



NRHEG

Panther Preschool

Parent Handbook

A Community Education Program for families with Pre-Kindergarten
Children in ISD 2168, New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva

NRHEG Community Education Office
(located in the New Richland Building, B121)
306 Ash Ave. S
New Richland, MN 56072
(507) 417-2667

Ellendale School Office: 684-3181. Address: 600 School St., Ellendale, MN 56026
New Richland School Office: 465-3205. Address: 306 Ash Ave. S., New Richland, MN 56072

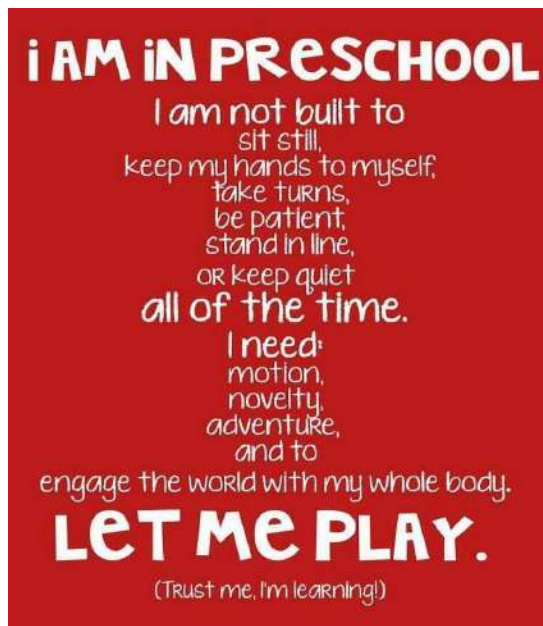
Staff Directory:

Grace Nelson
New Richland Preschool Teacher
gnelson@nrheg.k12.mn.us
507-417-2635

Elizabeth Nelson
Ellendale Preschool Teacher
enelson@nrheg.k12.mn.us
507-416-2112

Katelyn McGowan
ECSE Teacher
kmcgowan@nrheg.k12.mn.us
507-416-2112

Macy Whiteside
Community Education Director
mwhiteside@nrheg.k12.mn.us
507-417-2667



Welcome to the NRHEG
Panther Preschool!
We look forward to sharing
our world with you and your
child to ensure a happy and
exciting experience.

Class Options

We are a licensed preschool for ages 3-5. Our preschool holds classes in both the Ellendale and New Richland Buildings. The schedule is as follows:

3 Year Old

(Children must be 3 on or before 9/1/2024)

Two-day session (\$100.00 per month, 2 days per week)

Session 1: Tuesdays & Thursdays (8:00-10:30am)

New Richland

Session 2: Tuesdays & Thursdays (8:00-10:30am)

Ellendale

4/5 Year Old

(Children must be 4 on or before 9/1/2024)

Three-day session (\$155.00 per month, 3 days per week)

Session 3: Monday / Wednesday / Friday (8:00-11:00am)

New Richland

Session 5: Monday / Wednesday / Friday (8:00-11:00am)

Ellendale

Four-day session (\$187.00 per month, 4 days per week)

Session 4: Mon. / Tues. / Wed. / Thurs. (12:15-3:15pm)

New Richland

Session 6: Mon. / Tues. / Wed. / Thurs. (12:15-3:15pm)

Ellendale



Participation Opportunities

1. Early Childhood Screening – make sure this is done within 90 days of enrollment. It is mandated before Kindergarten enrollment, but should be done as close to 3 1/2 years old as possible. If you receive an Early Learning Scholarship it must be done within 60 days of enrollment or your scholarship will be revoked per state statute.
2. Parent-teacher conferences – Attend two each year. Fall & Spring.
3. Volunteer in the classroom. Register in advance for this with the classroom teacher. You will be notified of confirmation to do it, and please sign in at the School office when you arrive. You can read to the class, share a hobby, and more! All classroom volunteers need a background check before they can be in the classroom.
4. School Readiness – Participate in parent/child home activities such as reading logs, activity calendars, etc.
5. Parent/Child Special Events – They are planned with you in mind. We encourage you to attend them all. Notification of these events will be sent home in your child's folders. Examples:, Cookies with Santa, Grandparent's Night, Halloween KidsFest, Adventures in Parenting (ECFE Parent Education Classes), etc.
6. Snack and Supplies – Each family will need to contribute to our snack cart every other month. Your child's teacher will send home a list of your assigned months.
7. Parent Advisory Council – We need you! We have 4 meetings per year and you can help as much or little as you want to plan events, fundraising, and give program input.

ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL:

Art Activities:

School is a place to have fun and get messy! Art activities encourage children to use their imagination as well as to problem solve. Your child will be exposed to a variety of art materials such as paints, glue, play-dough, shaving cream, rice, and much more! We encourage children to wear play clothes to school.

Music and Movement:

Children learn in many ways. Preschoolers love to use their bodies and voices. Each class session will include a variety of song, rhyme, and movement activities that will introduce concepts of math, science, and language for the children. We encourage children to wear tennis shoes in order to participate in all activities.

Literacy:

Books will be an integral part of your child's day at school. Many stories will be read, discussed, and included in daily learning activities. We have also participated in Minnesota Reading Corp to help preschoolers meet literacy benchmarks for Kindergarten in picture naming, letter naming, rhyming, alliteration, and letter sounds.

Pre-Math and Science Experiences:

Children will learn about shapes, colors, and patterning. They will perform many "experiments" to discover interesting facts about the world around them.

Letter Concepts:

Each week children will be introduced to a new letter. They will learn not only what each letter looks like, but also how it sounds and even feels. This exposure to the alphabet is up to plant the seed in the minds of the children that letters have meaning, that they make up words, and that words make up stories and so on.

Number Concepts

Children will learn the basics of counting through a variety of math activities including games, songs, and table-top activities with manipulatives.

Take Home Activities:

Parents can expand upon concepts introduced at school with take-home activities. These will provide parents another excellent opportunity to be involved in their child's learning. So please keep a close eye on your child's school folder and check it after school every evening so you are able to do the fun take-home activity with your child so they can discuss it in class with their teacher and friends the following day!

Child Assessment Procedures:

Our program uses 3 different assessment tools throughout the school year (Panther Preschool Academic Informational Assessment TS Gold Assessment for all preschoolers, and the Phonemic Awareness Assessment for the 4/5 year old class in the Spring. These assessment tools help us to identify and track skills of preschool students in the areas of personal and social development, physical development, and language and literacy emergence. A portfolio for each child is assembled and used to share with parents at bi-annual Parent/Teacher conferences.

WHILE YOUR CHILD IS IN SCHOOL....

General Education Methods

We are concerned about the child's emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth. Children will learn how to deal with others and new situations. They will be offered many new experiences in which to learn and grow. We will provide multi-cultural and ethnic experiences that develop each child's family and community. We also have centers for learning. We encourage children to learn and develop at each one's individual rate while keeping in mind developmental milestones.

Some specific activities that we will offer are field trips, centers, numbers, colors, letters, weather, science, show and tell, projects, stories, music, outside play, and so much more!

Behavior Management Plan

A very important part of the preschool experience is helping children learn how to get along in the world, enjoy being with other children, and follow the direction of an adult other than their parent. Our goal is to help the children to learn and develop self-control and responsibility for their actions within their environment.

We believe each child is unique and should be allowed to develop at his or her own pace. Our priority is to provide a safe, nurturing environment where children are challenged and allowed to grow at their individual rates. Conflicts may arise when children interact in a classroom setting. We will take every opportunity to teach each child ways to solve their differences in a PEACEFUL manner. We will praise and recognize positive behavior, while discouraging & productively addressing negative behaviors. We believe discipline is not about reprimand, but rather about teaching appropriate forms of behavior.

Our guidance and discipline goals are carried out by:

- *Teachers and staff who serve as role models for appropriate behavior.* Our teaching staff sets examples and models ways for children to express their feelings and effectively problem-solve.
- *Creating an environment that is comfortable and safe for all children.* Our programs offer a variety of age-appropriate educational toys and activities, which provide children with the opportunity to experiment with their world and socialize with their peers.
- *Stating clear and concise rules.* Children are better able to express themselves and successfully work within their environments when they are aware of what is expected and of their limits.
- *Acknowledging and respecting each child's feelings.* Teachers help children to express and understand their feelings, which allows them to recognize their feelings and express them in a positive manner.
- *Using redirection to refocus the child's attention towards a more positive outcome.* Redirection helps to avoid unnecessary confrontations while guiding children to make appropriate choices.
- *Having consistent and ongoing communication between teaching staff and parents.* Open lines of communication regarding each child's day will help the adults in the child's life better understand his/her state of development. This shared knowledge will give the adults the information necessary to better meet the needs of each child.

