

Clarksville-Montgomery School System



Pre-K
Handbook

Pre-K classrooms are the ultimate place for learning and fun! Most pre-k students develop better language skills, score higher on school readiness tests, and have better social skills and fewer behavioral problems once they enter school. Pre-k offers your child a quality program that provides respect, nurturing, guidance, and a developmentally sound learning experience. Pre-K actively involves parents, family, and the community. The Pre-k environment fosters the love and joy of learning!

Allergies and Asthma

Your child's school should be informed of any medical conditions, including allergies and asthma. Please make sure you speak with the school nurse to discuss your child's medical needs.

Arrival

Pre-K classrooms will open 5 minutes before class begins. An adult must accompany the child into the building and sign in. Please be on time as it disrupts the schedule when children are late. Children who arrive after the designated time are tardy and must stop by the office with a parent to sign-in and then go to the pre-k classroom to sign-in as well.

Developmental Pre-K students who ride the bus will be dropped off at the designated school location and picked up by a school staff member.

Attendance

The Voluntary Pre-K program is five days a week (Monday-Friday) and follows the CMCSS school calendar. Your child's attendance is critical to the progress that he/she can be expected to make in pre-k. We expect your child to attend every day unless he/she is sick. Pre K is not a drop-in or part-time program. All children are enrolled on a full time basis only. We follow the same schedule as the public schools. When schools are closed for snow or other reasons, pre-k will be closed, as well.

When a student is absent because of illness or emergency, the parent or guardian is asked to send a written excuse with the child when he/she returns to school. If the child is going to be absent more than two days, parents are asked to call the teacher to let her know.

The Developmental Pre-K program allows for part-time students, depending on their needs. Testing and IEP team meetings will decide on placement and participation days.

Please Note: Pre-K students **do not** attend on the first half day (Aug 7).

Birthdays

Birthdays are special to all of us and should be recognized in some way at school. To avoid hurt feelings, students are not allowed to deliver birthday party invitations at school unless everyone in the class is invited. Contact your child's teacher in advance to discuss any plans or arrangements.

Centers

Young children learn best through active play. Your child visits numerous centers each day. Activities at these centers are related to curriculum units and themes. They are also created and aligned with the

Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards. The pre-k classroom enhances your child's curiosity and desire to learn through participation in diverse, large and small group activities. Your child will discover the wonder of our world through exploration at the science center. They will learn to count and order their world as they assemble puzzles, build with blocks, and acquire other manipulative skills. The art and writing centers offer children the joy of creative self-expression. In the dramatic play area, your child will "try on" different roles, such as firefighter, parent, doctor, or dentist. Your child will experience the delight and excitement of books through interactive story time and in the quiet of the library center, as well. Your child might become the next great musician or dancer in the music center. Through interactions with teachers and peers, your child will develop social skills and a sense of self-worth. The pre-k environment, designed by our certified teachers, will help your child develop skills for success in school.

Clothing

Active indoor and outdoor play is a regular part of our school day. Please dress your child in clothing that is suitable for running, climbing, and other vigorous activity, and that is appropriate to the weather. (Play clothes) Tennis shoes are required. For health and safety reasons, please refrain from putting on or allowing your child to wear dress shoes, sandals, or flip-flops. We strongly encourage girls wear shorts underneath their dresses or skirts.

We encourage and teach independence in pre-k. Please send your child to school in clothing that he/she can manipulate fairly independently. Please label any articles of clothing so it does not get lost.

Parents will need to send a change of clothing to be left at school in case of an accident. Label clothing and put in a large zip lock bag with the child's name written on it. You may also want to keep extra seasonal clothes in your child's backpack.

Communication

We believe good communication between school and home is necessary for a positive educational experience. Weekly newsletters and information of upcoming activities will be distributed to each family.

Curriculum

Our Pre-K curriculum is research-based and is approved by the Tennessee Department of Education. It is a hands-on, minds-on curriculum that is aligned with the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standard. It provides children with the foundational skills they need to succeed as lifelong learners.

In addition, **Voluntary Pre-K classrooms** use "Keeping Kids Safe" to teach personal safety. "Keeping Kids Safe" takes a holistic approach to the safety of children. The curriculum is composed of the following 6 Units " Self Esteem "Family and Friends " Feelings " Problem Solving " Personal Safety " Safety Around Me. All sessions begin with Group Time. Spot, the Dalmatian, sometimes introduces story time and gathers children to the story area. Following the story is a list of supplementary activities that give children practice in understanding the concepts. Each classroom will offer two parent sessions aligned to the "Keeping Kids Safe" curriculum for families, including "Communication" and "Child Abuse".

Dis-enrollment

All children are enrolled on a full time basis only. Participation in Pre-K is voluntary and parents may disenroll their children at any time. Excessive unexcused absences, tardiness, and/or extreme unacceptable behavior could result in dismissal from the Voluntary Pre-K program.

