Danville Head Start Pre-K
PARENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027

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Social Media: Danville Head Start Pre-K
www.danvillesd.org
School hours: 8:45 am-2:30 pm



Educating Children, Empowering Families

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WELCOME TO THE HEAD START PRE-K FAMILY

Welcome to the Danville Head Start Pre-K family! We are thrilled to partner with you and your child, and we look forward to a deeply rewarding year ahead for your entire family.

This Parent Handbook is designed to guide you through our program's policies and highlight the vital role you play in your child's education. You are your child's first and most important teacher. By working together as a team, we can build the foundation your child needs to succeed both in school and in life.

Please take some time to read through this handbook and keep it handy, as it contains essential information you will need throughout the school year

HEAD START PRE-K COMMUNICATION

Head Start Pre-K Office:

- Phone Number: (570) 271-3268, ext. 3700
- Office Hours: 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
- After Hours: Answering machine available; please leave a message
- For questions or concerns, please call the office

Contacting Your Teacher:

- You may contact your child's teacher before and after classes
- During school hours, teachers are unavailable by phone, text, or SchoolStatus Connect
- To leave a message for your child's teacher during school hours, please call the office

Staying Connected:

Throughout the school year, Head Start Pre-K will keep you informed through various communication methods:

- Weekly Classroom News: Regular updates from your child's teacher are posted on School Status Connect
- Bi-Weekly Head Start Pre-K Happenings: Information on community activities and helpful articles are posted on School Status Connect
- Phone/Text Updates: Staff will provide timely notifications about upcoming events

INFORMATION HEAD START PRE-K NEEDS TO KNOW

To ensure we can best care for your child, please provide the following critical information:

- Your Current Contact Info: Residential address, along with your home, work, and mobile phone numbers.
- Childcare Provider: The name and phone number of your child's current childcare provider (if applicable).
- Three (3) Emergency Contacts: The names and phone numbers of at least three trusted individuals we can contact immediately if you cannot be reached.

GETTING YOUR CHILD READY FOR HEAD START PRE-K

Establish a Consistent Bedtime: A well-rested child is ready to learn and enjoy their Head Start Pre-K experience! Setting a routine helps them transition smoothly into their school day.

What to Bring (and what to leave at home):
To ensure a safe and focused learning environment, please adhere to the following guidelines:
Do Not Send: Money, cough drops, candy, gum, personal toys/stuffed animals, chapstick, or lotion.
Medication: Please do not send medication in your child's bag. Refer to our Medication Guidelines for the proper procedure (page 4).
Backpacks: Please do not send your child to school with a backpack.
Extra Clothes: All children should have a change of clothes kept at school at all times. Please send these in a labeled plastic bag.
*Please note that Head Start Pre-K cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal belongings

Weekly Folder Routine:

- Please review and remove all papers from your child's labeled folder when it is sent home on the last school day of each week, and return the empty folder on Monday.

Join Us for Open House and Parent Orientation:

- We encourage you to attend these events to connect with teachers and learn more about our program

HOW TO DRESS FOR HEAD START PRE-K

At Head Start Pre-K, we learn through play—and that can get beautifully messy! To ensure your child is safe, comfortable, and ready for all of our fun activities, please follow these clothing guidelines:

- **Wear Play Clothes:** Please send your child in washable clothes. We want them to dive into arts, crafts, and outdoor play without worrying about getting dirty!
- **Safe Footwear Required:** For your child's safety, **socks and sneakers** are the best choice for school. Other types of shoes (like sandals, flip-flops, or boots) can pose a safety risk during active indoor and outdoor play.
- **Dress for the Weather:** We believe outdoor play is vital for growth! We head outside daily unless the temperature drops below 25°F or rises above 90°F. Please send your child with appropriate seasonal gear, such as a coat, hat, and mittens when it's chilly.

Important Reminders:

- Label Everything: Please clearly write your child's name on all personal belongings, especially coats, hats, and extra clothes.
- Borrowed Clothes: If your child changes into borrowed Head Start Pre-K clothing during the day, please wash and return those items promptly.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Helping Your Child Learn:
Children learn best when they have regular routines at home and school. Establishing bedtime and morning routines and schedules now will help your child get the most out of preschool and have a seamless transition to kindergarten.

