

WHITEHALL CITY SCHOOLS

Student Handbook

2026-27

C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Center



C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Center

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Motto

“We are relationship-driven, resilient, resourceful, and ready!”

Vision

Whitehall City Schools will ignite a passion for innovation to grow resourceful, resilient, and future-ready students.

Mission

Whitehall City Schools maximizes relationships and innovation to empower growth, adaptability, positivity, creativity, and accountability for all.

Board of Education

Lorena A. Lacey | President
Jayne Shannon | Vice President
Leo Knoblauch
Dr. Joanne Lunceford
Kyra Thorpe

Superintendent

Dr. Sharee Wells

THE RAMS WAY

Respectful

R

Be Respectful & Kind

Treat and speak to everyone in the school community with kindness and respect. Act thoughtfully and speak with empathy.

Think the Best of Others

Listen with an open mind, try to understand different perspectives, and give others the benefit of the doubt.



Accountable

A

Share Concerns Responsibly

Share concerns directly with the right person and work through them respectfully.

Protect Privacy

Respect personal information and keep private matters private to build trust and protect one another.



Motivated

M

Build Strong Relationships

Be friendly, welcoming, and supportive. Make time to listen, connect, and build trust.

Focus on Solutions

Work together to solve problems, stay positive, and focus on what helps the district grow and improve.



Safe

S

Respect Differences & Expectations

Honor differences and follow school expectations so everyone feels valued, included, and safe.

Work Together as One Community

Support one another and work as a team to create a safe and positive learning environment.



The RAMS Way outlines how students, staff, and families work together to build a respectful, supportive school community.

RELATIONSHIPS ALWAYS MATTER

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RELATIONSHIPS ALWAYS MATTER

Welcome to the Whitehall City School District's

C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Center

Located on The Kae Avenue Literacy Campus

We are proud of our vibrant early childhood education program where children are encouraged to share and play with their peers. Through these fun interactions, they develop important interpersonal skills that will help them get along with others in preschool and beyond.

Our dedicated staff is committed to meeting the individual needs of every student, and we look forward to partnering with you. We encourage you to take the time to read through this handbook to get familiar with our school processes and procedures.

Our goal is for your student to have a delightful, adventurous, and wonderful school year. By collaborating, we can make this a reality. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can assist you further.

Sincerely,

Dr. Wells

Sharee Wells, Ed.D.
Superintendent

WELCOME TO THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR!

Dear Families,

We welcome you to the C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Program and Whitehall Early Childhood Education Program located on the Kae Avenue Elementary School Literacy Campus - where the world awaits! We are excited to be a part of your child's educational foundation.

THE KAE AVENUE LITERACY CAMPUS VISION

By the end of first grade, each Kae Avenue student will have the necessary skills to proficiently be an active reader. An active reader has the foundational skills of understanding words, has quality conversations about words, and uses those skills and conversation to move to independence in comprehension of text for purpose and enjoyment.

THE KAE AVENUE LITERACY CAMPUS GOAL

A student who is an active reader:

- Demonstrates understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (consonant sounds and long and short vowel sounds in single-syllable words).
- Knows and applies phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding one-syllable and multisyllabic words (minimum of 2 syllables), this includes spelling/sound, diagraphs, and blends.
- Reads grade level tests with sufficient accuracy and fluency with purpose and understanding

In order to maximize the acquisition of early literacy skills, the District has identified key considerations that are essential in assuring reading mastery by first grade:

- the essential content of instruction
- the amount of time spent learning
- the strengths and areas of growth for all students
- the classroom and school environment
- the opportunity for collaboration among teachers and students

ASSESSMENT AND SCREENING INFORMATION

Upon enrollment, development, speech, hearing, vision screenings are conducted for each child.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is completed on children 3 to 5 years old. These screenings are required to be completed within 30 calendar days in order to meet Step Up to Quality and Licensing regulations.

The screenings determine how staff will implement classroom activities that meet the individual strengths and needs of children. Results are shared with parents in writing and during conferences or a Home Visit.

CURRICULUM

All programs will use Project Ready! Curriculum as a framework to compare data from assessments to plan individualized instruction for each child. The curriculum was chosen because it addresses the domains of learning as mandated by The Ohio Department of Education for School Readiness. The program utilizes ASQ-3 as a developmental screening tool and The Ohio ELA (Early Learning Assessment) as a comprehensive assessment.

The program provides environments which support the child's educational development in the areas of:

- Language and Literacy
- Fine and gross motor
- Cognitive
- Social and Emotional Approaches to Learning
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical and Health
- Creative Arts

ENROLLMENT

The following items must be on file in the school's office when your child starts his/her first day: 3 proofs of residency, birth certificate, parent ID, enrollment packet papers, custody papers. State law requires the following: Immunization records for each student upon the time of enrollment and four-year old children must have four Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis, three Oral Polio Vaccines, One Measles, Mumps and Rubella, and three or four Hemophilic Influenza Type B.

FAMILY SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

After-School Functions for Families & Staff – Family Engagement opportunities, Annual Spring Art Show, Little Rams Kindergarten Round-Up, and Math and Literacy nights.

Anti-Harassment, Anti-Bullying Statement (HB 276)

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying behavior by any student/personnel in the Whitehall City Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, in accordance with House Bill 276, means any intentional written, verbal, graphic or physical acts including electronically transmitted acts, i.e. Internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (POA) or wireless hand-held device, either overt or covert, by a student or group of students toward other students/school personnel with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule or humiliate. Such behaviors are prohibited on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school provided transportation or at any official school bus stop that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, should know, will have the effect of:

1. Causing mental or physical harm to the other student/school personnel including placing reasonable fear of physical harm and/or damaging of student/personnel property: and
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or educational environment for the other student/school personnel.

