



2021 - 2022

Parent Handbook

The Charlotte- Mecklenburg NC Pre-K program is administered in partnership with Smart Start of Mecklenburg County and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. In compliance with federal law, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools administers all education programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin, age or disability.



NC PRE-KINDERGARTEN PARENT HANDBOOK

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August 2021

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Welcome to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg NC Pre-K family! Soon your child will begin one of the most exciting times in his or her life. This year will be a very important one, and the Pre-K teachers and staff are looking forward to working with your child.

We know that you trust us with your precious child. We want to assure you that we will provide your young child with a nurturing environment that encourages and literacy growth.

This handbook gives you an overview of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools NC Pre-K Program. NC- Pre-K is contracted by Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. The best source for finding out more about the program will be by visiting the site and talking with your child's teacher. Your involvement is critical to your child's success in school and you are welcome at any time!

Thank you for sharing your child with us.

Sincerely,
Tracy Thiery
Assistant Director NC Pre-K Program

MISSION

CMS Pre-K provides students with a developmentally appropriate educational environment that focuses on all areas of child development to build a foundation for success in Kindergarten and beyond.

GOALS

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Pre-Kindergarten Program/NC Pre-K provides a curriculum focused on developing each child's social, emotional, physical and academic skills in a safe, caring and friendly environment. The Pre-Kindergarten curriculum goals are to:

- Provide a child-centered and project based approach program based on how young children learn, through their experiences (play), the environment and interactions with adults and other children.
- Provide the stepping stones for success in kindergarten.
- Involve families in their child's learning (reading with them, having conversations about what the child is learning, and other ways you will hear about during the year).

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is necessary for your child to get the greatest benefit from this learning opportunity. Attendance is critical for success! Children absent from school miss out on key opportunities to learn, build lasting friendships, and develop the skills needed for kindergarten success. There is a clear connection between student attendance and student performance in school.

In order for your child to meet the goals of our program and to be ready for kindergarten, he/she needs to attend a full day of school each day. Parents who bring their child to school should arrive in their child's classroom at least 10 minutes before the instructional day is to begin. This will give your child an opportunity to unpack, wash their hands and get ready for the day.

Excused Absences: student illness, religious holidays, death in the immediate family, quarantine, family emergencies, education opportunities with prior approval, court or administrative proceedings

Unexcused Absences: missing the bus, oversleeping, lack of heat/water/electricity, bad weather, car trouble.

You are expected to communicate with the school when your child is absent. Regular attendance is necessary for your child to get the greatest benefit from the program.

On-time arrival each day is also key to your child's success. Please make arriving on time a priority. Tardy procedures are established at all schools for handling late arrivals. Those tardy procedures may include signing your child in, getting a visitor's pass and walking him/her to the classroom.

Picking up children before dismissal time results in missed learning opportunities for your child. Many schools do not allow dismissal during the last 30 minutes of the school day.

BREAKFAST / LUNCH

- The kitchen staff provides free breakfast and lunch. Posted menus align with the USDA nutrition guidelines for children.
- If parents choose to pack their child's lunch, please contact the site director.



FOOD ALLERGIES

- If your child has a food allergy, you must provide this **written** information from a licensed health care provider to the site director. Please make sure it describes your child's specific allergic condition.
- Once documentation is received, the school will work closely with you to develop a plan that will minimize risk to the child, as well as an emergency plan in the event of an allergic reaction.



For complete details concerning allergies, visit the CMS website and see Board Policy JLCG and JLCG-R (Students with Food Allergies).

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL LEARNING IN PRE K

Children will form positive relationships with adults and children, learn how to express their emotions, and learn to regulate themselves. To be successful in school, children learn to use self-discipline, cooperate, share, follow directions, listen, and show respect for themselves and others. It is the responsibility of adults to help children learn these behaviors. In Pre-K classrooms, this is accomplished by providing activities that encourage the development of these skills and by modeling these skills for the children. Keeping children actively engaged in learning, consistent rules, and procedures, and parent support help children learn these skills.