Developmental Pre-K is for special needs children only and is either full or part time according to the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Dismissal (Early)

If there is a weather or emergency early dismissal, the information on the Emergency Closing form will determine how the child will get home.

Emergency

All parents must complete an emergency closing form. Parents are asked to make sure that the school always has their most current emergency contact information. If you have any changes in your child's information, such as change of address, new phone numbers (work, home, and cell), changes in guardianship, or changes in any other important information, please inform the school immediately. An emergency contact system is in place and will be used should the need arise.

Expectations

Our community and state are committed to the education of young children. We are a community based on mutual respect and consideration of others. Your child's classroom teacher will share the classroom expectations with you during parent orientation. All children are expected to follow the classroom expectations.

Family Involvement/ Volunteers

Family involvement is the cornerstone of a successful preschool experience. We invite parents/ guardians to share information about family traditions, values, and customs with the children throughout the year. You are invited to participate in the day-to-day activities, be a guest speaker, share a special talent, or read a story in the classroom, but please contact your child's teacher in advance to schedule your visit.

****If you would like to volunteer, the school requires that you fill out a volunteer packet. When the packet has been processed, the teacher will be notified and you will be contacted to discuss volunteer opportunities in the classroom. Parents will be notified of upcoming school-wide and/or classroom activities through the weekly newsletter.

Grievance

If you have a problem or concern, please contact your child's teacher, first. If you are not satisfied, you may contact the Early Learning Administrator, Maribeth Mathis at maribeth.mathis@cmcss.net. We work diligently to solve all problems.

Health

The school requires students to provide documentation of a current physical examination, birth certificate, and immunizations. It is important to remember that preschool children spread contagious

illnesses very rapidly to one another. In order to provide a healthy school environment for all children and staff, the following guidelines have been prepared to help you make decisions regarding your child's health and school attendance. Feel free to call the school nurse with any concerns or questions.

A sick child must be picked up from school as soon as possible after a parent is called. It is the parent's responsibility to make alternative arrangements in the event of illness. See additional information on the CMCSS Health Guidelines. If your child has a fever over 100 degrees your child must stay home until they are fever free without medication for 24 hours.

Immunizations

Your child MUST have an up-to-date immunization record on file before attending pre-k. (On same form with physical). You will NOT be allowed to attend without an immunization record and a current physical.

Kid Central TN

This website has a wealth of information for parents on health, education and child development. CMCSS provides a direct link to this site by going to www.cmcss.net under the heading of Students and Families.

Meals

Breakfast and lunch are available for you to purchase. You may also pack a breakfast or lunch or your child. Please pack healthy options and not just snacks in your child's lunchbox. Please be sure to fill out the free and reduced lunch application as well.

Medication

No medication can be given at school without proper authorization from both the doctor and the parent. Authorization forms are available in the school office. Medication must be in the original bottle bearing the name of the medication, name of the patient, and dosage. Medication will be kept in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office. The nurse will maintain a log of the medication given to each student. No over the counter medication, even cough drops, can be given to the students. Students CANNOT carry their medications to school; a parent MUST deliver it.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a regular part of our day. It is healthy for children to breathe cool, clean air and soak up sunshine. Make sure your child is adequately dressed for the season. Please have your child wear shoes appropriate for running and active movement. Tennis shoes are strongly recommended.

Parent-Teacher Conference

Pre-K parents will be given the opportunity to conference with the teacher regarding their child's progress. Conferences will be offered county wide in the fall and spring. At this time, parents will be shown testing and checklist results, as well as reading informal notes taken by the teacher. Parents who wish to schedule additional conferences may let the teacher or office know and a time will be arranged. In order to not interrupt classroom instruction time, these MUST be scheduled in advance.

Progress Reports

Progress reports for **Voluntary Pre-K** students will be sent home with children every 9 weeks. The report will include your child's areas of strengths and needs for improvement. Although formal grades are not used in Pre-K, students are assessed and parents will be kept informed.

Developmental Pre-K students will receive progress reports (IEP goals/progress monitoring) will be sent home every 4 ½ weeks. The report will include your child's areas of strengths and needs of improvement. Although formal grades are not used in Pre-K, students will be assessed and parents will be kept informed.

Release Policy

A record of the designated individuals to whom the child may be released to from pre-k or the bus is on file. For your child's safety, we will NOT release your child to anyone who is not listed. Changes MUST be made in writing. Staff may ask for photo identification of people with whom they are not familiar.

Court documents must be on file if a parent is restricted from picking up a child. If there is a custody concern, we are legally bound to honor the wishes of the parent who has legal custody. If no legal documents are on file, we must consider both parents as having equal rights of access to the child due to Tennessee law.