Panther Preschool defines unacceptable behavior as:

- *A child who continuously stops the flow and continuity of the program.
- *A child inflicting physical or emotional harm on other children or staff.
- *A child who is consistently unable to follow the rules and expectations of the program.
- *A child/parent who uses abusive language or threatens other children or staff members.
- *A child who continues to behave against the Panther Preschool policies explained here that the Teacher/Director feels that the program can no longer function effectively due to the unacceptable behavior of a child.

If a child engages in unacceptable behavior:

- The child will be supported by the staff and redirected to an appropriate activity and given suggestions for positive choices.
- If this is not effective the child will be removed briefly from the activity and the child and staff will engage in "TAKING A BREAK." This provides time for our staff and the child to discuss the situation and concerning behavior to help the child make a better choice next time.
- Parents will be contacted in a timely manner regarding any behavioral concerns and ways to resolve with help and support from parents/caregivers.
- A conference may be required of the parent(s), teacher(s), and director to further discuss the child's behavior if ongoing.

If the above steps have been followed and the child's inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be dismissed from the program. However, if a situation occurs that severely jeopardizes the health, safety, and wellbeing of the children and staff in the program, the Director reserves the right to dismiss a child immediately, without advance warning or notice.

Preschool Orientation

Towards the end of July / beginning of August each family will receive a Preschool Orientation packet in the mail filled with forms that will need to be filled out ahead of time and brought back to your individual orientation. In August, families will receive an email from our preschool teachers inviting them to sign up for an orientation timeslot, it is required that you attend with your child as this is an essential time for you to get to know your child's teacher as well as for your child's teacher to get to know your child and you as well, and to collect your required paperwork. Each individual orientation will take approximately 15-20 minutes. Please feel free to bring any snacks, items, or donations during this time as well.

Preconference

At some time before your child starts preschool (usually orientation), your child's teacher will have a preconference with you and your child. This is our opportunity to get acquainted. It is also a time for us to answer any questions you may have.

Conferences

We will have two conferences per year. These will help us to share how your child has progressed physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially.

If you would like to talk with your child's teacher, please let her know. Our doors are always open. If there are any concerns, we hope that these will be freely brought to us. Likewise, if there are any concerns, we will contact you as soon as it arises.

Flexible Learning Days:

The first five days that school is cancelled (due to weather, etc.) will be considered flexible learning days. Parents will receive a packet to work on with their child for these days school is cancelled. We will have a bingo card that your child has to do five squares of fun activities and then send back to school within the next couple of days.

Labeling Belongings

All personal belongings (coats, boots, hats, backpack, folders, etc.) that are brought to school should be labeled with the child's name.

Toileting

All children are required to be toilet trained, however accidents do happen! This is why we ask that you bring an extra change of clothes for your child. During preschool if your child has a bathroom accident we will assist as much as possible to help your child get cleaned up and changed. Please make sure another set of clothes is dropped off with your child at preschool the following day.

For ease of toileting, please dress your child in clothing that your child can remove in order to attend to his/her own needs (e.g. Snaps, suspenders, jumpsuits, and belts may be difficult for your child)

Outdoor Recess

What are the benefits of outdoor play? It invites children to learn science, creates opportunities for social interaction and collaboration, promotes physical health, invites new contexts for learning, promotes better sleep, gives children a chance to take appropriate risks, may lead to better learning outcomes once children return to their classroom, supports STEM skills, and anchors children to the real world.

Preschoolers will be going outside each day if the weather allows. Please make sure to bring appropriate outdoor clothing for your child each day they are at school or please feel free to leave a set of outdoor clothing in the classroom. We have a limited supply of extra outdoor play gear, so please plan appropriately.

Field Trips

We will be going on some in-town field trips. We will send permission slips home that need to be signed for your child to attend. We will be asking for parent volunteers for field trips.

Snack Time

In order to keep costs as low as possible each month, we ask that each child contribute a snack for the entire class a few times per year because we will be having a snack each day. A snack list will be sent home with each child stating which months your child needs to bring a snack to share. Homemade treats may not be brought due to State Health Department directives. Snacks must be purchased and brought to the room in an unopened commercial package. Your child may bring a treat to share on his/her birthday or half-birthday if you would like to. Healthy snacks/treats are highly encouraged.

Please do not send candy, gum, or soda with your child or any food item not meant to be shared with the class.

Parents should be sure to notify your child's teacher (and write it on any forms) and staff of any allergies.