Parents will be responsible for promoting emotional and social development by:

1. Teaching and discussing the purpose of classroom and school rules. (Children respond well to clear and consistent expectations from adults.)
2. Attending conferences at school when needed.
3. Providing structure at home and reviewing school correspondence sent home in the child's bookbag.
4. Working to maintain consistent routines, such as a regular bedtime and routine (for example, reading a book before turning out the light).
5. Responding appropriately to school reports by praising and encouraging positive behavior and discussing areas that need improvement.

The Pre-K administrators and staff will promote emotional and social development by:

1. Forming positive relationships with children and parents.
2. Teaching children classroom procedures and expectations, implementing a positive reinforcement system, and supporting children's communication as they express their wants and needs.
3. Using non-verbal cues (pictures) or prompts (pictures, signals) to encourage children to correct their own behavior.
4. Using verbal cues to redirect children to make desirable choices.
5. Recognizing natural consequences and providing logical and respectful consequences (cleaning up a spill).
6. Working with parents, administrators, support staff and teachers to develop and implement a behavior intervention plan, if needed.
7. Requesting support from Pre-K program personnel or making a referral to the school intervention team.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is key to your child's success in school. Parents are important to the success of our program as well. Each family is expected to *read at least 100 books* with their child during the course of the year, attend Parent Orientation, participate in parent conferences, and participate in two school related events. Below are some ways that you can fulfill your parent participation expectations.

Take-Home Readers

To help families meet their reading goals for the year, teachers will provide each student with take-home readers on a regular basis. Of course, books from home or the public library may be read instead of the book your child brings home. We also support the use of online readings and stories as well.

Please follow this process:

- Books may be read by parents or another adult family member.
- Parents should sign, date and provide the title of the book read each day.
- Please return book(s) and the Daily Reading Record back to school.
- Parents are responsible for replacing books from school that are damaged or lost.

Holidays

The Pre-K program focuses on the young child's world through children's books. We have special celebrations throughout the year that relate to current creative curriculum study in the classroom. Please refer to school board policy regarding Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Religion/Religion in Schools regarding religious celebrations. We do not use NC Pre-K Funds for religious materials or activities.

School Visits

Although parents are expected to have four school visits during the course of the year; you are also encouraged to volunteer, visit or attend school functions as often as your schedule allows. Opportunities include:

- Volunteering in the classroom.
- Accompanying the class on field trips
- Attending school wide functions such as Parent Workshops, School Programs, Book Fair, etc.
- Having breakfast or lunch with your child at school.
- Virtual Workshops

Volunteering is an important part of the educational experience. Volunteers and parent involvement are critical to the success of our students. Please register to be a volunteer in your child's classroom!

Family Support Staff

The literacy coach, social worker, and family advocate act as consultants and may be invited to observe and offer suggestions to teachers and parents. In addition, they can provide information on community resources offered to families, children and staff.

NC Pre-K Daily Schedule (*Sample)



7:30-8:00	Arrival & Morning Free Choice Time (Students will answer the Question <i>of the Day</i>)
8:00-8:05	Clean-Up
8:05-8:30	Breakfast
8:30-8:50	RECAP or Arte y Mas
8:50-8:55	Music & Movement
8:55-9:15	Large Group
9:15-10:20	Interest Centers/ Free Choice Time
10:20-10:40	Read Aloud #1
10:45-11:15	Outside Time #1
11:20-11:50	Lunch
11:50-12:10	Quiet Time
12:10-12:30	Read Aloud #2
12:30-1:00	Outside Time #2
1:00-2:10	Interest Areas/ Free Choice Time
2:10-2:30	Large Group Meeting & Departure

STUDENT HEALTH



EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND FIRST AID

In case of a suspected contagious disease or emergency, these procedures are followed:

- The parent is contacted.
- The parent is asked to take the child home or to a doctor.

For more serious incidents or accidents:

- The school calls 911.
- The parent is notified.