Children's Book or Toy Lending Library – Books are available in the Main Lobby for families to choose to take home and return at their own convenience on the Honor System. Also available by request from teachers and the office.

Family Meetings, Seminars or Support Groups – Family Nights/Events throughout the school year listed on Whitehall Schools/ C. Ray Williams calendar.

Family Resource Library – Resources are available in the main lobby in areas of Health, Education, Community Services, Language Classes and Numerous Support Systems. Numerous other resources are available in the office.

Information and Referral to Supportive Services Regarding Family Issues – Center of Hope

(Counseling, Clothes, Food, Furniture Bank (referral from Social Worker is required), Cap 4 kids (teenage services)

Parent Teacher Conferences - Parents are provided opportunities to impact their child's learning experience by participating in two regularly scheduled conferences.

A conference/phone conference can be scheduled at any time by contacting your child's teacher.

During these meetings/phone calls, teachers will discuss your child's progress, share samples of your child's work and review other important information.

Parents are also encouraged to share information about their child and family, offer suggestions for classroom activities and discuss any concerns during these meetings.

PROGRAM / Eligibility

- All families must be residents of Whitehall.
- All programs are licensed by the Ohio Department of Education.
- All classrooms have degreed teachers in Early Childhood Education.
- All children receive nutritious meals at no additional cost.
- All programs' curricula focus on skills to ready your child for kindergarten.

WHITEHALL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

The classrooms are a combination of preschoolers with disabilities and typically developing peer models. Each classroom has a total of 16 children. The program has both full and half-day options - Tuesday through Friday.

The C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Programs believe that children with special needs can benefit from inclusion in a typical classroom setting. Staff works with parents and specialists to develop individualized programs and adapt their strategies to meet the unique needs of each child.

ARRIVAL (Drop Off) & DEPARTURE (Pick Up)

****Pay close attention to the “starting” and “doors open” times, as NO children or adults will be permitted into the building before that time****

The Etna Road Loop will ONLY be available for car riders for families that have been given a CAR DASHBOARD PASS and/or a handicap placard.

*These must be clearly displayed in order to enter the driveway.

ALL OTHERS: Will be considered “hand to hand” and will need to park at John Bishop Park and walk students to assigned entry/dismissal doors.

DASHBOARD PASS (Special Education Preschool) Procedures for BOTH Arrival and Departure:

1. Driver pulls into the loop and **stays in the vehicle**
2. A staff member will approach your car and assist your child in exiting the vehicle.
3. Once your child is out of the vehicle, please depart so that we can greet other students.

Center staff will only release your child to persons who are listed on the **Authorization for Pick up Form**, which you can receive from the office. All changes to this form must be made in writing by the parent/guardian.

All persons picking up a child must have proper identification.

If an emergency arises and someone other than those listed on the Authorization for Pick up Form or the Emergency Contact Form must pick up your child, you must notify the Program staff of this change: otherwise, your child will not be released to that person.

C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Program's responsibility ends when the child has been signed out from the staff's care.

C. RAY WILLIAMS EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Each classroom consists of 11 students who are 3 or 4 years old. The students' family must qualify for a Grant from The Ohio Department of Education. Qualifying is based upon family size and gross yearly income up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and the Whitehall City Schools Approved Sliding Fee Scale. Tuition can range from \$0 and up based on the Sliding Fee Scale. The program is a full-day program, Monday through Friday.

CUSTODY ISSUES

C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Programs recognize the importance of both parents in a child's life.

We provide services to both parents of an enrolled child, thereby complying with the legal rights of each parent to be involved in the C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Program.

Information given to each parent is strictly limited to child progress and health restrictions and/or personal information and will not include any family information.

Court ordered, visitation schedules, and /or restricting orders will be enforced. Please give a copy of custody papers upon enrollment.

The center does not take sides during a custody disagreement. Each parent has the right to complete a separate "Emergency Contact Form" for the days that he/she has scheduled visitation.

If custody issues change during the school year, please bring all documents to the main office.

PARENT ACCESS POLICY

Any parent of a child enrolled in the program shall be permitted unlimited access to the school during its hours of operation to contact their child, evaluate the care provided by the program, the premises, or for other purposes approved by the director. Upon entering the premises, the parent shall report to the school office.

RESTING TIME

All children at the program more than 5 hours a day are required by licensing to rest for one hour. Children must remain on their cots and a staff member is always present. Cots, soft music and soft lighting are provided for rest time in the classroom.

SAFETY OF CHILDREN

The safety of your child is our primary concern. To help us with this, parents complete a "Child Enrollment and Health Information Form". The form must include at least 2 local emergency contacts with working numbers and available transportation.

It is very important that you notify your child's program immediately if your address, phone number and/or emergency numbers change. We must have a current telephone number where you or the emergency contact person can be reached at all times.

In case of an emergency, please call 614-417-5680.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

Children enrolled in C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Programs receive continuous supervision and care from authorized adults.

The C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Program personnel policies prohibits leaving a child unattended and/or exposed to risk.

Children are always with an adult when in the classroom, going to the restroom, cafeteria or outside.

TRANSPORTATION -Special Education Students ONLY

A parent/guardian or other designated adult must wait with your child until the bus arrives and wait for the bus when he/she is returned home.

During arrival and departure, students with bus transportation are escorted by preschool aides to the appropriate bus. Each child gives their bus card to the driver upon exiting the bus, and the driver collects the card, matching the name and address. Each child also has their name and bus number on a tag on their backpack.

In case of an emergency, you must notify the Transportation Department at 614-417-5140, if someone other than designated persons from the Authorization List for Pick up will be waiting for the bus.



