

Pre-K  
**Pint Size**  
**Panthers**



**Student Parent Handbook**

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**2026-2027**



## **Table of Contents**

|                                                         |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Welcome to Our Classroom!                               | 4     |
| Mission of the Yazoo County School District             | 5     |
| Vision of the Yazoo County School District              | 5     |
| Philosophy of the YCSD Pre-Kindergarten Program         | 5     |
| Learning Principles and Foundations of Pre-Kindergarten | 5     |
| Goals of the YCSD Pre-Kindergarten Program              | 6     |
| School Contact Information                              | 6     |
| Helpful Suggestions and Checklist for Parents           | 7     |
| “Starting the Year Successfully”                        | 7     |
| Separation and Phase-In                                 | 7     |
| Registration and Enrollment Requirements                | 8     |
| Affidavit of Residency                                  | 9     |
| Residence                                               | 10-11 |
| Attendance, Transportation, and School Hours            | 11-12 |
| Nutrition Information                                   | 12    |
| YCSD Dress Code and Attire                              | 12-14 |
| Dress for Males                                         | 12-13 |
| Dress for Females                                       | 14    |
| Health Matters and Services                             | 15    |
| Organizational Procedures and Daily Schedule            | 17    |
| Curriculum, Materials, and Assessment                   | 17-18 |
| A. Curriculum                                           | 17-18 |
| B. Educational Materials                                | 18    |
| C. Assessment                                           | 18    |

|                                                           |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Grading Policy                                            | 19    |
| Parent Information                                        | 19-22 |
| A. Parent Communication                                   | 19    |
| B. Parent Visits/Observations                             | 19    |
| C. Volunteer Participation                                | 19    |
| D. Holidays and Celebrations                              | 19    |
| E. Birthday Policy                                        | 20    |
| F. Personal Belongings                                    | 20    |
| G. Extra Clothes                                          | 20    |
| H. School Supplies                                        | 20    |
| I. Field Trip Information                                 | 20    |
| J. What To Do When You Have a Problem                     | 21    |
| Student Behavior and Discipline                           | 21    |
| A. Student Restraint and Seclusion Policy                 | 21-22 |
| B. School Rules                                           | 22    |
| C. Classroom Rules                                        | 22    |
| Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) | 23    |
| Yazoo County School District Calendar                     | 24    |
| DISCLAIMER                                                | 25    |

## **“Welcome to Our Classroom!”**

Dear Families,

WOW parents, the time has arrived for your child to come to pre-kindergarten, and we are so excited to see you! We would like to welcome you to the 2026-2027 Pre-Kindergarten school year. We are certain, with this being your child's first experience with school, there will be many questions about what to expect.

As we embark on this new school year, we know that you all, as parents, are wondering what the school year will bring, as well as, how successful your child will be. We are going to have a great time together. We will sing songs and read stories, make projects and learn so many wonderful new things. Of course, there will be lots of other new friends who will be waiting to play and learn with your child, too.

Our classroom is all set up with exciting things to do and see, and we are ready to get started! Your child will become an integral part of a most wonderful learning journey. The curriculum for our pre-kindergarten students is entitled **“MS Beginnings Pre-K Curriculum”** organized around 6 thematic units integrating literacy, math, science, social studies, social-emotional connections, STEAM, technology, assessment, and family engagement.

These units include the following:

- (1) Family;
- (2) Friends;
- (3) Wind and Water;
- (4) The World of Color;
- (5) Shadows and Reflections;
- (6) Things that Grow;

Not only will the activities from each of these six thematic units be in full swing, we will also embark on seasonal thematic units on some of the students' favorite interests.

We know that the fun has arrived because you are here. It is our plan for this to be a super fantastic pre-kindergarten year!

Parents, the pre-k years are a time of promise, a time when young children's bodies and minds are growing at an incredible rate. The pre-k years are a time for learning.

Please take the time to get to know your child's teacher, and please share with your child's teacher things that she needs to know in order to help your child be successful and have a great year!

We are looking forward to a great year!

Yazoo County School District Pre-Kindergarten Faculty and Staff

## **Mission of the Yazoo County School District**

Yazoo County School District recognizes that each child is an individual; that all children are creative; that all children need to succeed. Therefore, Yazoo County Schools respect the individual needs of children and emphasize the social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of each child.

## **Vision of the Yazoo County School District**

It is the vision of the Yazoo County School District to create "Next Generation Leaders."

## **Philosophy of the Pre-Kindergarten Program in the Yazoo County School District**

The preschool years are one of the greatest times of discovery, learning and exploration. Children are discovering their feelings, learning life-long social skills and expanding their intellectual horizons by leaps and bounds. The Yazoo County School District Pre-Kindergarten Program provides a safe and supportive environment where your child can develop in all these ways.

Perhaps the most challenging area of growth for preschoolers is their emotional and social development. One of the primary goals of our program is to help children learn the skills of sharing, problem solving, cooperation and expressing feelings and desires verbally. We help children acquire these skills through lots of positive guidance and by role modeling. We want our students to learn the importance of compassion, kindness and respect for all.

We believe that in order to build a strong sense of community within our school, we must begin with each child as an individual. The more children learn about themselves and their abilities, the more confident they will be both about themselves and with interacting and contributing to a group. The main way we promote this self-confidence and self-esteem is by giving children a lot of individual attention on a daily basis.