Once enrolled in Head Start, children are expected to attend every day and for the full school hours, unless a valid reason exists for an absence. We record attendance and absence reasons daily.
Exemptions: Accommodations can be made for children with chronic medical conditions, family emergencies, or other unique needs. Please speak with your child's teacher or Family Advocate if you need to discuss an exemption.

Partnering Together for Regular Attendance
To ensure a smooth day for your child and the classroom, please follow these daily routines:

- **Arrival Time:** All children should be in their classroom and ready to learn by **8:45 AM**
- **Punctuality:** Please be on time for bus stops, morning drop-off, and afternoon pick-up
- **Tardiness**: Children arriving 15 minutes or more past the start of the school day will be marked tardy

What to Do If Your Child Is Absent

1. **Notify Us Immediately:** Inform us of the absence and the reason by calling the office at (570) 271-3268 ext. 3700 (you may leave a voicemail outside of office hours) or by sending a School Status message.
2. **Safety Check-In:** If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, your Family Advocate will call you within one hour of the start of the school day to ensure your child is safe.
3. **Two (2) Consecutive Absences (or Sporadic Attendance):** If your child misses two days in a row without communication, or misses days on a weekly basis, your Family Advocate will schedule a home visit to offer support and resources.
4. **Five (5) Consecutive Absences:** Missing five consecutive days without communication will result in a formal letter from the Director outlining the next steps regarding enrollment.

Attendance Incentive:
To encourage excellent attendance habits, all children who maintain an attendance rate of 85% or higher each month will receive a small incentive token! These rewards will be sent home once a month in your child's weekly folder to celebrate their dedication to learning.

WEATHER, DELAYS & SCHEDULE CHANGES

Head Start Pre-K follows the Danville Area School District for all weather delays and closures. Our name will not appear separately on TV or radio—if you see DASD listed, it applies to Head Start Pre-K, too!

How to Stay Informed:
In the event of bad weather or schedule changes, updates will be posted on local radio/TV, the district website (www.danvillesd.org), and our social media pages. You will also receive an automated call/text. Please ensure the office always has your current contact information on file.

Early Dismissals:
If the Danville Area School District announces an early dismissal, Head Start Pre-K classes will dismiss one hour earlier than the announced school district time.

Flexible Instruction Days (FID):
If school shifts to a Flexible Instruction Day, lessons will be delivered via SchoolStatus Connect in one of two ways:

- Live (Synchronous): Virtual instruction through Google Meet.
- Recorded (Asynchronous): Pre-recorded video lessons and assigned activities.

Children are expected to attend live sessions or watch the recordings, and complete all assigned work.

SNOW MAKE-UP DAYS

Day #1: 2/12/27 **Day #2:** 6/1/27 **Day #3:** 6/2/27 **Day #4:** 6/3/27 **Day #5:** 6/4/27

HEALTH CONCERNS/SICK CHILDREN

A sick child has trouble learning and playing. If your child has any of the following symptoms, ***PLEASE KEEP THEM HOME:***

- **fever (100.4°F or above)**
- **nausea, vomiting, diarrhea**
- **flushed face or hot dry skin, paleness**
- **unexpected, excessive sweating, or rash**
- **seizures**
- **sore throat, hoarseness**
- **swollen glands**
- **pain in ear, head, chest, stomach, or joints**
- **watery, red eyes with mucus**

To protect the health and safety of all children and staff, sick children cannot remain at school. If your child becomes ill or injured during the day, we will notify parents first to pick them up. If we cannot reach you, we will call your designated emergency contacts.
Please Keep Us Informed: If your child is sick or injured at home, please call the office to let us know how they are doing.

When Can My Child Return to School? If your child has a contagious disease or condition, the following will provide guidelines as to when the child can return:

- Fever: Must be fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication
- Vomiting and Diarrhea: Must be free of illness and symptoms for at least 12 hours
- Chicken Pox: May return only after all blisters have completely dried and scabbed over
- Strep Throat, Scarlet Fever or Tonsillitis: May return 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
- Pink Eye: when doctor permission form states and/or eye(s) are free from discharge
- Impetigo: May return after antibiotic treatment has officially started
- Other Contagious Conditions: May return once a doctor confirms the child is no longer contagious

ALLERGIES

Please notify us as soon as possible about **ANY** allergies your child may have. There are forms and procedures that must be in place before the child begins school.