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Vehicular crashes are the leading cause of death for children. I am writing to you today because buckling up is the best way to save lives and reduce injuries. Using the correct car seat or booster seat can be a lifesaver. It seems like such a simple thing, yet every day thousands of children are at risk on the road because they are not buckled up. It is important as a parent to know how to effectively use car seats, booster seats, and seat belts and to use them on every trip, no matter how short. Recognize the safest way to buckle up changes as a child grows. Ensure your child(ren) is always buckled into an age & size appropriate car/booster seat. Children under 12-years-old should ALWAYS be buckled in the back seat. Help them learn to wear their seatbelts regularly by using yours as well.

I am personally seeing far too many of our students not being buckled into the appropriate child restraint system during student drop off and pick up times. It is the law and officers will be writing citations for child restraint for the safety of our students. I have included the law at the bottom of this letter for your reference.

Thank you for helping me keep our students safe,

Tanner Williams #94
School Resource Officer

Section 4511.81 | Child restraint system

When any child who is in either or both of the following categories is being transported in a motor vehicle, the operator of the motor vehicle shall have the child properly secured in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards:

- (1) A child who is less than four years of age;
- (2) A child who weighs less than forty pounds.

When any child who is less than eight years of age and less than four feet nine inches in height, who is not required by division (A) or (B) of this section to be secured in a child restraint system, is being transported in a motor vehicle, the operator of the motor vehicle shall have the child properly secured in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions on a booster seat that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards.

IN CASES OF EMERGENCY

If an emergency arises and someone other than those listed on the Release of Child Information form must pick up your child, you must notify the center staff immediately about the change.

The designated person must show proper identification in order for your child to be released to him/her. If you do not let the center know you are unable to pick up your child we will attempt to contact you and the individuals listed on the Release of Child Information Form. After an hour of repeated attempts to reach you or those you have designated, we will notify Franklin County Children Services (FCCS). We will arrange to have your child taken to FCCS at 4071 E. Main Street by the appropriate police personnel. A member of our staff will accompany your child and provide your contact information to FCCS staff. The FCCS Hotline is 614-229-7000.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

The Kae Avenue Literacy Campus Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) provides policies and procedures on how to respond to all-hazard emergency incidents. This plan has been customized to meet the specific and unique needs, capabilities and circumstances found at Kae Avenue Campus.

The plan outlines the expectations of school staff and students as well as providing authority for personnel to enact the plan as needed. The plan identifies internal and external communications: training and sustainability: authority and references as defined by state mandates and actions the school will use for prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery. Plan is available upon request in the office.

INCIDENT AND INJURY REPORT

In the event of an incident/injury, a report will be completed and given to the person picking up the child the same day. Some examples of an incident/injury include: the child has an illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid: the child receives a bump or blow to the head: the child has to be transported by emergency squad: or an unusual or unexpected event occurs which jeopardizes the safety of the child. If a child requires emergency transportation, the report shall be available within 24 hours after the incident occurs.

The school is required to contact the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) within 24 hours when a "general emergency" or "serious incident, injury or illness" occurs. A written report will be provided to the Ohio Department of Education within 3 days of the incident.

Parent notification and signature are required.

FIELD TRIP PERMISSION AND SAFETY

Prior to each field trip, the center staff will send home a field trip permission slip and parent reminder, which provides the date, location and time of the scheduled field trip. Parents must return the signed permission slip for their child to attend the field trip.

Adults that are trained in First Aid and CPR are present for each field trip and also ride the bus. The First Aid kits and each child's emergency information are accessible during field trips. During the field trip, each staff member will have specific children to supervise. Before departing and upon arrival at the destination, another count will be taken to ensure that all of the children have safely arrived. This process will be repeated before leaving the destination and again when returning to the school.

HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)

There are occasional cases of head lice within our student population. This can happen in any institution where people come in close contact with one another. Parents will be given information on the treatment and follow-up for head lice. Immediate treatment is essential to control this condition. If a student has been identified as having live lice on 3 or more occurrences, it will be considered chronic and at that time a meeting between the parent, school nurse, social worker and anyone else that it pertains to will be called. At the meeting a plan will be set up to help the family eradicate the lice infestation.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

Limited Exposure to communicable diseases is an expected part of a young child's experience. If your child has a communicable disease, please keep them home until your physician tells you the child may return. Some illnesses may require a doctor's statement for the child's return. Please keep the center informed of your child's recovery.

SICK CHILD POLICY/ ISOLATED CHILD

Please do not send your child to school if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

Temperature of 100 degrees - in combination with other signs of illness

- Diarrhea (2 or more abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period)
- Severe coughing (causing the child to become red in the face or make a whooping sound) Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching
- Untreated skin patches, unusual spots or rashes
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation
- Vomiting 2 times or when accompanied by any other sign of illness, sore throat or difficulty swallowing.
- Any child demonstrating signs of illness not listed above will be carefully observed and isolated for symptoms.
- If a child does not feel well enough to participate in school activities, the parent will be called to pick up the child.

Anytime a child is isolated, they will be kept within sight and hearing of a staff member. The cot and any linens used will be washed and disinfected before being used again.

Parents will be notified by a sign on the door, or sign on the sign-in table, or a note sent home, if children have been exposed to a communicable illness. Children will be readmitted to the school after at least 24 hours of being free of fever without any medicine and other symptoms. If they are not symptom free, a doctor's note will be required stating that the child is not contagious.

At Whitehall City Schools, we take the health and well-being of our students seriously. The goal of the nursing staff is to keep students healthy and in school. There are occasions when students will be sent home or asked to remain out of school. These include:

- Vomiting – A student will be sent home and may return to school once he or she has been free from vomiting for 24 hours without the use of medication or with a physician's note deeming the student is not contagious. Exceptions are made for students with a related documented medical condition on file.
- Diarrhea – A student will be sent home if he or she is complaining of persistent diarrhea and may return after the student has been free from diarrhea for 24 hours without the use of medication, or with a physician's note deeming the student is not contagious. Exceptions are made for students with a related documented medical condition on file.