## **Learning Principles and Foundations of Pre-Kindergarten**

The following principles and foundations are reflected in the learning environment and curriculum in the classroom:

1. Skills and concepts specific to developmental domains developed by the Mississippi Department of Education are foundational to all instruction. (Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children);
  - a) English Language Arts
  - b) Mathematics
  - c) Social Studies
  - d) Science
2. Approaches to Learning
  - a) Social and Emotional Development
  - b) Physical Development
  - c) Creative Expression

3. Learning activities are constructed which acknowledge children advance through similar stages of development, but at individual rates;
4. Children are in an inclusive learning environment that embraces diversity;
5. Children use their senses in the instructional process (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling);
6. Active involvement (exploring, playing, manipulating, and problem solving) is the primary strategy for delivering instruction;
7. Children are taught using a combination of instructional strategies, which includes active involvement in learning;
8. Attitudes and examples from teachers and content in lessons taught reflect a positive problem solving approach;
9. Children have experiences that are sensitive to the value of play, for it is through play that children create their own meaning and learning.

The majority of the instructional delivery is organized around learning centers and responsive interactions among children, and their peers and adults. These experiences provide opportunities for children to acquire skills and concepts through hands-on engaged learning while the teacher is facilitating appropriate language development through conversations.

#### **Goals of the Yazoo County School District Pre-Kindergarten**

- Create a caring community of learners;
- Increase vocabulary and language development;
- Increase competencies and skills in oral language, literacy, writing, listening, thinking, mathematical reasoning, and scientific exploration;
- Increase intellectual growth both cognitively and academically;
- Actively put feelings and desires into words;
- Increase self-direction and independence;
- Discover, ask questions, and explore the world using all five senses;
- Enlarge one's understanding of the world, people, experiences, ideas through discovery and asking questions;
- Build confidence and increase self-esteem; and
- Develop gross and fine motor skills

## **School Contact Information**

### **Bentonia Gibbs Elementary School**

Dr. Andrea Edgecombe; Principal

Brianna Walker; Assistant Principal

Alyson White; Lead Teacher

Dana Rivers; Pre-Kindergarten Teacher

Ellen Jordan; Pre-Kindergarten Teacher

#### **Address:**

10340 Highway 433 West  
Bentonia, MS 39040

**Phone: (662)755-2270**

### **Linwood Elementary School**

Cristin Ware; Principal

Keshia Shaffer; Assistant Principal

April Ketchum; Pre-Kindergarten Teacher

#### **Address:**

3439 Vaughan Road  
Vaughan, MS 39179

**Phone: (662) 673-9191**

## **Helpful Suggestions and Checklist for Parents**

- Photo(s) of child, child with parents, parents alone, anything or anyone important to your child (grandparents, siblings, sitters, relatives, friends, and pets)
- Extra clothes (pants, shirts, sweater, two pairs of socks and underwear) -- Everything must be fully labeled. You can use a laundry pen or "Sharpie" indelible pen.
- In addition to labeling all of your child's extra clothes, please label his/her backpack.
- A blanket and a small sheet for a nap mat
- Accept your child as he/she is and seek out strengths and capabilities;
- Be ready with praise when things are done well;
- Talk about school with your child;
- Guide your child to trust the teacher and those who want the best for him/her;
- Discuss the need for rules in the community, home and school;
- Help your child understand that sharing is necessary in order to get along with others and be part of a group;
- Establish regular routines of sleeping and eating by eating at a scheduled time and setting a specific bed time;
- Teach your child to button, zip, or snap clothing and take care of all toileting needs;
- Read to your child to help develop an appreciation for books;
- Encourage your child to look at and listen to the person talking;
- Take trips to points of interest like museums, planetariums, art displays, concerts and sporting events;
- Give your child opportunities to refine oral language by encouraging him/her to explain and describe experiences; and
- Encourage your child to recognize his/her name.

### **"Starting the Year Successfully"**

In pre-kindergarten, our emphasis begins with the development of strong, warm, trusting relationships. The social environment paves the way for the children to get the most out of the physical environment, as well as our routines and activities. For every child, the first days of the year in pre-kindergarten are filled with new experiences, people and expectations. We try to make this adjustment period as smooth and comfortable as it can be for each child because it serves as a foundation for a happy year at the Center and for future separations and transitions. We ask parents to work with us in creating a bridge between home and school and to help your child establish trusting relationships with their new teachers. It is best to leave treasured objects at home since they are not easily shared and are particularly missed if they get lost at school. We ask that any toys remain at home.

### **Separation and Phase-In**

Helping children to comfortably separate (say good-bye) from their parents is a key component in the program. This may be your family's first experience with separation. Please know that we are sensitive to individual needs and feelings. In order to ease the process, parents and teachers work together to create a bridge between home and our program. We have found that when a parent feels comfortable the child will as well.

The building of a relationship between parents and teachers is the foundation for the child's positive experiences in school. We encourage you to talk openly with the teachers in order to establish positive relationships. Expressing your feelings and needs at this time and all through the year is vital to the success of you and your child's experiences in pre-kindergarten. It is also one of the most important things you can do to establish a working relationship with the staff. Please speak with the teachers after the children have left or arrange for a phone conversation.