Backpack

Each child needs to have a backpack, book bag, or other bag for bringing home papers and projects.

Medication

If your child needs medication during school hours, please notify the office and your child's teacher, and she will provide you with our school policy regarding medications and the administration of them. All attempts should be made to give meds before or after class times.

Communication

It is very important that you check your child's bag every day. Parent newsletters are sent home in your child's backpack at the beginning of each month along with at-home activities. Newsletters contain important information about upcoming special events, non-school days and fun information about your child's learning at school and home. Please read it thoroughly.

Pets

The NRHEG schools have a policy that states that pets will not be allowed in the building at any time. Photos of pets are encouraged!

Drop off/Pick up (the procedures for each building may change at any time, the preschool staff will update you for any changes during the Orientation in September)

New Richland: All doors to the Secondary School are locked from 8:30am to 3:05pm.

AM class: For the morning class, please drop off and pick up your child through the south entrance door #2. At 7:55am the preschool classroom door will open and you will be able to drop your child off at that time. The south exterior entrance door will be locked at 8:30am so if you are late dropping off your child please use the main entrance door (#1E to be buzzed in through the District Office) to the school. Preschool pickup is at 11:00am, please feel free to wait outside the south entrance door to pick up your child after class.

PM class: For the afternoon class, please drop off and pick up your child through the south entrance door #2. At 12:10pm the preschool classroom door will open and you will be able to drop your child off at that time. The south exterior entrance door will be locked. Preschool pickup is at 3:15pm, please feel free to wait outside the south entrance door to pick up your child after class. If you drop off or pick up between 8:30am to 3:05pm need to pick up your child at any time are late picking up or dropping off please use the main entrance door (#1E to be buzzed in through the District Office).

Ellendale:

AM class: We will use the north entrance doors for dropping off and picking up after class. You may begin dropping your child off at 7:55am, please use the North entrance door (#1N) lobby area. For picking up at 11:00am please be ready for your child at the North entrance doors or in your vehicle. Feel free to wait in your car until you see your child/teacher at the door.

PM class: We will use the north entrance doors for dropping off and picking up after class. You may begin dropping your child off at 12:10pm, please use the North entrance door (#1N) lobby area. For picking up at 3:15pm please be ready for your child at the North entrance doors or in your vehicle. Feel free to wait in your car until you see your child/teacher at the door.

- Each child must be accompanied to their classroom by their parent or responsible person.
- Each child is assigned a locker or cubby. If there is a change in your pickup plan, we need to be notified of the change for that day.
- Please be respectful of drop off times (you may drop your child off 5 minutes before class begins) and please pick up and drop off children promptly. A parent/guardian/authorized adult will be required to sign your child in before each class and out after each class.

Late Pick-Up Procedures

If a parent/guardian/adult is late picking up their child: a phone call will be placed to you within 5 minutes after preschool has dismissed. If your child has not been picked up within 5-10 minutes after class has ended your child will be walked to the School Age Care – Wrap around program (if available in the building) located in the same building for daycare services – there a fee will be charged for daycare. If the wrap-around care is not available in your child's school a fee will be charged after the 2nd late pickup. So please plan accordingly so your children are picked up on time or feel free to register with the School Age Care – Wrap around daycare program for preschoolers.

Health and Safety

- Current immunization records are required for all children. MN Department of Health rules do not allow children to begin school without it on file.
- ***Restrictions/policies may be implemented at any time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will keep everyone updated as needed.***
 - **COVID-19 symptoms: more common**
 - new or worsening cough
 - Fever of 100.4 or higher
 - Difficulty/hard time breathing
 - New loss of taste or smell
- A child must be fever free for 24 hours to return to school
- Children taking antibiotics must be on the medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- Children who have vomited during the night should not attend school the next day.
- If you discover head lice on your child, please notify the school. Your child can return to school as soon as their heads have been treated with a lice killing remedy and they no longer have live lice in their hair. Children will be allowed to return to school after being cleared by the school nurse. Please know that this is confidential information and we will not disclose your child's name to non-school personnel.
- You must report to your child's teacher within 24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays, if your child is diagnosed as having a contagious, reportable disease, head lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, pinkeye, or chicken pox.
- If a child becomes sick during the school day, we will call the parent to come pick up the child. The child will be separated from others and must be picked up as soon as possible. If the parent cannot

be reached, we will call the persons (in the order listed) on the Child Information Form. Please keep office informed of any phone number changes.