- Fevers – A student will be sent home with a temperature of 100.4 or higher. A student may return when he or she is fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (Tylenol and Ibuprofen).
- Any symptoms/illness that significantly impairs a student's ability to learn at the discretion of the nursing staff.

Parents will be asked to pick up students that are displaying any of the above symptoms. The nursing staff advises having back-up plans for sick students and updated contact information in Infinite Campus. If a student is displaying any of the above symptoms prior to the start of the school day, please call and speak to your students' nursing team member for directions. If there are any questions regarding these procedures, please reach out to your students' nursing team members.

MEDICATION POLICY

If it is determined by a physician that it is medically necessary for your child to receive medication during center attendance, a "Medication Administration Form" must be completed by the physician and the parent. Prescription and non-prescription medication must be in its original container with the label containing exact dosage information. (To include: child's name, current date and the means of administration). A nurse or health aide will consult and provide any additional training or education about prescribed medications. Medications will be stored and locked in a cabinet or locked box in the refrigerator. Medications will only be given by trained staff.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

To benefit from the curriculum and full services of the program, it is very important for children to attend classes daily. Based on the hours of operation, parents are expected to arrive and depart on time.

If, for some reason your child cannot attend school, please call 614-417-5680, to report the nature of the absence and date of return. If you cannot call, please send a note upon your child's return to school indicating the reason for the absence.

Attendance for Pre-K is not mandatory, however, because the school program is funded by the ODEW Grant, continued enrollment will be based on your child's attendance.



DISTRICT INFORMATION

Expectations, Forms, and Policies

ATTENDANCE & DISMISSAL

Absences and Excuses (Board Policy: JED)

Regular attendance by all students is very important. In many cases, irregular attendance is—the major reason for poor schoolwork; therefore, all students are urged to make appointments, do personal errands, etc., outside of school hours. Work missed through absences is difficult to make up. There is no substitute for the actual participation in the daily classroom discussion and work.

Medically Excused Absences

Reasons for which students may be medically excused include, but are not limited to:

- Personal illness of the student.
- Illness in the student's family requires the presence of the child.
- Quarantine for contagious disease.
- Emergency or other set of circumstances in which the judgment of the Superintendent constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school, which may include, but not be limited to, absences due to documented medical, behavioral, or dental appointments.

Non-Medically Excused Absences

Reasons for which students may be non-medically excused include, but are not limited to:

- Needed at home to perform necessary work directly and exclusively for parents or legal guardians for a limited period of time when approved in advance by the Superintendent (applies to students over 14 years of age only when all statutory obligations have been met for such excusal).
- Death in the family (applies to absences of up to 18 school hours unless a reasonable cause may be shown for a longer absence).
- Observance of religious holidays is consistent with the truly held religious beliefs of the student or the student's family.
- Traveling out of state to attend a Board-approved enrichment activity or extracurricular activity (applies to absences of up to 24 school hours).
- College visitation.
- **Career and Workforce Technical Exploration (HB 98 Compliance):** Job interviews, vocational assessments, or formal presentations/interviews with career-technical education programs or certified skilled trade representatives.
- **Military Enlistment & Support (HB 98 Compliance):** Pre-enlistment reporting, processing at a military enlistment processing station, or absences of a student of a

military family for purposes of visiting their parent, legal guardian, or custodian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services called to duty, on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment.

- Absences due to a student's placement in foster care, change in foster care placement, or any court proceedings related to their foster care status.
- Absences due to a student being homeless.
- Other reasons, as determined by the Superintendent.

Attendance Reporting & Absence Procedures

Daily Absence Notification

If a child is absent, parents are required to call the school before 9:00 a.m. to inform the staff of the child's absence. School telephone numbers are listed after the cover page. A message can be left on voicemail, as it is checked regularly.

The District makes an attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or other person having care of a student who has not notified the school of the student's absence that day regarding that student's absence without a legitimate excuse **within 120 minutes of the start of the school day**. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to determine and use the appropriate notification procedure and methods consistent with State law.

Return to School

Parents shall send a note explaining the absence to the child's teacher when the child returns to school. In that note, parents should state if the child is contagious or needs special attention. Notes provide necessary attendance documentation for the building staff.

Each absent student must immediately, upon return to school, make arrangements with his/her teacher(s) to make up for missed work. Students who are absent from school for reasons not permitted by State law may or may not be permitted to make up work; each case is considered on its merits by the principal and the respective teacher(s). Students who are absent due to an in-school or out-of-school suspension are permitted to make up missed classroom assignments in accordance with District-level policies and procedures.

Family Vacations

The Board does not believe that students should be excused from school for vacations or other non-emergency trips. The responsibility for such absences resides with the parent(s), and they must not expect any work missed by their child to be retaught by the teacher. If the

school is notified in advance of such a trip, reasonable efforts are made to prepare a general list of assignments for the student to do while he/she is absent.

Driving Privileges Suspension

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to establish a hearing and notification procedure for the purpose of denying a student's driving privileges if that student of compulsory school age has been absent without legitimate excuse for more than 60 consecutive hours during a school month or a total of at least 90 hours during a school year.

District Absence Intervention Strategies

The district will use a continuum of strategies to reduce student absence, including, but not limited to:

- Notification of student absences to the parent and guardian.
- Development and implementation of an absence intervention plan, which may include supportive services for students and families.
- Counseling.
- Parent education and parenting programs.
- Mediation.
- Intervention programs available through juvenile authorities.
- Referrals for truancy, if applicable.

Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism

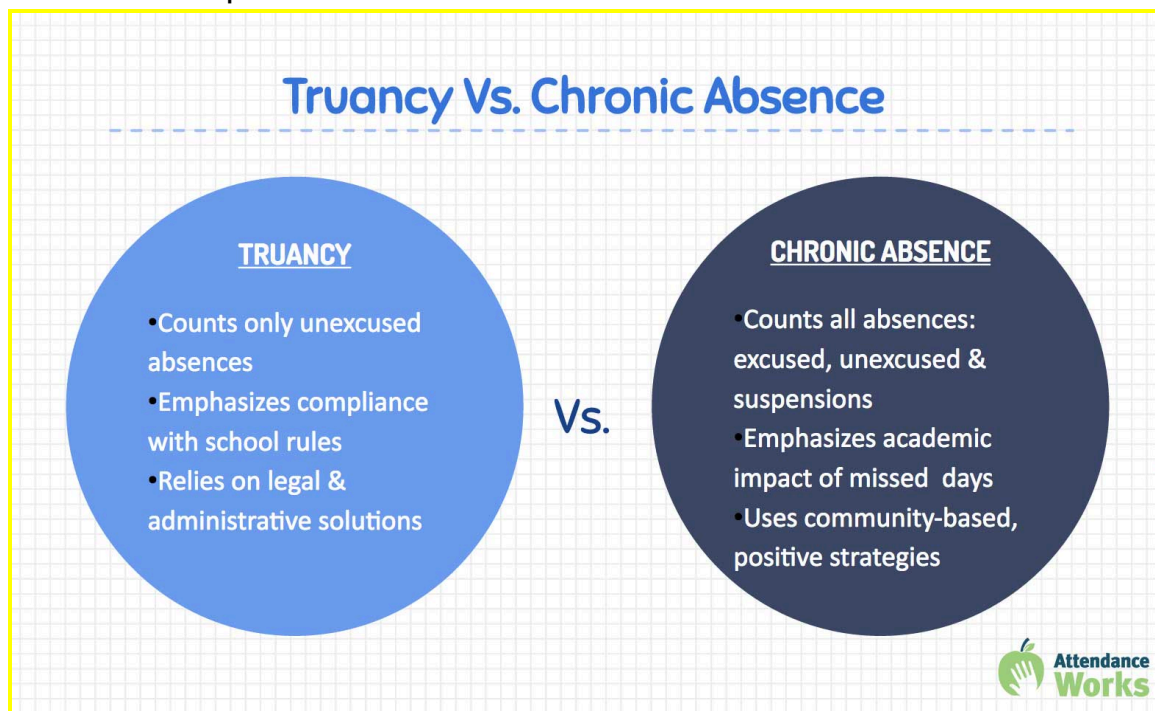
Habitual Truancy

A student is legally classified as a habitual truant when they miss school **strictly without a legitimate excuse**. Triggering this tier requires the school to form an Absence Intervention Team with the family within 7 to 10 days to build a formal, mandatory attendance correction plan. Under state law, uniform access opportunities for armed forces recruiters, certified skilled trades, or vocational programs cannot be coded as unexcused.

- **Consecutive Track:** Absent **30 or more consecutive hours** without a legitimate excuse.
- **Monthly Track:** Absent **42 or more hours** in one school month without a legitimate excuse.
- **Annual Track:** Absent **72 or more hours** in one school year without a legitimate excuse.

Chronic Absenteeism

A student is considered chronically absent if they miss **10% or more of the school year** for any reason (excused or unexcused). This metric serves as an overarching indicator of academic risk and is a key benchmark used by the administration when evaluating long-term student development, intervention success, and class retention decisions.



Illness Accommodation Protocols

Multi-Day Illness

If a student is anticipated to be absent for multiple days, it is the parent's responsibility to contact the school for daily assignments.

- Parents must give teachers a **24-hour notice** to prepare homework assignments for ill children.
- Teachers will select assignments that should be made up and how much review and remedial work will be required.
- Parents are encouraged to help with directions and give examples, but all work must be done independently.

Extended Illness/Recovery (Virtual Home Instruction)

If a student requires an extended period of absence due to chronic illness or the need to recover from an injury or surgery, the district can provide virtual home instruction to assist the student in staying current with school work.

A letter from a medical professional is **REQUIRED**. The letter must include a general description of the condition making home instruction necessary and an estimated date of return to school. To initiate this process, please contact the Special Services office at **(614) 417-5013**.

School Day Arrival & Dismissal Routines

Arrival Safety

Students should not arrive at school before the start of breakfast. Teachers and staff are not on duty prior to this time, and there will be no adult supervision. If a child arrives after the official start of the school day, he/she must report directly to the main office to sign in before going to the classroom.

General Dismissal

Children are expected to leave the building and school grounds immediately upon dismissal. It is important for our students to follow the routine upon dismissal. Please ensure that your child is picked up at the appropriate dismissal time. Be sure to communicate all routine dismissal information to your child's teacher in writing.

Early Sign-Outs

If it is necessary for a child to leave school before dismissal time, a written note must be sent in advance, and an authorized adult must sign the student out through the main office. Please do not interrupt your child's class by going directly to the classroom.

Emergency Dismissal Changes

We understand that emergencies happen and changes to dismissal routines may be needed, however rare. If your child is to be dismissed differently for the day, please send written communication of the change to your child's teacher.

If there is an emergency change to your child's dismissal and you are unable to send written documentation, you must call the main office as soon as possible and **no later than one hour prior to that building's specific school dismissal time** (e.g., 1:55 p.m. for Beechwood, 2:15 p.m. for Etna, 2:35 p.m. for Kae Avenue). The district may not be able to accommodate or safely execute dismissal modifications for students with less than one hour's notice.

Building-Specific Scheduling Addendums

High School Exceptions: Early Release and Late Start

Students at the High School level may be granted an early release or late start in their daily schedule based on course tracks and credit fulfillment.