The following are suggestions for ensuring a comfortable, supportive phase-in period:

- Share information about your child with the teachers. They will ask questions about your child's routines at home for meals, sleeping and being with you. They are not being intrusive; they want to be able to understand your child better;
- Please inform them of any changes that have happened recently or about to happen during their year in pre-kindergarten. Changes that may seem routine or ordinary to an adult may be regarded as unusual by a young child who has not had as many years of experience in dealing with changes.
- Discuss needs with the teachers;
- Remember, the teachers are trained to understand the developmental stage of our pre-kindergarteners and are skilled at implementing activities and routines in their classrooms that enhance the separation process from home to school;
- Remember, communication with the teachers and your child is the key to a successful experience. Please do not hesitate to voice your questions, concerns and needs.

### **Registration and Enrollment Requirements**

- A. Required Entrance Age and Expectations: A pre-kindergarten child shall have reached the age of four years on or before September 1 and be completely potty-trained.
- B. Required Documents:
  - (1) The child's certified birth certificate;
  - (2) The child's MS certificate of immunization compliance form (Form 121);
  - (3) The child's social security card; and
  - (4) Two (2) proofs of residence in Yazoo County School District (one proof from the **Group One** list of acceptable documents and one proof from **Group Two** list of acceptable documents).

### **Residency Requirements:**

Check one in **Group I** and **Group II** and if applicable check a or b in **Group III**

#### **Group I:**

- a) \_\_\_\_\_ Filed Homestead Exemption Application Form
- b) \_\_\_\_\_ Mortgage Documents or Property Deed
- c) \_\_\_\_\_ Apartment or Home Lease/Rental Agreement  
\*\* Any unofficial Lease Agreement (handwritten or computer-generated) must be notarized.
- d) \_\_\_\_\_ 911 information

## Group II: Acceptable Bills

- e) \_\_\_\_\_ Current Utility Bill (Must be dated within thirty days of enrollment, with a service address)
- f) \_\_\_\_\_ Electricity
- g) \_\_\_\_\_ Gas
- h) \_\_\_\_\_ Landline telephone
- i) \_\_\_\_\_ Cable TV or satellite TV

A driver's license, water bill or voter identification are **not acceptable** as proof of residency.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other Residency documentation may be approved by YCSD Administration

## Group III: Guardianship or Affidavit Guardianship

\_\_\_\_\_ a. Student is living with legal guardian and a certified copy of the Court Decree (or petition), if pending, was received declaring the district resident to be the legal guardian of the student and further declaring that the guardianship was formed for a purpose other than establishing residency for school district attendance purposes.

### **Affidavit of RESIDENCY**

\_\_\_\_\_ b. Custodial parent(s) residing with an adult in a home not owned or rented by the custodial parent(s) will present documents to show legal custody. The non-custodial adult in the home must prove residency through Group I and Group II (above) and sign the affidavit. Affidavits will be checked each semester for updated proofs of residency. **Policy: JBC**

**In addition, the custodial parent(s) will present *three of the items below*:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor or dentist's bill bank statement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Automobile license receipt
- \_\_\_\_\_ Credit card statement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone bill
- \_\_\_\_\_ Insurance policy
- \_\_\_\_\_ State or federal benefit check Salary check stub
- \_\_\_\_\_ IRS Documentation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other residency documentation approved by YCSD administration

**LEGAL REFERENCE: MS Code Annotated 37-15-31 (1993 Supp.) State Board Policy 7301 JFAA 7-17-13**

### **STUDENT LIVING WITH ADULT OTHER THAN PARENT/GUARDIAN:**

If a child is living with an adult other than parents or legal guardians, *in loco parentis* authority will be recognized to establish residency of the minor in situations that include, but are not limited to:

- (a) death or serious illness of the child's parent/guardian;
- (b) abandonment of the child;
- (c) child abuse or neglect;

- (d) unstable family relationships or conditions in the home of the parent/guardian having a detrimental effect on the child; and
- (e) students enrolled in recognized exchange programs residing with a host family.

**(See “RESIDENCE” below)** If all registration/enrollment documents are presented and approved, your child, upon starting school will be screened for pre-kindergarten readiness. The screening instrument(s) utilized are two-fold. One is the Communication and Cognitive sections of the Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI-2 Screening) and the other screening instrument is a District created screener to help determine readiness as well.

The Yazoo County School District Pre-K Program is funded through Title I funds. This program is designed to serve a maximum capacity of 60 children (40 children at Bentonina Gibbs Elementary School and 20 at Linwood Elementary School) with the most academic/developmental needs.

## **Residence**

Residency may be determined in the following manner:

- A. STUDENTS LIVING WITH PARENT(S) OR GUARDIAN(S):** The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a student seeking to enroll must provide this school district with at least two of the items numbered 1 through 5 below as verification of their address. NO post office box as an address will be accepted. Every school year, the parent or legal guardian must submit two (2) current proofs of residency in the Yazoo County School District.

The two (2) proofs of residency **MUST BE** one of the following:

- (1) Filed Homestead Exemption application form OR Current mortgage document or property deed OR Current official home/apartment lease agreement with length of lease included;
- (2) Valid driver's license OR voter identification card;
- (3) Current utility bill (dated within 60 days) showing the service location - Acceptable bills: electricity, gas, water, or landline telephone;
- (4) Automobile Registration receipt;
- (5) Any other document that will objectively and unequivocally establish that the parent or guardian resides within the school district, and in the case of a student living with a legal guardian who is a bona fide resident of the school district such as (Official government documentation - i.e. current tax year return, social security statement, DHS statement, etc.)

**NOTE:** Legal guardian(s) must also provide a copy of the court order appointing guardianship. If a petition for guardianship has been filed and the decree is pending, a certified copy of the filed petition for guardianship must be provided.