- In case of an emergency or injury at school which requires professional medical attention, parents will be notified immediately. If a child cannot be reached we will call the persons in the order listed on the Child Information Form. If necessary, we will immediately dial 9-1-1 and proceed with medical/dental help. Every effort will be made to contact the parents as soon as possible.
 - Some guidelines for keeping children at home:
 - Oral temperature above 100 degrees
 - Intestinal disturbances
 - Any undiagnosed rash
 - Discharge from eyes or ears
 - Profuse nasal drainage

Mandated Reporters

All NRHEG Panther Preschool staff members are mandated reporters. If any staff member suspects that a child is being abused and/or neglected, we are required by law to report such cases to the authorities.

TRANSPORTATION

You are responsible for your child's transportation. We will only release your information to families in your child's session if you indicated on the registration form for carpooling help. This list will be emailed to you along with your child's preschool class session the end of July.

FORMS THAT MUST BE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE

1. Immunization Records and Health Care Summary
2. General Enrollment/Consent and Contact Form

All forms must be on file in order to begin classes.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

1. Try to attend each class. Children are a special part of the group and will be missed if they are absent. If parents know they will not be attending class, you should call your child's teacher at least 30 minutes prior to class beginning.
2. Please communicate with your child's teacher prior to an extended absence. After 2 weeks of absence, without explanation, your child's spot may be filled by a child on our waiting list.
3. Children should try to arrive on time. The teachers allow themselves 15-30 minutes to set up before classes begin. Please wait in the hall quietly.
4. If a parent is late picking up their child, the teacher will keep the child in the classroom to wait for a parent or guardian. After 5 minutes you will be contacted.
5. **School Closing Announcements** – During inclement weather listed to local radio and TV stations for school closings, there will be no classes if NRHEG Public Schools are closed. If NRHEG is running two hours late there will be no morning preschool classes. If NRHEG has an early dismissal, we will dismiss/cancel class the same time as the rest of the school building, but families are welcome to pick up their child ASAP. You do have the option to take part in our instant alert system at school. You will need to supply us with contact information for that.

TUITION PAYMENTS

Monthly payments are due by the 1st of each month if you do not prepay for the entire school year. You will not receive a monthly invoice/bill for preschool. You will receive quarterly statements alerting of any past due

monthly tuition and of all payments received to date. You are responsible for making timely monthly payments. Payments may be made in cash or check. All checks should be made payable to NRHEG Community Education – Panther Preschool. Monthly payments are required by the 1st of each month. A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for any late payment. You can call or email (mwhiteside@nrheg.k12.mn.us) the Community Education office during business hours to check on your balance at any time. Payment reminders & updated balances will be sent home 4 times per year.

At your individual Preschool Orientation you are required to, at minimum, pre-pay for the months of September and October. A discount applies if you wish to prepay for the entire school year (2-days per week: \$865.00, 3-days per week: \$1360.00, or 4-days per week: \$1648.00)

- 2 days/week = \$100.00 per month
- 3 days/week = \$155.00 per month
- 4 days/week = \$187.00 per month
 - *There is a discount for paying the entire year before Sept. 9th 2024 as shown above.*

Payments can be mailed directly to NRHEG Community Education, 306 Ash Ave. S, New Richland, MN 56072. They may also be dropped off at the Ellendale school office or the New Richland Secondary School Office or handed to your child's teacher/staff in the classroom.

Pathway II Scholarships or applications for our sliding fee scale are available to families who qualify and have children who are 3 or 4 in Panther Preschool classes. Please request paperwork in the Community Education office. Scholarships are given out on a first come/first serve basis.

Failure to fully pay for preschool tuition will result in suspension from the program and any future fee-based classes/activities hosted through Community Education or NRHEG Public Schools.

SCHOOL AGE CARE (wrap-around program): Community Education now offers a Preschool Wrap Around School Age Care Program in Ellendale and New Richland for children enrolled in Panther Preschool. Hours for care are 6:45am to 5:45pm, Monday-Friday. This is a daycare program for families if you are in need of daycare at any time throughout the week. Informational flyers and registration forms can be found in the school offices, the Community Education Office, or upon request in your child's preschool classroom. Call the Community Ed office at 507-417-2667 mwhiteside@nrheg.k12.mn.us for more information. *Minimum participation numbers are required for the program to run at each location, so please enroll early and contact Macy for enrollment information.*