MEDICATION

While we prefer children receive medication at home, if your child needs medication at school (like an antibiotic), please follow these important guidelines:

- **Required Documentation:** A completed Medication Permit form, signed by both a parent/guardian and the prescribing doctor, must be submitted
- **First Dose Policy:** The first dose of any new medication must always be given at home to ensure there are no adverse allergic reactions
- **Original Packaging Only:** Medication must be brought to school in its original prescription container, with your child's name and the doctor's specific instructions clearly printed on the pharmacy label
- **Dosage Changes:** Any changes to your child's medication dosage require a new, written note from their doctor
- **Safe Hand-Off:** Please hand the medication and the signed Medication Permit directly to the bus monitor or your child's teacher
- **Prior Approval Required:** All medications and completed paperwork must be received and approved by staff before your child can begin school or return to the classroom

ACCIDENT REPORTS

In the event that your child is injured at school and receives basic first aid, a "Boo Boo" Report will be completed and sent home that day.

If your child is injured and needs to be picked up to seek medical treatment, please keep us updated as to how they are doing and any treatment they may have received.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Health begins long before a child enters the classroom. As your child gets older and grows, their needs change. Consistent access to ongoing medical and dental care can help ensure your child is healthy and in school. A current physical or well-child exam can help identify health concerns that may affect your child's learning. Children who are healthy are more prepared for school.

Head Start Pre-K Requirements:

- **Immunization Record** - up-to-date
- **Physical Examination** - completed within the last year
- **Dental Examination** - completed within the last year
- **Lead Result** - can be from anytime after the child's birth

Why is a yearly physical exam important?

Regular doctor visits are important for your child's health. They allow healthcare professionals to:

- Track Physical and Cognitive Development: Gain valuable insights into how your child is growing and learning
- Ensure Healthy Growth: Verify that your child is developing at a healthy and appropriate rate
- Address Potential Issues: Identify and provide timely treatment for any health concerns
- Maintain Immunization Schedules: Ensure your child's immunizations are current and protect them from preventable diseases

Why is dental care Important?

Good dental health is essential for more than just a bright smile. It contributes to**:**

- **Appearance:** giving form and shape to our face
- **Health:** allowing us to eat a variety of nutritious foods
- **Speech:** helping us make the proper sounds to speak
- **Confidence:** growing a positive self image through a healthy smile

Don't underestimate the importance of baby teeth! They act as spacers, holding the correct positions for permanent teeth to erupt properly.

Brushing at school: At Danville Head Start Pre-K we reinforce healthy habits by including teeth brushing into our daily routine!

NUTRITION

To ensure a consistent and safe environment for all children, we do not allow outside food, with the exception of pre-arranged birthday celebrations.

Meals Provided:

- Nutritious Breakfast: A healthy breakfast is offered to your child every morning
- Family-Style Lunch: We enjoy lunch together in the cafeteria daily, fostering positive social interactions and conversation

Important Notes:

- Changes in Eating Habits: It's common for children's eating habits to change
- Snow Delay Days: Breakfast will not be served. However, lunch will still be provided as usual, unless we communicate a change to families.
- Encouraging Exploration: We encourage trying new foods but will never force children to eat
- No Meal Charges: There is no cost for the meals provided

Food Allergies and Intolerances:

If your child has a food allergy or intolerance, a completed Medical Plan of Care for School Food Service form from their doctor is required before they can attend our program. This ensures we can take the necessary precautions to keep your child safe.

Religious Dietary Needs:

Head Start Pre-K will accommodate religious dietary needs with a completed Medical Plan of Care for School Food Service form and will provide appropriate alternatives or substitutions.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL GROWTH

At Danville Head Start Pre-K, our goal is to ensure your child is happy, confident, safe, and fully ready for kindergarten. A child's social and emotional well-being is just as important as their academic growth. To create an environment where every child can thrive, our program weaves together positive behavior teaching, proactive learning supports, expert mental health partnership, and dedicated safety protocols. Think of this handbook section as a guide to how we partner with you every step of the way, from celebrating your child's successes to wrapping extra support around them whenever it's needed.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS (PBIS)

What is PBIS at Danville Head Start Pre-K?
PBIS is our school-wide approach to teaching young children positive social skills. We focus on building strong relationships, encouraging good behavior, and teaching friendship skills.