If residency is questioned any time throughout the year, the parent/guardian will be required to provide a third proof of residency.

B. **HOMELESS CHILDREN:** When a child is determined to be homeless as defined by the Stewart B. McKinney Act 42 USC Section 11431 (1), 11432 (e) and 11302 (a), this school district shall consider and take enrollment action that is in the best interest of the child pursuant to 42 USC 11432 (e) (3).

C. **STUDENTS LIVING WITH ADULTS OTHER THAN PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIANS:**

- (1) The non-parent(s) claiming district residency must meet the criteria of subparagraph (A) (1) through (5) above, required of a parent or legal guardian;
- (2) The district resident must provide the school with an affidavit stating his or her relationship to the student, and that the student will be living at his/her abode full time, and provide documentation fully explaining the reason(s) (other than school attendance zone or district preference) for this arrangement;
- (3) The superintendent or his/her designee will make the necessary factual determinations as required under this policy. Examples of situations where "in loco parentis" authority of an adult will be recognized to establish residency of the minor include but are not limited to the following:
  - a) Death or serious illness of the child's parent(s) or guardian(s);
  - b) Abandonment of the child;
  - c) Child abuse or neglect;
  - d) Unstable family relationships or undesirable conditions in the home of the child's parents or guardians having a detrimental effect on the child;
  - e) Students enrolled in recognized exchange programs residing with host families.
  - f) Whenever appropriate the person who has assumed responsibility for the care and custody of the child shall be encouraged to obtain legal guardianship of the child.

D. The school district may require additional documentation and verification at any time, and may also make a home visit asking to view your child's living space to confirm and verify residency. If this is asked and refused, then it is assumed that your child does not live at the residence listed on the registration documents.

### **Attendance, Transportation, and School Hours**

A. **Bus Riders:** The Yazoo County School District is providing transportation for pre-kindergarten students this year. It is a privilege to ride the bus not a requirement. Students are expected to follow all safety procedures and precautions in reference to riding the bus to and from school. Bus privileges can and will be taken away with excessive instances of behavior not in line with and conducive to safety for the student, other students riding the bus, and the bus driver.

B. **Arrival and Dismissal:** Students must be dropped off at the between 7:30 a.m. and 7:55 a.m. and must be picked up between 2:30 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. At your child's

particular school site, these times may vary. Please clarify these times with your child's teacher.

- C. **Tardiness:** Students who arrive to school after 7:55 MUST be signed-in by an adult at the front office. Teachers begin their school day promptly in order to maximize the instructional time. When your child arrives late, it requires one member of the teaching team to break away from the classroom instruction to assist him/her, which disrupts his/her learning and the learning of others.
- D. **Early Sign-Out:** Students who are being picked-up before 2:30 must be signed out at the front office.
- E. **Excessive Tardiness, Early Sign-Outs, Absences:** If your child has excessive tardies, early sign-outs, and/or absences, your child will be dropped (unenrolled) from the program. If a student misses more than 5 unexcused days in a term, the student will be dismissed from the Pre-K program.
- F. **Changes in Transportation:** For the protection of the child, the teacher MUST be notified if someone different is picking up your child. A form of identification will need to be shown by anyone picking up your child. In the event of a last minute change, call the school office immediately (located on page 6). When completing student forms, please list the names of individuals who you authorize to pick up your child. Any individual not listed will not be permitted to pick up the child.
- G. **Field Trips:** Students will be transported by bus on field trips when a field trip is appropriate and approved.

### **Nutrition Information**

**Yazoo County School District** participates in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program option of Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This is great news for you! As a part of CEP, all enrolled students of **Yazoo County School District** are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school at **no charge** to your household each day of the school year. No further action is required. Your child(ren) will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee or submit an application.

**Snacks:** Students are responsible for their own snacks; parents should pack students' snacks in their backpack.

### **YAZOO COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT DRESS CODE:**

Optimal learning situations depend on the best possible behavior and attitude of the student. Students are encouraged to take pride in them and to strive to meet public appearance and expectations for success.

Students should be neat and clean, thus reflecting favorably on themselves and the school. Safety, health, and individual dignity provide the basis for any dress code. If clothing is disruptive to the learning situation or if it is embarrassing to others, steps will be taken to deal with the individual student as outlined further below in this approved dress code for students.

It is believed by the administration that parents/legal guardians, as well as teachers, should recognize the main purpose of public education is to provide an education for the students

that will allow them to become productive citizens in our society. Thus, any disruption or concerns, caused by the student, as a result of dress would call for appropriate disciplinary action by the school authorities.

Teachers may, at any time, counsel with students about attire that may not be acceptable. When there is any doubt that students are not adhering to the standards of the approved dress code, the principal or his/her designee will be the final authority.

In summary, all Students are expected to be clean and appropriately dressed for school. Dress and appearance must not present health or safety problems or cause disruption and should encourage a serious approach to school. The Yazoo School District Board of Education prohibits any clothing or grooming that in the principal's judgment may reasonably be expected to cause a substantial disruption of, or interference with, normal school operations. The local school site principal will be the final authority for determining appropriate dress within the framework of the policies, processes, and procedures below.