If necessary, the student is sent with an accompanying adult to the hospital of the parent's choice as **indicated on the emergency contact card.**

MEDICATION

ALL MEDICATION SHOULD BE GIVEN AT HOME. However, some students need medication on a regular schedule in order to receive maximum effect in treatment. In these cases, a Medical Authorization Form must be submitted. In addition, to maintain the safety of all children:



- The Medical Authorization Form should contain the name of the drug, dosage and the time interval that the medication is taken. Additional forms may be picked up at the school office.
- All prescription medication must be in the original container with the prescription label.
- Non-prescription medication such as aspirin can only be given with the written permission of the parent **and** physician. It must be in the original container with the label attached. No medications will be accepted without the Medical Authorization Form.
- **Children are not to handle any medication. Medication should be handed from parent to teacher.**

ILLNESS OR SICKNESS

In the case of illness where your child has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, he/she should remain at home. When a child becomes ill and appears to have a contagious or communicable disease while at school, parents will be contacted. The director or school will determine if a child is too ill to remain at school. Any child experiencing the following symptoms will be sent home:



- ✓ A fever higher than 100.4 degrees
- ✓ Suspected contagious skin or eye infection
- ✓ Diarrhea that exceeds 2 or more stools above normal for that child.
- ✓ Vomiting 2 or more times, unless vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition.


If your child becomes infected with a contagious disease, please notify the school immediately so they can notify families of other children who may have been exposed to the disease. Some contagious diseases include: flu, chicken pox, measles, pink eye, impetigo, ringworm, pinworms and head lice.

***Your center will be giving you guidance on Covid-19.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

The safety of your child is our concern. In case of bad weather, here are some important things to remember:



- The decision to close schools or delay opening them will be made no later than 5:00 AM the morning of the closing or delay. If possible, the decision will be made the evening before.
 - Tune into area radio and television stations for the CMS announcement or contact a neighbor who can listen for you.
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Below is a list of some local TV & radio stations

- WBTV
- WCNC
- WSOC
- 95.1 KISS
- 96.1 HITS
- 102.9 The Lake

Weather Updates will be posted on the CMS website www.wearecms.com and the CMS Mobile District app.

Please use the following link for your corresponding mobile device to download the app:

iPhone: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/cms-mobile/id907220025?mt=8&ign-mpt=uo%3D4>

Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.dub.app.cms&hl=en>

Generally, all Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools/NC Pre-K sites will be affected by the decision, not just schools in areas of the county where weather conditions are most severe. If no announcement is made, you may assume schools will operate on a normal schedule.

TRANSPORTATION BY CAR

Each site has designated a specific parking area for visitors and parents. Parents or guardians who bring children to school in the mornings must walk them to the classroom, sign them in and let the teacher or assistant know that the child is present. Never leave the child in the classroom alone. When picking up a child, make sure the teacher or teacher assistant is made aware that the child is leaving. Parents providing children with transportation are asked to be on time for drop-off and pick-up. Late pick-ups will result in wrap-around fees.

Your child will be released only to the parent(s) or other persons authorized by the parent. The designated person must show identification that matches information on file at the site.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

The CMS NC Pre-K Program does not provide before and after school care. Any supervision needed before or after normal school operational hours should be arranged with the center your child is attending and is subject to any applicable fees. If your child is receiving child care subsidy, it can be applied to wrap around care services. For more information about child care subsidy, please contact Child Care Resources, Inc. at 704-376-6697.

WITHDRAWAL

If you choose to withdraw your child, please contact the Pre-K staff as soon as possible and let them know your plans. We appreciate knowing ahead of time if you will be withdrawing your child for any reason.

TRANSFER

If you would like to request a transfer during the school year to another North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten site, please contact us at 980-343-5950 or prek@cms.k12.nc.us and we will send you a Request for Transfer Form.

MAINTAINING CURRENT INFORMATION

As the school year progresses, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will send information regarding the next school year. For this reason, and in the event of an emergency, it is important that your address on record remains accurate. Please notify the center of any address, telephone or emergency contact changes as soon as possible. Please email prek@cms.k12.nc.us or call 980-343-5950 if you have moved and we will provide instructions on how to change your address with CMS.

CLOTHING



As you know, young children are extremely active. Please dress your child for play and according to weather conditions. Tennis shoes or other rubber soled shoes are the safest footwear choices. Sandals, flip flops, shoes with wheels or elevated heels are not safe for young children and therefore may not be worn to school.

*** Please note that, if your child's school has a school uniform policy, Pre-K students must follow the dress code.**

Parents are asked to send a complete change of clothes to school (i.e. bottom, top, socks, and underclothes). The clothes are kept in the child's individual cubby to be used in case of accidental soiling or wetness. If your child comes home with clothes provided by the school, please remember to wash and return them to school.