School wide Behavior Expectations:
We use three simple, school-wide expectations that your child will learn right away and see posted everywhere: ***Be Safe *Be Kind *Be Respectful**

PARTNERING FOR YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS: What is MTSS?

At Head Start Pre-K, our number one goal is to make sure your child is happy, confident, and ready for kindergarten. To do that, we use a system called MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports). Think of it as our safety net to ensure every single child gets the exact level of attention and engagement they need to thrive.

Instead of waiting for a child to struggle before we help them, we check in on every child's progress constantly. If we notice your child is hitting a roadblock, whether it's learning letters, making friends or managing big feelings, we don't wait. We instantly wrap extra support around them right in the classroom.

Sometimes that support happens during regular classroom activities. Other times, it means giving them a little extra practice in a small group, or creating a personalized, one-on-one plan tailored just for them.

Because you are the expert on your child, we are true partners in this. You will always be invited to every single meeting we have regarding your child's progress. Together, we will look at what they are doing well and decide on the best next steps to help them thrive.

MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTANT

Dr. Heidi Fisher, a licensed psychologist from Geisinger, partners with the adults in your child's life – that's you, their teachers, and our administrators – to support their social and emotional well-being.

Dr. Fisher focuses on classroom and program-wide strategies; she does not provide one-on-one therapy for children.
Common areas she can help address include:

- Emotional: Anxiety, fears, or big feelings.
- Behavioral: Tantrums, trouble following directions, or lack of cooperation.
- Developmental: Speech delays, toilet training, or social skills challenges.

How to connect: If you have questions about your child's development, behavior, or emotions, you can request an in-person or phone meeting. Please check the school calendar for her upcoming on-site dates.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

We use positive guidance to build your child's self-esteem and self-regulation. Our daily strategies are tailored to each child's needs and include:

- Teaching Skills: Use PBIS, Second Step Curriculum and Zones of Regulation to teach social-emotional and friendship skills.
- Clear Expectations: Show, practice, and remind children of rules using pictures & clear words
- Positive Reinforcement: Praising good behavior and celebrating it in the classroom
- Gentle Correction: Guiding children back on track when mistakes happen

Safety Note: If a child's behavior risks hurting themselves or others, staff will intervene immediately. This may include moving to a calm space to cool down, talk through the issue, and plan a safe return to the group.

SAFE CRISIS MANAGEMENT

At Danville Head Start Pre-K, your child’s safety is our top priority. We use positive guidance to maintain a calm, loving environment. However, if a child's behavior poses an immediate danger to themselves or others, our certified staff is trained to step in using Safe Crisis Management (SCM).

Our Safety Approach

- De-escalation First: Staff use verbal calming, redirection, and sensory tools to resolve distress early
- Last Resort Only: Physical holding is never a punishment. It is strictly used as a temporary safety measure if a child is at immediate risk of hurting themselves or others.
- Certified Staff: Only formally trained and certified professionals administer these gentle, safety-first techniques.

Communication and Partnership

If an SCM intervention occurs involving your child, we promise total transparency:

1. Same-Day Notification: We will call you immediately that day.
2. Written Report: You will receive a detailed incident report.
3. Team Meeting: We will invite you to meet with our teachers and support team to collaborate on how we can best support your child moving forward.

Our Promise: We view these moments as times when a child needs intensive support to feel safe and regulated. We are committed to partnering with you.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

PLAY IS YOUR CHILD'S WORK!

Every experience a child has can be used as a time for learning. When children play, they learn. Since children's play is their work, we give children lots of space and opportunities to play and explore their world. A child needs to see, touch, smell, taste and hear to understand and obtain the true meaning of their environment.

In your home and in the classroom, our staff will provide a wide variety of activities for your child and you to play and learn together.

Teachers will follow research-based curriculums, *Creative Curriculum* and *Second Step,* to support the development of the *whole child.* The goal is to prepare children for life beyond their time in the classroom, focusing not only on math and literacy skills, but also social-emotional, literacy, and cognitive skills.

Children need safe and supportive environments where they can practice newly acquired skills and build on those skills to learn new information. Teachers support children's individualized learning opportunities by providing meaningful experiences that engage their interests, abilities and culture.