### **Dress For Males:**

1. Clothing advertising alcoholic beverages, or drug culture or clothing with obscene language or gestures shall not be worn.
2. Shoes shall be worn at all times; however, shower shoes, slides, flip-flops and/or slippers, shoes with wheels shall not be worn. When participating in PE class, students should wear shoes with non-marking soles.
3. Football or other jerseys shall be worn in a manner as not to conceal pants, trousers, and/or jeans, which may be considered "sagging."
4. Shirts, except those with straight hems, shall not be worn unbuttoned.
5. Shirts shall be long enough to cover the stomach.
6. Hats, headscarves, headbands, rollers, sunglasses, or any other headwear, which may interrupt the education process, shall not be worn on campus during normal school hours.
7. Belts shall be fastened.
8. No fraternity jerseys or shirts shall be worn. (Mississippi Code Sec. 37-11-39)
9. Walking shorts shall be worn at an appropriate length of 5 inches above the top of the kneecap.
10. Sleeveless shirts shall not be worn.
11. Bike shorts may not be worn.
12. Grooming or dress styles which could disrupt proper classroom atmosphere or disrupt classroom management will not be condoned.
13. All garments shall be worn in a conventional manner; and
15. Shirts with slits, that expose the midriff, may not be worn.

**Please Note: ANY CLOTHING CONSIDERED BY THE PRINCIPAL OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE TO BE TOO REVEALING SHALL NOT BE WORN. STUDENTS MAY BE SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL IF THEY FAIL TO ABIDE BY THE GUIDELINES ABOVE.**

### **Dress For Females:**

1. Dresses, skirts, and shorts shall be worn at the appropriate length of 5 inches above the kneecap. Dresses, skirts, and shorts with a long slit up the sides may not be worn.
2. Clothing shall not be excessively low in front or back; dresses shall not be backless.
3. Appropriate under garments shall be worn.
4. Hats, headscarves, headbands, rollers, sunglasses, or any other headwear, which may interrupt the education process, shall not be worn on campus during normal school hours.
5. Shirts and blouses shall be long enough to cover the stomach.
6. If a hoodie is worn, the hood **MAY NOT** be worn inside the building.
7. Leggings may only be worn under appropriate dress-length, tunic-style garments. Leggings/Tights **ARE NOT** pants and **WILL NOT** be allowed unless one's shirt, blouse, t-shirt, etc. covers one's bottom.
8. Clothing advertising alcoholic beverages, drug culture, and clothing with obscene language or gestures shall not be worn.
9. Shoes shall be worn at all times; however, shower shoes, slides, flip-flops and/or slippers, shoes with wheels shall not be worn. When participating in PE class, students should wear shoes with non-marking soles.
10. No sorority jerseys or shirts shall be worn. (Mississippi School Code SEC. 37-11-39)
11. Biking shorts may not be worn.
12. All garments shall be worn in a conventional manner. A belt must be worn if pants are loose fitting.
13. Under **NO** circumstances, will a student be allowed to wear pants that "sag." Pants must be worn at the waistline.
14. Shirts with slits, that expose the midriff, may not be worn.

**Please Note: ANY CLOTHING CONSIDERED BY THE PRINCIPAL OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE TO BE TOO REVEALING SHALL NOT BE WORN. STUDENTS MAY BE SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL IF THEY FAIL TO ABIDE BY THE GUIDELINES ABOVE.**

#### **General Regulations of the Dress Code:**

1. All students shall be clean and appropriately groomed at school.
2. Extreme or unusual grooming or dress styles, which could disrupt proper classroom atmosphere, disrupt school decorum, or would be disruptive to school discipline will not be condoned (e.g., sagging pants, hip huggers, lace-up jeans or shorts, etc.).
3. Dress or grooming that is dangerous, presents a health hazard, or is immodest, will strictly be inappropriate for school use.
4. The wearing of hats, caps, and hoods on hoodies or toboggans will not be allowed in the buildings or on any school buses.
5. Shoes and appropriate undergarments are required as a part of necessary dress.

6. Not permitted are garments that expose the midriff, tank tops without blouses or shirts, backless, strapless, or low-cut dresses, bicycle shorts, spandex type clothing, shower shoes, indecent clothing, transparent clothing, clothing with slogans and/or advertising that may be detrimental to a wholesome atmosphere, or garments that have slogans or advertisements for alcoholic or tobacco products.

7. Pajamas will not be allowed to school, unless related to a special activity in the pre-kindergarten environment such as activities related to The Polar Express.

**Please Note:** The school administration will be the judge if dress and appearance are in question.

### **VIOLATIONS OF THE DRESS CODE:**

Students and parents are reminded that the dress code is in effect both at school and at school sponsored activities.

### **Results of Dress Code Violation:**

1. The **first violation** results in a warning;
2. The **second violation** results in one-day of in-school detention; and/or
3. The **third violation** will result in the student either being assigned in-school detention for 1-3 days or suspended from school one day.

The means by which this information is communicated, to all stakeholders in the District shall include one or more of the following:

- a. District/School website;
- b. Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- c. School Newsletters;
- d. Parent Meetings;
- e. Rapid Notification System;
- f. PTO Meetings and Newsletters;
- g. Parent Advisory Meetings;
- h. Television, Radio and/or Newspaper Announcements; and/or
- i. District Communication App (when applicable and appropriate; not finalized at this time).