- **Academic Standing Requirement:** This scheduling flexibility is a privilege, not a right. If a student utilizing either option begins to fail a class, the early release or late start option may be immediately removed from their schedule.
- **Building Clearance:** Students who are granted early release must exit the school building immediately following their last scheduled class bell.

Procedures for Severe Weather and Emergency Events

When severe weather or other emergencies necessitate a school closure, delayed start, or early release, the following measures will be implemented:

Full-Day Closure Procedure

1. **Decision Process**
 - a. When conditions necessitate, the Superintendent may decide to close/cancel school for the entire day.
2. **Notification Methods** The Superintendent will initiate these measures to ensure families and staff are informed quickly and efficiently:
 - a. Local radio and television stations will be notified promptly.
 - b. Updates will be posted on the Whitehall City Schools website and social media accounts.
 - c. Automated phone calls will be sent to households.

Early Release Due To Weather Or Other Emergency Situations

These steps are designed to ensure timely communication and safety during unforeseen events.

1. **Decision Process**
 - a. If conditions warrant closing schools early, the Superintendent may authorize an early release.
 - b. This decision is reserved for extreme circumstances only.

2. Notification Methods

- a. Automated phone calls will be sent to households with accurate contact information.
- b. Updates will be posted on the Whitehall City Schools website and social media accounts.
- c. Local radio and television stations will be informed as early as possible.

Two-Hour Delayed Start

- Schools will open **two hours later** than their usual start time.
- Buses will operate **two hours later** than their regular pick-up schedules.
- Morning preschool programs will be **canceled**.
- Midday pickups and field trips will be **canceled**.
- Breakfast programs will still be **offered**.

School	Normal Start Time	2-Hr Delay Start Time	School Dismissal
C. Ray Preschool AM	9:05 AM	AM Classes Canceled	AM Classes Canceled
C. Ray Preschool PM	12:50 PM	12:50 PM	3:35 PM
Kae Avenue Elementary	9:05 AM	11:05 AM	3:35 PM
Etna Rd. Elementary	8:45 AM	10:45 AM	3:15 PM
Beechwood Elementary	8:25 AM	10:25 AM	2:55 PM
Rosemore Middle	7:45 AM	9:45 AM	2:35 PM
WYHS	8:30 AM	10:30 AM	3:20 PM

Frequently Asked Questions

What Factors Are Considered When Decisions Are Made To Close Schools?

- **Building Conditions**
 - Does the state of the building hinder learning or safe operations?
 - Considerations include access to restrooms, water, acceptable temperatures, and electricity.

- **Ice and Snow Removal**
 - Can school parking lots and sidewalks be cleared for safe use?
- **Road and Sidewalk Conditions**
 - Feedback from transportation staff and local officials determines whether roads and sidewalks are safe for travel to and from school.
- **Weather Trends**
 - Will conditions worsen or improve throughout the day?
- **Temperature and Wind Chill**
 - Current and forecasted ambient temperature and wind chill are assessed.
- **Weather Forecasts**
 - Reliable forecasts help guide decisions.

By law, the Superintendent is responsible for making the final decisions regarding school closings or schedule adjustments.

Where Can Parents And Staff Receive Information About Closings?

- Check local news channels (4, 6, or 10), Infinite Campus, the district website, and school communications for updates on school closings and delays. Notifications are promptly posted on the district's social media platforms and the School Messenger Notification System - Infinite Campus, typically between 5:30 am and 6:30 am.
- Sign up for Infinite Campus for automated alerts about weather-related closings and delays. If you don't have access to the parent portal, email techhelp@wcsrams.org for assistance. Ensure your contact information in Infinite Campus is up-to-date.

How Can Students/Families Prepare For Weather Conditions?

- Plan ahead, adjust your schedule, and check road conditions to ensure a safe and timely arrival at school.
- Take extra time to defrost and warm your vehicle, leave early, and drive cautiously.
- Stay warm by wearing hats, coats, boots, gloves, and extra socks. Dress in layers to stay dry and protected from the cold.

C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Programs will be CLOSED when the Whitehall City Schools are CLOSED, this includes: Holiday Breaks, Snow Days, Professional Development Days - that are listed on the school district calendar.

FOOD SERVICE

Food item(s) are provided and prepared within the school and supplied in accordance with local, state, and federal food preparation and service guidelines.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

The center asks for a two week notice of withdrawal. A withdrawal form provided by the school needs to be completed for withdrawal.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a very important part of our programs. To provide the best services, parents and community volunteers are needed to share their talents, knowledge and skills. Volunteer activity is not required for a child to be in the program.

Licensure requires classroom child/adult ratios of one adult to 10 students. All volunteers will need to provide documentation of current **fingerprints**, medical and BCI & FBI background checks. Parents who volunteer may not bring other children with them to school.

PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Our goal is to resolve concerns promptly, respectfully, and at the lowest level possible.

If you have a concern or complaint related to your child's school experience, we encourage you to follow these steps:

1. **Speak directly with the staff member involved.** Many concerns can be resolved through open and respectful communication.
2. **Contact the staff member's supervisor.** If the concern is not resolved after speaking with the staff member, contact their immediate supervisor. If you are unsure who the supervisor is, please contact the school office for assistance.
3. **Submit a written complaint.** If the concern remains unresolved, you may submit a formal written complaint to the appropriate school administrator.
4. The District is committed to promoting positive communication and effective conflict resolution. Written grievance procedures are posted at the school and are available in the school office upon request.