If a parent or authorized person arrives to pick up the child and is acting in a manner that may place the child at immediate risk of harm, expect the staff to question the appropriateness of releasing the child. The staff may hold the child until more suitable transportation can be arranged. For example, staff will not release a child to someone who is obviously under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

School administrators will be notified immediately and appropriate authorities will be contacted.

Schedule

Each classroom has a daily schedule posted. The daily schedule includes breakfast, large and small group activities (including time in learning centers and outdoors), and lunch. Your child will also participate in routine safety drills.

Separation

We understand children have difficulty with separation. We are always ready to talk to you and comfort your child. We are there to help during those transition times and help comfort your child once you leave. Always say goodbye with a kiss, hug, and a wave. Be firm, but friendly about leaving. If your child whines or clings, prolonging the goodbye will only make it harder for yourself and your child.

Children need time to get used to change and need constant positive reinforcement (praise, encouragement, etc.) to help them adjust and succeed. Children should be given at least three to four weeks to settle into a comfortable routine. Approach school in a positive manner and use statements such as "When you get to school, you'll get to play with your friends or you'll get to play outside."

Toys

Please do not send any toys from home except on designated special days.

Technology

Students interact with technology and use technology as a learning tool on a daily basis. Pre-K students become familiar with technology in the classroom through use of listening centers, computers, and iPads.

Transportation for Developmental Pre-K Only

Parents must inform the Pre-K staff how their child will get to and from school. If the child is to ride a bus, parents must inform the teacher, so they can submit a request for transportation. Pre-K students are expected to follow rules at all times.

The names listed on the CMCSS Special Transportation Form are the **ONLY** people authorized to receive the student at the bus stop and can sign the student off or on the bus.

Parents/guardians or designees **MUST** accompany their children to the bus stop each morning and must be present to meet the bus when the child gets off in the afternoon. Please arrive at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to your scheduled stop time.

If your information changes, you must inform the teacher, so they can update your information and submit the updated form. Changes may take up to 2 weeks before the change takes place.

Please notify the school when your child is not going to ride the bus.

The expectation for parents is to be at the designated stop. **Please do not stand in the house, on the porch or in a car.** The bus has a schedule to keep and we need all participating to be waiting at the actual designated stop.

If parents/guardians are not home when the bus arrives in the afternoon, the child will be taken back to the school. If we cannot reach the designated individuals listed on the Special Transportation Form, the matter will be handled directly by the school's administrations (the same steps will be taken if a parent is late picking up a child, see below).

Failure to be at the bus stop on time in the morning and afternoons could result in the loss of transportation. Transportation is a privilege and is scheduled as a convenience to parents.

There is no transportation for accepted Voluntary Pre-K students.

If your child is a car rider, you must drop-off and pick-up at the time school starts and ends. If you are late picking up your child from school the following steps will be followed:

1. First time an adult is late, you will have a conversation with the School Principal.
2. Second time an adult is late, the PreK Specialist will be contacted, and we will create a plan to make sure late pick-up doesn't happen again.
3. The third time an adult is late, DCS will be contacted, and a report will be filed.
4. If the child is picked up late after DCS is contacted, as a last resort, the child could be removed from the program.

Visitors

For safety reasons and to minimize disruptions in the classroom, all visitors to the school must check in at the office and receive a visitor pass. A picture ID is required in the office. We strive to protect the teaching time in the classroom; therefore parents wishing to have a conference with the teacher must schedule one with the teacher when the teacher does not have classroom duties.

Weather

Parents will be notified via the automated calling service for weather related district delays and closings. This information will also be posted on the district's website.

If the district is on a 1 or 2- hour delay, Pre-K will follow the same delay schedule as their school. Buses will also run 1 or 2 hours later depending on the delay.

Websites

Be sure to visit the district's website www.cmcass.net, then visit your child's school's website.

You are your child's first and most important teacher. You are great and we appreciate you! You can help your child have a successful year by doing some of the following:

- Read with your child every day and talk about the story after you read. It encourages a love of reading. It sends the message that reading is important and fun.
- Be interested in your child's day. Ask questions like, "What did you learn today?" "What did you do during center time today?" or "What centers did you choose today?"
- Be sure to allow for enough sleep at night (about 10-12 hours). Studies show that children who received a good night's sleep perform better and learn more than children who do not get enough sleep.
- Speak positively about school. The way your child perceives your feelings about school and his/her teachers will have a direct effect on his/her feelings of school and motivation to learn.
- It is very important to become involved in your child's pre-k activities. Not only does it give them the message that you care, it also helps them to succeed in school.

Handbook Confirmation Page

Please complete and return to your child's teacher.

Date: _____

I have read and understand the Pre-Kindergarten Policies as stated in the CMCSS Pre-Kindergarten Handbook.

Child's name: _____

Parent/ Guardian's Signature: _____