### **Health Matters and Services**

A. **Illness:** A child with any of the following conditions should not be in school:

- (1) Fever or vomiting within the past 24 hours; Any child with a temperature of 100 degrees and above, vomiting or suffering diarrhea must be picked up immediately. Students sent home with any of these conditions cannot return to school until free of symptoms.
- (2) (2) Students must be fever-free for 24 hours (without the aid of fever-reducing medication) before returning to school. Children who have vomited or had diarrhea should also stay home for 24 hours from the time of the incident.
- (3) Diarrhea;

- (4) Undiagnosed skin or eye irritation; and/or
- (5) Symptoms of any other illness or condition not diagnosed by a doctor

- B. **Medication:** We discourage the administration of any medication in school. However, if a physician decides that it is necessary for a student to receive prescription or over-the-counter medication at school for long 18 or short-term administration, specific requirements must be met: Written orders from the physician, nurse practitioner or dentist must accompany all medications to be administered. A new order must be obtained at the beginning of each school year. This includes inhalers and EPIPENS.
- C. **Absences: Absences are either excused or unexcused dependent upon the circumstances.** An "unexcused absence" is an absence for an entire school day or during part of a school day by which the absence is not due to a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance. In that pre-kindergarten is NOT a grade that falls in the parameters of "compulsory attendance age," if a pre-kindergarten student does not come to school for an extended amount of days, and there is no indication of a valid reason and/or excuse, the student will be dropped from the teacher's roll and if there is a waiting list for enrollment, the next student, on the list, will be contacted.

Each of the following shall constitute a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance of a compulsory-school-age child enrolled in school, provided satisfactory evidence of the excuse is provided to the superintendent of the school district or his/her designee.

- a) An absence is excused when the absence results from the compulsory-school-age child's attendance of an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the superintendent of the school district or his designee. Such activities may include field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, musical festivals and any similar activity.
- b) An absence is excused when the absence results from illness or injury, which prevents the compulsory-school-age child from being physically able to attend school.
- c) An absence is excused when isolation of a compulsory-school-age child is ordered by the county health officer or by the state board of health.
- d) An absence is excused when it results from the death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family of a compulsory-school-age child. The immediate family member of a compulsory-school-age child shall include children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters.
- e) An absence is excused when it results from a medical or dental appointment of a compulsory-school-age child where an approval of the superintendent of the school district or his designee is gained prior to the absence, except in the case of emergency.
- f) An absence is excused when it results from the attendance of a compulsory school-age child at the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal if such child is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
- g) An absence may be excused if the religion, to which the compulsory school-age child or such child's parents adhere, requires or suggests the observance of a religious event. The approval of such absence is within the discretion of the superintendent or his designee, but approval should be granted unless the religion's observance is of such duration to interfere with the education of the child.
- h) An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the superintendent or his/her designee that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity such as travel including vacations or other family travel. Approval of such absence must be gained from the superintendent of the school district or his/her designee prior to the absence but such approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.
- i) An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the

superintendent or his designee that conditions are sufficient to warrant the compulsory- school-age child's nonattendance.

### **Organizational Procedures and Daily Schedule**

- A. Daily Schedule:** Each teacher, in the pre-kindergarten setting, will provide, you all as parents, a daily schedule of activities. This may vary slightly from class to class and school to school.
- B. Quiet/Rest Time:** Children in full-day Pre-K programs engage in a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 60 minutes daily. Activities during quiet time may include individual activities, looking at books/reading, listening to books on tape, drawing or resting, as appropriate for each individual student.
- C. Daily/Weekly Folder:** Your student will bring home a daily and/or weekly folder of his/her portfolio of work for you all to go over and discuss each week. Each pre-kindergarten teacher will let you know the specifics of the day(s) the portfolio of work will come home.
- D. Report Card Schedule:** The report card schedule is as follows: (1) 1<sup>st</sup> 9 weeks Report Card Date: October 8, 2026; (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> 9 Weeks Report Card Date: January 14, 2027; (3) 3<sup>rd</sup> 9 Weeks Report Card Date: March 25, 2027; and (4) May 25, 2027. Students in the pre-kindergarten classroom will receive a checklist of mastered standards and expectations -- they will NOT receive report cards with numerical marks.

### **Curriculum, Materials, and Assessment**

#### **A. Curriculum:**

- (1) The Pre-kindergarten curriculum is aligned with the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children published by the Mississippi Department of Education;
- (2) The curriculum contains thematic units of activities aligned with the Mississippi Early Learning Teaching Strategies for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children;
- (3) Activities are designed to provide children the opportunities and experiences needed to master the performance standards in the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children;
- (4) The chosen curriculum for the Yazoo County School District is Mississippi Beginnings Curriculum offered to Pre-K through the state of Mississippi. Mississippi Beginnings Curriculum, Pre-K is a comprehensive, research-based program that integrates instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines. The program is engaging for both teachers and children and is easy to implement!

The cornerstones of the program include:

- An extensive integration of theme, disciplines, and domains;
- Social and Emotional development includes Scarborough's Reading Rope which builds executive function;
- Differentiated instruction;

- Language, literacy, math, and vocabulary skills;
- Equity of English and Spanish materials and instruction; and
- A joyful approach to learning.

- (5) Learning Centers are utilized for at least 120 minutes per day. Students rotate through at least 5 centers per day. Centers integrate thematic unit concepts with the standards; and
- (6) Centers may be composed of the following types:
  - a) Creative Arts
  - b) Science
  - c) Math
  - d) Language Development
  - e) Cooking
  - f) Blocks, Wheel Toys, and Construction
  - g) Sand and/or Water
  - h) Woodworking
  - i) Music
  - j) Library
  - k) Listening
  - l) Dramatic Play
  - m) Creative Writing
  - n) Social Studies
  - o) Technology
  - p) STEM and/or STEAM
  - q) Maker Space
  - r) Motor Development

**B. Educational Materials:**

- (1) Classroom educational materials are purchased by Title I Federal programs, the Yazoo County School District, and by writing successful grant proposals for external funding.

