This will be done in a workshop fashion, much like reading. The children will spend the majority of the workshop time doing actual writing.

PHONICS

We will be teaching your child phonics using the UFLI (University of Florida's Literacy Institute) program. This follows the Science of Reading giving your child systematic explicit, structured instruction in the area of phonics.

BIG IDEAS

The Board of Education's adopted curriculum for math is Big Ideas. It is aligned with the Ohio Learning Standards for Kindergarten Mathematics. We will also be using a Math Workshop Framework.

SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Science units include the study of plants, animals, the earth, weather, matter, and motion. Social Studies units include the study of historical people and events, families and communities, community helpers, and holidays and traditions. The units for both of these subjects will be incorporated into all other areas of learning.

BEHAVIOR PLAN

The Van Wert City Schools implements Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) mandated by the state of Ohio. We work with children on the character traits of Cougar Cubs in all physical areas of the building. Specifically,
C: Cougar Respect
U: Unity
B: Be Responsible
S: Safe Actions

We have a PBIS committee in the building who have attended training about how to implement this program. All classrooms are encouraged to use a pom-pom system for individual, classroom, and building rewards.

Teachers also use two other curriculums, Skill Streaming and Zones of Regulation to help maintain self-regulation skills while at school. All staff are also training in Safe Crisis Management to help children maintain self-regulation skills and safe actions for themselves and others in their classrooms.

Title 1 - *Annual Notice To Parents Regarding Teacher Qualifications*

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Our school receives federal funds to Title 1 programs that are a part of ESSA legislation.

As part of this act, we want to provide you with this annual parent notice.

As a parent of a kindergarten student at the Van Wert Early Childhood Center, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teacher(s) who instruct your child. Federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teachers, and requires us to give you this information in a timely manner if requested.

Specifically, you have the right to ask for the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

A. Whether the Ohio Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.

B. Whether the Ohio Department of Education has decided that said teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.

C. The teacher's college major; whether the teacher has an advanced degree, and, if so, the subject area(s) of the degree.

D. Whether any paraprofessionals provide services to your child, and, if they do, their qualification.

If you would like to receive any of this information, please contact the superintendent's office.

Thank you for your involvement in your child's education.

KINDERGARTEN WORDS

THE LIST OF WORDS YOUR CHILD WILL BE EXPOSED TO IN KINDERGARTEN

a	again	all	am	an
and	any	are	as	at
ball	be	because	been	big
black	blue	book	both	boy
brown	by	can	can’t	come
could	dad	day	did	do
does	down	eat	eight	five
for	four	friend	from	get
girl	go	goes	good	got
gray	green	had	has	have
he	her	here	him	his
home	how	I	if	in
into	is	isn’t	it	jump
like	little	look	make	man
many	me	mom	my	nine
no	not	now	of	on
one	or	orange	out	people
pink	play	purple	put	ran
read	red	run	said	sat
saw	say	says	see	seven
she	should	sit	six	so
talk	ten	that	the	their
then	there	they	this	three
to	too	two	up	us
very	walk	want	was	water
we	went	were	what	where
white	who	will	with	would
yellow	yes	you	your	

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

While in some instances that possession and use of electronic equipment or devices by a student at school may be appropriate, often the possession and use of such equipment or devices by students at school can have the effect of distracting, disrupting and/or intimidating others in the school environment and leading to opportunities for academic dishonesty and other disruptions of the educational process. Consequently, the Board of Education will supply any electronic equipment or devices necessary for participation in the educational program. Students shall not use or possess any electronic equipment or devices on school property or at any school-sponsored activity without the permission of the principal, the classroom teacher, bus driver or advisor/coach.

Examples of prohibited devices include, but are not limited to cameras (photographic and/or video), laptops, tablets (e.g., iPad-like devices), smartphones, e-readers (e.g., Kindle-like devices), personal digital assistants (PDAs), lasers, laser pens, or pointers, radios, “boom-boxes”, headphones, portable CD/MP3 players, portable TV’s, electronic games/toys, pagers/beepers, other paging devices or recording devices, or other devices with one- or two-way audio communication technology.

Students are prohibited from using electronic equipment or devices in a manner that may be physically harmful to another person (e.g. shining a laser in the eyes of another student). Further, at no time may any camera or other electronic equipment/device be utilized by a student in a way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed, or intimidated. See Policy 5517.01 - Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior. In particular, students are prohibited from using a camera or other electronic construed as harassment or disparagement of others based upon their race, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation/transgenter identity), age, disability, religion, or political beliefs; and (2) send, share, view or possess pictures, text messages, e-mails or other materials or a sexual nature (i.e., sexting) in electronic or any other form. Violation of these prohibitions shall result in disciplinary action. Furthermore, such actions will be reported to local law enforcement and child services as required by law.

Students are prohibited from using cameras and other electronic equipment/devices to capture, record or transmit test, information or any other information in manner constituting fraud, theft, or academic dishonesty. Similarly, students are prohibited from using cameras and other electronic equipment and devices to capture, record, or transmit the words (i.e. audio) and/or images (i.e. pictures/video) of any student, staff member or other person in the school or while attending a student-related activity, without express prior notice and explicit consent for the capture and/or recoding of such words or images. Using a camera or other electronic equipment/devices to capture, record or transmit audio and/or pictures/video of an individual without his/her consent is considered an invasion of privacy and is not permitted, unless authorized by the building principal. Camera and electronic equipment/devices are expressly banned from and may not be possessed, activated, or utilized at any time in any school situation where a reasonable expectation of personal privacy exists. These locations and circumstances include but are not limited to locker rooms, shower facilities, restrooms, classrooms and any other areas where students or others may change clothes or be in any stage or degree of disrobing or changing clothes. The building principal has authority to make determinations as to other specific locations and

situations where possession of a camera or other equipment/device is absolutely prohibited.

Unauthorized electronic equipment and devices will be confiscated from the student by school personnel and disciplinary action taken.

Any electronic equipment/device confiscated by District staff will be marked in a removable manner with the student's name and held in a secure location in the building's central office until it is retrieved by the parent/guardian. Electronic equipment/devices in District custody will not be searched or otherwise tampered with unless school officials reasonably suspect that the search is required to discover evidence of a violation of the law or other school rules (e.g. a student is observed using a camera in a prohibited area). Any search will be conducted in accordance with Policy 5771 - Search and Seizure.

Students are personally and solely responsible for the care and security of any electronic equipment or devices they bring to school. The Board assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, damage or vandalism to electronic equipment and devices brought onto its property, or the unauthorized use of such devices.

This information is per Van Wert City Schools Board of Education Policy.