SCHOOL READINESS

School readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Danville Head Start Pre-K views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and for life. Physical, cognitive, social and emotional development are all essential parts of school readiness.

Our program values the unique role families play in this process and will provide opportunities for you to help prepare your child for kindergarten. We are excited to be with you on this journey of learning and look forward to a positive school experience. As a team, we can help your child develop the skills and attitudes necessary for school success.

CURRICULA AND ASSESSMENT

To ensure high quality education and to prepare children for school, we implement the following:

- **Creative Curriculum for Preschool**- Researched based curriculum that emphasizes rich, engaging, play-based learning experiences and hands-on investigation
- **Second Step for Early Learning**- Teaches social skills, conflict resolution, and impulse control
- **Zones of Regulation**- Teaches children self-regulation and emotional control
- **Orton Gillingham**- A multi sensory approach to teaching literacy skills
- **Heggerty**- Teaches phonological skills such as rhyming, syllables and language sounds
- **Teaching Strategies Gold**- Assesses children's developmental growth in areas of: social emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy and math

A DAY AT HEAD START PRE-K

Sample Schedule

Arrival- Welcoming children, sign-in, handwashing, toileting
Free choice play- several learning centers open and available
Large group meeting- question of the day, calendar, weather, lessons, letter of the week, Second Step lesson, Heggerty lesson
Breakfast- occurs in classroom with family style conversations
Music & Movement- musical instruments, yoga, singing, dancing and self expression
Gross Motor/Outdoor time- playground, trikes, balls, obstacle course, games, parachute
Small group time- individualized learning activities led by teacher
Lunch- served in the cafeteria with family style conversations
Toothbrushing- occurs one time per day after a meal
Wrap up/Review of day- favorite part of the day, review lessons, good-bye song
Dismissal- Own transport or by bus

HOME VISITS

Home visits are a very special part of the Head Start Pre-K program. You will have visits throughout the year with your child's teacher and family advocate. Due to the importance of home visits, they must be done with an adult who lives in the child's home. Home visits cannot be done with relatives or babysitters who provide care for the child, but do not live with them.

All children enrolled in our program receive home visits with the teacher twice a year. At all of the home visits, you will learn about Creative Curriculum, talk about your child's progress, learn about available resources, and together plan for your child's next steps for learning at school and at home.

In addition, a family advocate is assigned to all Head Start Pre-K families. Home visits with your family advocate are all about you and your family and occur throughout the school year. At these visits, you will complete a Family Partnership Agreement, which is a step-by-step goal you or your family would like to accomplish.

Also, at these visits, you will have the opportunity to learn about programs or events that may be available to you and your family.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year, with both day and evening appointments available so that all parents can attend. During conferences, you and your child's teacher will talk about your child's strengths and skills that will ensure kindergarten readiness. You will also have the chance to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's development. You may request additional conferences at any time by contacting your child's teacher.

EARLY INTERVENTION

To help us understand each child's unique development, every child receives a developmental screening called the BDI-3. This helps us see if a child might benefit from further evaluation or Early Intervention Services.

We use several tools to understand your child's progress, including the BDI-3 screening, Teaching Strategies Gold assessments, individual learning goals, and our teachers' observations. This information helps us plan our curriculum, identify areas where a child might need extra support, recognize children with special needs, communicate effectively with you, and see how well our program is working.

You will receive information about your child's screening results. If we recommend a further evaluation, your child's teacher will reach out to you directly.

If your child is eligible for Early Intervention Services, based on their needs and our team's recommendations, these services are provided in a group setting. They can include support in areas like learning, behavior, physical skills, fine motor skills, and speech/language.

We believe parents are a vital part of this team and encourage you to be actively involved in all aspects of your child's Early Intervention Services. Remember that children develop at their own pace. However, if you have any concerns that your child might be developing differently, please don't hesitate to talk to your child's teacher.

Early Intervention Services for eligible children are provided by the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU).

CELEBRATIONS

Head Start Pre-K does not celebrate any holidays. Please do NOT send in any treats for any holidays. Treats sent in will be returned to you unopened.