If you believe additional assistance is needed, you may contact:

- **Ohio Department of Education and Workforce:** 614-466-0224
- **Ohio Ombudsman Office:** 614-728-6699

PARENT ROSTER

A Parent Roster is available in the office for program families **ONLY**. The roster provides the child and parent's names with their phone number if written permission is given. Parents complete a statement indicating if they want their information on the parent list or not. Upon request, approved information will be provided.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Whitehall City Schools is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and positive learning environment where all children can grow, learn, and succeed. Staff use a proactive, preventive, and instructional approach to behavior guidance that focuses on teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors.

Our programs utilize Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and social-emotional learning practices to help children develop the skills necessary for success in school and in life. Staff members intentionally teach, model, and encourage positive behaviors while fostering respectful relationships and a sense of belonging for all students.

Social-Emotional Skills for Success

The following skills are essential for children's social, emotional, and academic development:

- Self-confidence and independence
- Positive relationship-building skills
- Ability to focus, persist, and manage frustration
- Recognition and appropriate expression of emotions
- Listening and following directions
- Social problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills
- Self-regulation and responsible decision-making
- Empathy and respect for others

Research shows that children who develop strong social-emotional skills are better prepared for academic success, healthy relationships, and positive lifelong outcomes. Therefore, our programs intentionally integrate social-emotional learning into daily routines and activities.

Behavior Guidance Practices

Staff work collaboratively with families to support children's development and encourage positive behavior. When behavior concerns arise, staff will use developmentally appropriate strategies such as:

- Teaching and reinforcing expected behaviors
- Redirecting children to appropriate activities
- Providing choices and opportunities for problem-solving
- Modeling positive social interactions
- Supporting children in identifying and expressing their emotions
- Collaborating with families to develop consistent strategies when needed

Prohibited Discipline Practices

To ensure the safety, dignity, and well-being of every child, staff shall not:

- Neglect or leave a child unsupervised.
- Use corporal punishment or any form of physical discipline.
- Use cruel, harsh, humiliating, or unusual punishment.
- Threaten, shame, ridicule, or intimidate a child.
- Use profane, derogatory, or abusive language toward a child or family.
- Delegate responsibility for disciplining other children to a child.
- Use physical restraint except as permitted by law and district policy for emergency safety situations.
- Confine a child in a locked room, enclosed area, or any space from which the child cannot freely leave.
- Punish a child for toileting accidents, failure to eat, or inability to sleep or rest.
- Withhold food, rest, water, or access to restroom facilities.
- Punish an entire group of children because of the behavior of one or a few children.
- Exclude or isolate a child from activities for an extended period of time.

Our goal is to partner with families to create a positive, respectful, and supportive environment where every child can develop the skills needed to become a confident, capable, and successful learner.

OHIO GUIDESTONE PARTNERSHIP



Dear Whitehall Families,

We are pleased to share that we will continue our partnership with OhioGuidestone to provide vital services to the Whitehall community and Whitehall City Schools.

OhioGuidestone and the ADAMH Board of Franklin County are working to provide prevention services for the students in the Whitehall City Schools to help address and prevent behaviors that can put children at high risk for future issues.

OhioGuidestone is a community solutions organization. They offer a unique blend of behavioral health treatment services, skill building programs and prevention opportunities for children and families. They not only help resolve problems that already exist, but teach skills to help individuals become self-sufficient and prevent future obstacles to success. Offered services help individuals not only to survive, but thrive.

Preventative services may include small groups, consultation and crisis intervention. In the event of an urgent or emergent situation, Whitehall City Schools may provide OhioGuidestone with parent/guardian contact information such as parent name, child name, phone number and address.



HEART OF OHIO FAMILY HEALTH



School-Based Health Center

Heart of Ohio Family Health (HOFH) and Whitehall City Schools (WCS) have established a partnership to improve the overall health and wellness of students, staff, and families.

As a WCS student, your child will automatically be enrolled with HOFH services.

School-Based Health Services include and *are not limited to* the following:

- Referrals to and within HOFH specialties for both student and family
- Enrollment in HOFH's 340B Drug Discount Program
 - Provides a 20-95% discount on prescription drugs
- Sliding Fee Scale Discount Program
 - Places a cap on out-of-pocket payments
- HOFH Transportation and Telemedicine
 - Telemedicine is an alternative to traditional health care when a patient has time, transportation, or access constraints. These appointments are performed via telephone or video chat.
 - Transportation services to bring patients from other school locations to the Whitehall-Yearling clinic (or other HOFH clinics, if applicable) for care, and back to school when complete.
- Data Sharing between HOFH and WCS
 - Helps HOFH track health trends and intervention outcomes among the population
 - Can assist with improving the quality of care
- Mentoring and Internship pairings
 - Pairs students with HOFH providers and staff for hands-on educational opportunities through internships and mentor-mentee relationships
 - Ultimate Goal: to pique student interest in clinical careers post-high-school.
- Alternative Penalty Program
 - Utilizes HOFH Behavioral Health services in lieu of (or in addition to) traditional academic penalties such as suspension or expulsion

Parents and guardians have the right to **opt their child out** of the service agreement.

If you **do not** want your child enrolled with **Heart of Ohio Family Health**, you may request a ***School-Based Health Opt Out Form*** from WCS School Nurse: saintj@wcsrams.org



This health center is a Health Center Program grantee under 42 U.S.C. 254b, and a deemed Public Health Service employee under 42 U.S.C. 233(g)-(n).

Administration: 5000 E. Main Street, Columbus, OH 43213 • Tel: (614) 235-5555 • Fax (614) 536-1994

OUTDOOR PLAY

Children are provided opportunities for outdoor play on a daily basis, if weather permits. We will limit the amount of time outside when the temperatures are very warm or very cold.

Children will not be taken outside when the temperature (wind chill and heat index factored in) drop below 30 degrees or rise above 90 degrees, or if there is an air quality alert.

In the event of inclement weather children will have large muscle activities in the building.

Please provide children with the proper clothing so they may be comfortable and safe when they are outside. This includes snow pants, hats, mittens and boots in the winter.