**C. Assessments:**

- (2) **Standardized Test:** All students must participate in the state approved kindergarten readiness assessment (KRA K-Readiness Assessment);
- (3) **Individualized Assessments:** All students will participate in vision, hearing, and speech screening. If a child currently receives services based on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), services will begin the first few days of school; and
- (4) **Standards' Assessment:** Teachers will use an observational checklist to measure each child's progress according to the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children and this will be sent home at progress report time as well as on report card dates.

## **Grading Policy**

A checklist aligned to the Mississippi Early Standards for 4-Year Old Children will be utilized in pre-kindergarten for grading and reporting progress to parents.

### **Parent Information**

#### **A. Parent Communication:**

- (1) Parent/Teacher Conferences: Teachers are available to conference any day during their planning time. Three parent/teacher conferences will be conducted during the school year (fall, winter, spring) to inform parents or guardians of child's progress. It is desired that these parent conferences will be held face-to-face in the 2026-2027 school year; however, if the scenario warrants, then these conferences may be held virtually. Please stay abreast of communication from the school regarding school visits and/or conferences.
- (2) Newsletters: Teachers will send home newsletters in students' "Pint-Size Panther Take Home Folder or in another manner specified by the teacher of each respective classroom."

#### **B. Parent Visits/Observations:**

If you would like to visit your child's classroom and the District is in a position to allow visitors on the campus during the 2026-2027 school year, please call the school and arrange a time with your child's teacher for your visit and/or observation to take place. Observations should be no longer than 30-45 minutes.

#### **C. Volunteer Participation:**

We encourage parents, guardians, and community members to participate in various activities such as: (1) developing learning games for home or classroom use; (2) sharing information with the class about their work skills or profession; and/or (3) sharing their talents through conducting music and/or leading art activities. Volunteers should not in the classroom without a teacher or assistant teacher present and will not used to meet the minimum adult-to-child ratio. Volunteers that serve in a school more than 120 hours per school year participate in an orientation session, sign a confidentiality agreement, and consent to a background check that is conducted by the district.

#### **D. Holidays and Celebrations:**

In the Yazoo County School District, we reflect and integrate into our curriculum the broad cultural and linguistic diversity of our children and families. We celebrate holidays and honor cultural traditions by emphasizing those aspects that are appropriate to all children and that relate to our overall program goals and objectives.

We mainly focus on family traditions. These may include special stories, foods, art projects, songs, dance or clothing. We are delighted when families come into the

classroom to share their special holidays and family traditions with us. Teachers incorporate appropriate aspects of the holiday in their plans for group discussions, art activities, music and movement and creative dramatics.

If you wish to do so, please speak with the teachers so that together you may plan what you will be doing with the children.

### **E. Birthday Policy:**

The emphasis in the Yazoo County School District in the pre-kindergarten program in celebrating is on celebrating your child's special day in a way that is consistent with other things we do here in the Yazoo County School District. Specifically, the fun is in being together and acknowledging the excitement that children, of this age, feel about their birthdays. Each class will have their own special ritual to mark the day – perhaps the birthday child picks a special story, makes a special hat, or uses a special birthday placemat or tablecloth or has a special banner made by his or her friends.

It is important that birthday celebrations feel predictable to the children so they know what to look forward to on their special day and enjoy celebrating with their friends. Our goal in the Yazoo County School District pre-kindergarten program is to be able to include all children in our birthday and other room celebrations.

**PLEASE DO NOT BRING PARTY HATS, TABLECLOTHS, PLATES, CUPS, FANCY CAKES, CUPCAKES WITH CHARACTERS AND/OR THICK ICING ON IT, PARTY FAVORS, GOODIE BAGS OR BANNERS! THESE ARE ALL GREAT TO HAVE AT AN “AT HOME” PARTY.**

Balloons are not allowed under any circumstance. If they break, they pose a serious choking hazard to young children.

### **F. Personal Belongings:**

It is recommended that students' personal belongings be kept at home in that teachers can't be responsible for each individual student's personal belongings.

### **G. Extra Clothes:**

Please send an extra change of clothes to school for your student in a Ziploc bag in case of an accident. However, *if a student has more than 7 accidents in a given 9 weeks and there is not a documented medical condition as defined by a doctor, the student will be dismissed from the Pre-K program.*

### **H. School Supplies:**

Teachers will each send a supply list home with each student at the beginning of school.

## **I. Field Trip Information:**

- Parents may be requested to accompany their child on a field trip when there are behavioral safety concerns for their child(ren);

- Parents will be notified of field trips at least two-weeks in advance;
- Each child must have a signed permission slip from the parent/guardian in order to attend;
- If a parent chooses to transport his/her child from the field trip site he/she must sign the child out with the teacher. Sign-out sheets will be provided by the teacher; and
- The parent(s) will be responsible for the cost of the field trip.

#### **J. What To Do When You Have a Problem:**

When a problem arises, please discuss this concern with your child's teacher through an arranged parent conference. If you can't find a resolution with your child's teacher, then please arrange a conference with the principal or the assistant principal.