The only exception to this rule is your child's birthday. If you would like to bring in a treat for your child's birthday, please choose one item from the list below and provide enough for every child in the classroom. If bowls, spoons, etc. are needed, please provide everything needed. Talk to your child's teacher ahead of time to ask if there are any children with food allergies.

Acceptable Items:

- Mini cupcakes or muffins (or regular sized cut in half)
- Goldfish or animal crackers
- Pretzels
- Donut holes
- Rice Krispie treats
- Raisins
- String Cheese
- Cookies
- Frozen yogurt
- 100% fruit juice popsicles
- Finger jello
- Fresh fruit, cut into individual serving sizes
- Low-fat pudding or yogurt cups
- Pre-packaged fruit cups

FAMILY SERVICES

FAMILY ADVOCATES

A family advocate is assigned to all Head Start Pre-K families. The role of the family advocate (FA) is to provide support services to Head Start families throughout the program year. The type of support offered includes providing resources, assisting with creating and working towards family goals as well as supporting parents in preparation for kindergarten and school readiness skills for their child. Families can expect ongoing communication from the FA, and they will schedule Home Visits throughout the year at convenient times that best fit the needs of the family. FA's are committed to maintaining privacy and working closely with classroom teachers. They are available to offer support as needed.

The Family Partnership Agreement is a working tool used throughout the year based on the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement framework.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

A Family Partnership Agreement in Head Start is a collaborative and ongoing process between Head Start staff and the parents or guardians of enrolled children. It's a mutually developed plan that aims to support the family's well-being, promote the child's learning and development, and connect families with necessary resources. The primary goal is to build a strong, respectful, and goal-oriented partnership between the program and the family. Based on the assessment, the family and Head Start staff collaboratively develop individualized goals that are meaningful and relevant to the family's needs and interests. These goals can be related to the child's development, the parent's personal growth, or the family's overall well-being. Goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely (SMART).

READYROSIE

ReadyRosie provides a library of short (around 2 minutes) videos that model fun and easy learning activities that parents and caregivers can do with young children at home. First, complete a ReadyRosie sign up form with your family advocate to start receiving videos to your phone or computer every Monday. These videos have real-life parents and children modeling different family activities you can perform at home with your children to enhance their learning and development. Teachers will recommend videos that pertain to the classroom study and individual children's educational goals. Parents can also download the ReadyRosie app for free. After viewing the videos and doing the family activity, please complete the ReadyRosie in-kind form monthly.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

PARENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Feel welcomed and always treated with respect and dignity
- Participate in decisions about our program
- To have input in developing parent training programs
- Receive information about available community resources and how to access them
- Visit your child's classroom in adherence with our volunteer guidelines
- Review your child's records (Head Start Pre-K must make records available within 45 days of request)

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Volunteering in the program when possible
- Attending scheduled home visits and conferences
- Informing Head Start Pre-K if your child will be absent
- Updating Head Start Pre-K when your phone number and/or address changes
- Notifying Head Start Pre-K of any changes to Emergency Contacts
- Engaging with the program and learning about Head Start Pre-K
- Participate in offered parent trainings

PARENT CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

At Head Start Pre-K, we deeply value the trust you place in us, and protecting your family's personal information is a top priority.

Your family's personal information is always private. This means any details you share with us about your child, family situation, your background or your needs will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Please ensure you are in a private place when discussing personal matters with Head Start Pre-K staff. This helps ensure your privacy and allows for open and honest communication.

It is crucial to never share information about other families or their children. Sharing personal details or concerns about other children or their families is a breach of confidentiality.

We protect everyone's privacy at all times, including in classrooms, meetings, parent events, field trips, bus stops, and school activities.

Any information we gather about your child or family is solely to help us provide services to you. The information we collect is essential for understanding your child's individual needs, planning appropriate learning activities, connecting you with resources, and ensuring the overall well-being of your child and family within the Head Start Pre-K program. We only collect information that is necessary for these purposes.

We will not share your family's information with anyone without your written permission, except in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, which we are legally required to report.