STUDENT PROGRESS



Starting in September, your child's teacher will observe him/her throughout the school day, recording what is seen and heard by taking notes, collecting samples of your child's drawings and writings, taking photos, and recording audio or video clips. We use a program called "TS Gold" to help us track your child's progress.

You will receive a detailed report to inform you of your child's progress at the end of each trimester. For each area of development and learning, your child's current knowledge, skills, and behaviors will be listed. In addition, there is a section that shares what skills and or behaviors your child will be doing next. Teachers will share ways you can support your child's development and learning at home. When reading reports, it is important to remember that all children develop at different rates and other factors can play a role in this development. As a district, we are committed to helping your child grow to their fullest potential.

If you have any questions on how to read this report please contact your child's teacher.

*The timing of this assessment might alter due to Covid-19



Three times a year your child will also be assessed in Early Reading Measures. These measures will assess the following areas which link to literacy:

- Picture Naming (Oral Language)
- Rhyming (Phonological Awareness)
- Sound Identification (Alphabet Knowledge)
- 'Which One Doesn't Belong?' (Comprehension)
- Alliteration (Phonological Awareness)

*The timing of this assessment might alter due to Covid-19

CMS Pre-Kindergarten Learning Compact

In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools we believe in the importance of families and schools working together. We believe that students do their best through the teamwork of students, families and educators. This friendly agreement lists the ways we all can contribute to the success of every student.

Parent and Family Responsibilities

- Make sure my child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Make sure my child is well rested.
- Check my child's book bag every day for home/school communication.
- Make childcare arrangements for my child before school and after school.
- Allow school staff to make home visits during the school year.
- Attend a Parent Orientation session, parent-teacher conference, PTA meetings and workshops whenever possible (at least 4 times during the school year).
- Agree to read 100 books (4 books per week) with my child and sign the reading log.
- Contact teachers or staff when I have a question about my child.
- Join teacher's classroom platforms

Student Responsibilities

- Come to school every day on time.
- Follow school and classroom rules.
- Read 100 books (4 books per week) with my parent/guardian.
- Follow teachers' directions.
- Help parent/guardian check my book bag daily.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Make a home visit at the beginning of the year and have at least one parent-teacher conference annually.
- Provide a safe, welcoming environment for students and parents/guardians.
- Help parents/guardians identify ways to help their children learn the skills that will enable them to read and write well.
- Communicate regularly with parents/guardians about children's language and early literacy skills, social and emotional development and progress in school.
- Provide a book every day (Take-Home Readers) or resources for virtual stories that the parent/guardian and child can read together.
- Provide high quality instruction to all students.
- Assess students' progress using TS Gold.
- Teach and practice the social and emotional behaviors that will lead to cooperation.
- During remote learning teachers will reach out via phone multiple times to families.

Director Responsibilities

- Adheres to all DCDEE license guidelines and NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Responsibility manual
- Welcome all parents/guardians and encourage them to take an active part in the school community and their children's education.
- Educate students, teachers, families and school staff about the importance of daily conversation and reading as well as the partnership approach of the Compact.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for parents/guardians to participate in school activities (i.e. parent workshops and volunteering).
- Ensure that translators or equipment are available so that all parents/guardians can participate.
- Encourage involvement of Pre-K families at all school events.



>>SIGN AND DATE SIGNATURE PAGE<<



2021-2022

CMS School Calendar

*****Due to Covid-19 dates could change**

Labor Day	September 6, 2021
Teacher Workday	September 16, 2021
Early Release	October 6, 2021
Teacher Workday	November 2, 2021
Veterans Day Holiday	November 11, 2021
Thanksgiving Break	November 24-26, 2021
Early Release	December 8, 2021
Winter Break	December 20-January 3
Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	January 17, 2022
Teacher Workday	January 24, 2022
Teacher Workday	February 21, 2022
Early Release	March 9, 2022
Teacher Workday	March 28, 2022
Spring Break	April 11-18, 2022
Early Release	May 4, 2022
Memorial Day Holiday	May 30, 2022
Last day of school	June 8 ,2022