There are two areas for outdoor play for preschool age children. The first is a natural playground with a fenced area for no more than two classrooms (48 children with 4 staff members (75 sq. feet per child) and the courtyard that is an educational learning space for no more than 20 students and two adults.

TRANSITION SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Our goal and commitment is to provide continuity for children's families by helping to make the smoothest possible transition between C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Program, elementary school and other early care and education programs. Children and parents may visit prospective schools and meet teachers and students. Parents are given the opportunity to transfer their child's records from C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Program to the receiving school or center.

Little Rams Round-Up is scheduled in the spring of each year for kindergarten bound students. The families will have the following opportunities: receive registration packet, tour classroom, participate in games/crafts, win prizes, free food and meet Columbus Clippers Mascot, Krash!

C. Ray Williams Early Childhood Program is a program for the entire family. We can assist families with developing individual goals based on the strengths of the family. In developing these goals the school will provide information to help each family access community resources, including job placement, parenting classes and emergency assistance. Support and referrals are provided by the center according to the family's needs using the steps and timeframes set by the family.

NUTRITION SERVICES

Our goal is to promote child wellness by providing nutrition services that supplement and complement those of the home and community. We assist families in meeting each child's nutritional needs while establishing good eating habits that nurture healthy development and promote life-long well-being.

Each child receives meals that meet the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School

Lunch Program guidelines and is provided at no cost to the parent. Tasting is encouraged; however, children are free to reject food if they find it not to their liking.

Nutrition requests for special diets are required to have a physician's statement on file.

HEALTH SERVICES

To start their first day of school the following forms must be current and in your child's file: A copy of the child's up-to-date immunization record. Physical examination signed by a doctor from within the last year on the school's form. Dental examination/screening performed and signed by a dentist on the school's form.

The school has a School Nurse who will review the health and nutrition assessment, dental and physical exam to gather information about your child's health. If we have questions, we will contact you for additional information. Our goal is to keep all children healthy.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

Whitehall City Schools is committed to ensuring that all families have meaningful access to school programs, services, and communications. Free interpretation and translation services are available for parents, guardians, and family members who need assistance with speaking, understanding, reading, or writing in a language other than English.

If you need language assistance for a school program, activity, meeting, or communication:

For Spanish language assistance: • Nicolas Rosales • Phone: (614) 417-5018 • Email: rosalesn@wcsrams.org	For all other languages: • Mary Huggins • Phone: (614) 417-5013 • Email: hugginsm@wcsrams.org
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Language assistance services are provided at no cost to families.

NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The Whitehall City School District is committed to providing an educational and work environment where every individual is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. The District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, religion, sex, economic status, age, disability, military status, or legally acquired genetic information in its educational programs, activities, employment practices, or operations.

District Compliance Officer

The Board of Education has designated the following individual to coordinate the District's compliance with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws:

Doug Shoemaker
Director of Employee Engagement, Partnerships & Legal Services
District Civil Rights and Title IX Coordinator
625 South Yearling Road
Whitehall, OH 43213

Phone: 614-417-5119 | Email: nondiscrimination@wcsrams.org

The Compliance Officer's contact information is published annually in District handbooks and on the District website.

The Compliance Officer is responsible for coordinating the District's compliance with applicable laws, including, but not limited to:

- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)

The Compliance Officer also receives, investigates, and helps resolve reports and complaints of discrimination and retaliation in a prompt and equitable manner.

Reporting Discrimination or Retaliation

Any student, parent, employee, applicant, or community member who believes they have experienced unlawful discrimination or retaliation is encouraged to report the concern as soon as possible. Reports may be made orally or in writing to the Compliance Officer or to any administrator or supervisor.

District employees who become aware of possible discrimination or retaliation are required to promptly report the matter to the Compliance Officer or another appropriate administrator. Any administrator or supervisor receiving a complaint must promptly forward it to the Compliance Officer.

The District has established complaint procedures that are available to all members of the school community. These procedures do not limit an individual's right to pursue remedies available under state or federal law, contact law enforcement, or file a complaint with agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Reports involving sexual harassment will be handled in accordance with the District's Title IX Sexual Harassment policy and procedures.

Interim Measures and Corrective Action

When appropriate, the District may implement supportive or interim measures while a complaint is being reviewed. These measures are intended to maintain equal access to educational programs and activities, protect the safety of those involved, and prevent further discrimination or retaliation.

If an investigation determines that discrimination or retaliation has occurred, the District will take appropriate corrective action to stop the misconduct, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects. Students or employees found to have violated District policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

The District will make every reasonable effort to maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved in a complaint or investigation, consistent with the need to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with legal requirements.

Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment, participates in an investigation, or opposes conduct prohibited by District policy.

DESIGNATION OF REQUIRED TITLE IX COORDINATOR

The following individual has been designated to serve as the District's Title IX Coordinator[s]. Such Coordinator[s] is authorized to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with its responsibilities under Title IX.

Name: Doug Shoemaker

Title: Director of Employee Engagement, Partnerships & Legal Services
District Civil Rights & Title IX Coordinator

Address: 625 S. Yearling Road, Whitehall, OH 43213

Phone number: 614-417-5119

Email: shoemakerd@wcsrams.org

Notification Of Policy

The District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education program or activities, including admission and employment, and is required by Title IX and its implementing regulations not to discriminate in such a manner. Inquiries about the applicability of Title IX and its implementing regulations to the District may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.

Notification Of Grievance Procedure

The District has adopted a grievance procedure to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by Title IX and its implementing regulations. This procedure describes how to report or file a complaint of sex discrimination, how to report or file a complaint of sexual harassment, and how the District will respond.

The District's Policy and Procedures can be found at: [BoardDocs® LT](#)