VOLUNTEERING AT HEAD START PRE-K

Parents are always welcome as classroom volunteers. This is a wonderful opportunity to experience and actively participate in your child's education. **Anyone who volunteers is required to:**

- Complete a volunteer application, including a Confidentiality Agreement and Standards of Conduct, ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all
- Get necessary clearances: child abuse, criminal background check, and fingerprints
- Attend a brief volunteer orientation to familiarize yourself with school policies

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES:

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe, respectful, and professional environment. Please adhere to the following rules during field trips and school activities:

- **Check-In:** Sign in at the office upon arrival and wear your visitor badge at all times.
- **Role & Boundaries:** Focus on assisting the group. Do not discipline children, change diapers, or assist with toileting.
- **Strict Confidentiality:** Protect the privacy of all students, families, and staff. Do not discuss student behavior, performance, health, or personal information outside the program.
- **Professional Conduct:** Do not use volunteer time to socialize with teachers about your child's progress, or to sell/promote personal goods and services.
- **Device & Tech Use:** Keep cell phones and personal devices turned off and out of sight. School computers must be used appropriately and responsibly.
- **Prohibited Items & Substances:** The following are strictly banned from all school property, vehicles, and field trips:
  - Tobacco products of any kind
  - Alcohol, illicit drugs, or controlled substances
  - Weapons of any kind

VOLUNTEERING ON FIELD TRIPS

<u>Transportation Requirements:</u>

- For the safety and organization of our field trips, all Head Start Pre-K children are required to travel on the provided bus
- If a parent/guardian plans to take their child home directly from the field trip, they must sign their child out with a designated staff member at the field trip location

<u>Sibling Participation:</u>

- Younger siblings of Head Start Pre-K students are welcome to join us on field trips, accompanied by their parent/guardian, unless the classroom teacher specifies otherwise
- Parents are responsible for the supervision and care of their child's siblings during the field trip
- Siblings enrolled in other Head Start Pre-K classrooms must participate with their respective classes
- School-aged siblings are expected to attend their regular school classes and cannot be excused to attend field trips

<u>Volunteer Guidelines:</u>

- Volunteers are asked to remain within the designated Head Start Pre-K area or with the group throughout the field trip, unless instructed otherwise by Head Start Pre-K staff

<u>Privacy and Respect:</u>

- To protect the privacy of all children and families, we kindly request that you refrain from posting photos of other children or families online

Note: All clearance requirements must be submitted by March 31st

WEAPONS POLICY

Danville Head Start Pre-K follows the Weapons Policy adopted by the Danville Area School District. In order to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and visitors, absolutely no weapons or dangerous instruments of any kind are allowed on school grounds, buses, or field trips. Weapons and dangerous instruments include anything that can cause bodily injury.

In addition, Head Start Pre-K does not allow children to play with toy weapons while at school. Please do not send these toys, including water guns, to school with your child.

HOW TO ADDRESS A CONCERN

We want to address your concerns promptly. Here's how to resolve any issues:

- Start by talking directly to the staff member involved (e.g., your child's teacher or family advocate). They will respond to your concern within 48 hours.
- If you're not satisfied with the response, please contact the Head Start Pre-K Director. They will also respond within 48 hours.
- If you still have concerns, you can appeal to the Danville Area School District Superintendent. The Superintendent will review your complaint and respond within five business days.
- If the Superintendent's decision doesn't resolve the matter, you can appeal in writing to the School Board. Representatives from the School Board will meet with the Director and Superintendent and provide a written decision.
- If the issue remains unresolved, we will use a mediator to help find a solution. Head Start Pre-K will cover the mediator's fees.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

The safety of our children, families, and staff is our primary concern at Danville Head Start Pre-K. If a conflict occurs at our program or a sponsored event, we will take the following actions to ensure everyone's well-being:

- If there is no immediate threat, we will ask all involved parties to leave immediately
- If they refuse to leave, the Head Start Pre-K Director will be informed
- If the conflict persists, the School Resource Officer will be called
- If our staff believes children are in any danger, they will call 911 immediately
- After any conflict, we will offer mental health support to all parties through our Head Start Pre-K Mental Health Consultant

PARENT CAFES

Every parent is part of our Parent Cafe, which is a great way to:

- Suggest training topics that interest our parent community
- Develop your skills as a leader within our group
- Make lasting friendships with other families in the program
- Learn what's happening at Head Start Pre-K

POLICY COUNCIL

Policy Council members learn so much about Head Start Pre-K and how it operates. As decision-makers, they work with management staff voting on key areas like the application, selection criteria, budget, and staff hiring. Monthly meetings allow parents to share input and approve policies. Parents also have an opportunity to become leaders by serving as officers.