### **Student Behavior and Discipline**

#### **A. Student Restraint and Seclusion Policy:**

In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-9-69 and 37-11-57, it is recognized that staff may intercede in situations wherein students are displaying physically violent behavior or are deemed to be a danger to themselves or others. The use of excessive force or cruel and unusual punishment regarding student management is prohibited. Restraint and/or seclusion shall not be utilized as a punitive measure. Only school personnel trained in the use of restraint and seclusion should be used to observe and monitor these students. Staff engaged in monitoring students shall have knowledge of effective restraint and seclusion procedures, emergency procedures, and knowledge of how to effectively debrief students after the use of restraint or seclusion.

This policy in no way shall inhibit the right of staff to reasonable self-defense in accordance with the provisions of the 5th and 14th amendments to the Constitution of the United States, or the Constitution of Mississippi, nor negate the obligation of the district to provide a safe work environment. In any situation in which a student is a danger to himself/herself or others, and it becomes necessary to contact law enforcement or emergency medical personnel, nothing in this policy guidance shall be construed to interfere with the duties of law enforcement or emergency medical personnel.

##### **(1) Restraint:**

- a) Physical restraint is considered to be an emergency response after all other verbal and non-verbal de-escalation measures have failed in effectiveness.
- b) When using physical restraint for students who are a danger to themselves or others, staff should take precautions necessary to ensure the safety of the student and the staff members engaged in restraining the student.
- c) Physical restraints that restrict the flow of air are prohibited in all situations.
- d) The use of mechanical restraints is prohibited, except by law enforcement.

- e) The use of chemical restraints is prohibited.

**(2) Seclusion:**

- a) The use of seclusion occurs in a specially designated room or space that is physically isolated from common areas and from which the student is physically prevented from leaving.
- b) The room or space used for seclusion may not be locked and staff shall be present to monitor the student.
- c) Seclusion shall cease once the student regains control of his or her behavior.

**(3) Parental Notification:**

- a) All parents shall receive written information about the policies and procedures for restraint and seclusion issued by this school district in the student handbook annually.
- b) Parents or guardians shall be notified verbally or in writing on the day of the restraint or seclusion or no later than 48 hours following the incident. In the event a parent cannot be reached by telephone, a letter shall be sent informing the parent of the incident and the person who can be contacted at the school to address any questions the parent may have.
- c) At the time the parent is notified, the school shall schedule a debriefing with the parent to discuss the incident.
- d) A complaint from a parent regarding the physical restraint or seclusion of their child may be submitted in writing to the principal.
- e) The written complaint must state the student's name, the nature and date of the restraint or seclusion, the persons involved (teacher, witness, etc.) and requested action.
- f) The principal shall provide an initial response to the complainant within five school days. If the parent is not satisfied with the response, he/she may request (in writing) a review by the superintendent. Within 10 days from receiving the request for a review, the superintendent will issue a decision.

**B. School Rules:**

Both Bentonina Gibbs Elementary School and Linwood Elementary School establish their own school rules.

**C. Classroom Rules:**

Each pre-kindergarten teacher will establish classroom rules that are most conducive to each classroom of learners.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)**

Parents and eligible students (a student or former student who has reached age 18 or is attending a post-secondary school and who is no longer a dependent of the parent for federal tax purposes) have the following rights under FERPA and district policy:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education record;
2. The right to exercise a limited control over other people's access to the student's education record;
3. The right to seek to correct the student's education record, in a hearing, if necessary;
4. The right to report violations of the FERPA to the Department of Education; and
5. The right to be informed about FERPA rights.

**NOTE:** The educational records include all materials directly related to a student that a school maintains. Records and notes maintained by a teacher, administrator, school physician, or school psychologist for his/her own use are exempted from this definition.

**PROCEDURE TO INSPECT EDUCATION RECORDS:** The parent or eligible student should submit to the student's school principal a written request that identifies, as precisely as possible, the record he/she wishes to inspect. The principal will contact the parent or eligible student to discuss how access will be best arranged (copies, visit to site, etc.) The fee for copies will be from no cost to 10 cents per page. The school will require a prior written consent before information other than directory information may be divulged to third parties.

The YCSD designates the following as directory information:

- The student's name, address, and telephone number;
- The names of the student's parents;
- The student's date and place of birth;
- The student's major field of study and class designation (i.e., first grade, tenth grade, etc.);
- The student's extracurricular participation;
- The student's achievement awards or honors;
- The student's weight and height if a member of an athletic team;
- The student's photograph;
- The student's electronic mail address;
- The student's date of attendance; and
- The most recent educational institution the student attended prior to the student enrolling in this school district.

**NOTE:** A parent or eligible student will have two weeks to advise the school district in writing (a letter to the superintendent) of any or all of the items they refuse to permit the district to designate as directory information about the student. The student's record will be marked to indicate the items the district will designate as directory information about the student. This designation will remain in effect until it is modified by the written notification of the parent.

# **Yazoo County School District Calendar**

### **DISCLAIMER:**

This Handbook and Student Code of Conduct is not intended to nor does it contain all rules, policies, procedures, and/or regulations that relate to students. Every effort has been made to provide parents and students with complete and accurate information. However, the Baldwin County Board of Education (Board) reserves the right to change program requirements, and to modify, amend, or revoke any rules, regulations, and schedules both academic and financial. For students or parents having difficulty reading and understanding information in this document, consider one of the following options: Contact your student's school office for help or contact your school counselor and schedule an appointment time for guidance.