NON-FEDERAL SHARE

Federally funded Head Start programs require a 20% non-federal match, which can be fulfilled through community support like donated time, goods, or services valued at a reasonable rate. Every contribution to Head Start Pre-K helps meet this requirement. For instance, each hour parents volunteer translates into program funding. When parents volunteer, they complete a non-federal share form to document their time. Examples of things that count as non-federal share include:

- Volunteering in classroom
- Attending field trips
- Serving on Policy Council, Parent Committee and other committees
- Activities or work that was sent home that you complete with your child

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

At Danville Head Start Pre-K, our staff are mandated reporters, a legal requirement to report concerns regarding a child's safety and well-being. Our team is trained to recognize when a child or family may benefit from support. Please know that if a report is made, it is to ensure the family receives the help they need, focusing on support and positive change rather than blame.

ANY INDIVIDUAL who is concerned about the welfare of a child and/or who feels a child may be the victim of child abuse, is morally obligated to call the 24 hour CHILDLINE number 1-800-932-0313 and report their concerns.

SMOKING POLICY

Danville Head Start Pre-K cares about the health and safety of our children, families, and staff. It is part of our mission to promote health and wellness. In addition, our Performance Standards require us to provide information to our families regarding preventative health awareness including environmental hazards.

Danville Head Start Pre-K operates a healthy environment that is free from alcohol, illicit drugs, smoking and vaping in all areas including:

- Danville Area School District property, including inside private cars
- School buses or school vehicles at any time
- Within 10 feet of the bus
- Field trips

TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES & RULES

Own Transportation

Drop-off:
- Please arrive no more than 10 minutes before your child's designated start time
- Ensure your child remains in their safety restraints until the vehicle has come to a complete stop

Pick-up:
- Adhere to your child's assigned pick-up time
- If someone unfamiliar is picking up your child, they must be on the approved list and present valid identification

Late Pick-up:
- If your child is not picked up on time, staff will contact: Parent(s) at the provided phone numbers or Emergency contacts listed on the Emergency Contact/Bus Release form

Parking:
- Please do not park in the Head Start Pre-K loop

Bus Rules

Pick-Up and Drop-Off:

Timelines:
- Have your child ready for pick-up on time
- Bus times are approximate; allow a 10-minute window before and after the scheduled time

Escort:
- Children must be escorted to and from the bus
- Meet your child at the bus stop at drop-off

Child's Belongings and Behavior:
- Identification:
  - Label all your child's belongings with their name
- Prohibited Items:
  - Do not send toys, food, money, cough drops, gum, chapstick, or medication on the bus
- Safe Conduct:
  - Encourage your child to sit quietly, stay buckled in their seatbelt, and listen to the driver and bus monitor
  - Head Start regulations require that all children MUST wear a safety restraint on our bus
  - If a child keeps taking off their seatbelt or other children's, their parent/guardian will need to meet with us to make a plan to help the child follow the rules
  - Busing privileges may be suspended due to safety issues

Emergency Contacts/Bus Release

Designated Contacts: Only individuals listed on your child's Emergency Contact/Bus Release form are authorized for pickup from school or the bus stop. Please confirm these individuals are aware of and agree to this responsibility.

Identification Verification: All authorized individuals, including parents and emergency contacts must present a valid photo ID upon request (e.g., in the event of a substitute bus monitor). All individuals picking up a student must be at least 18 years old unless prior approval is granted by the program.

Custody Agreements: In the absence of a court-ordered custody agreement, both parents retain equal pickup rights. Please provide Head Start Pre-K with copies of any relevant court orders to ensure compliance.

Secure Release:
- Children will be released only to verified individuals listed on the Emergency Contact/Bus Release form who present valid photo ID
- Staff WILL NOT release children to anyone not listed on the Emergency Contact/Bus Release form or who are on the list but do not have identification
- Send a written note or call the office if someone not listed on the form is meeting the bus
- In an emergency, if you or an authorized person is not able to get your child, you must call the Head Start Pre-K office at 570-271-3268 ext. 3700 to let them know who will be getting your child

Information Accuracy:
- Please maintain current and accurate Emergency Contact information
- Timely updates are crucial for your child's safety