

Little Panther Academy

Parent Handbook

Mission Statement

Where the teachers and students give 100% every day and failure is not an option. Panthers Prowling to Proficiency!

Little Panther Academy

Director: Kristin Merrill

317 Eli Street

Dawson Springs, Kentucky 42408

Phone: 270-797-3811 EXT: 1005

Fax: 270-797-5202

Email: dspantheracademy@dawsonsprings.kyschools.us

Welcome to Little Panther Academy. We are excited to provide this enhanced opportunity for you and your child. We look forward to having the privilege of meeting you and working with your child(ren). Our child care policies and procedures are affiliated with the Dawson Springs Independent School District and follow [DSIS Policies and Procedures](#). In the past our district has offered early childhood services to qualifying 3 and 4-year-old children who are at-risk in the areas of low income or special needs. We begin this new journey as Little Panther Academy and open our early childhood classroom for all 3 and 4-year-old students.

We will try our best to keep all families informed of the activities at the center. One way to stay in touch is to LIKE us on our [FACEBOOK](#) page – Center. We have also recently introduced a new app/program called “Remind.” The app allows you to stay connected with your child’s teachers throughout the day. The teachers will be able to post pictures, stories about your child and much more.

Dawson Springs Community Schools Preschool Mission Statement

Children are our most valuable possessions. Our goal is to provide high quality educational experiences, encouraging both individual growth and cooperation with others.

We want each child to remember their pre-school experiences as the first step to life-long learning. Through creative play and a commitment to learning, each child will be prepared for the many exciting years of education that awaits them in our school system.

Thank you for considering Little Panther Academy. If you have any questions, suggestions or issues, please remember that my door is always open!

Kristin Merrill

NON DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT NOTICE

Students, their parents, and employees of the Dawson Springs Independent School System are hereby notified this school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, marital status, gender, or handicap in employment, educational programs, or activities as set forth in Title IX, Title VI, and Section 504. Any person having inquiries or wishing to file a grievance concerning Title IX, Title VI, or Section 504 is directed to contact Dawson Springs Independent Schools, 317 Eli Street, Dawson Springs, Kentucky, (270) 797-3811 , who has been designated by Dawson Springs Board of Education to coordinate the district’s efforts to comply with Title IX, Title VI, and Section 504. Persons Who feel they have been discriminated against may obtain the forms for filing a grievance from the School Office.

Enrollment

Children between the ages of 3 years to 4 years of age are eligible for enrollment at Little Panther Academy. Children may attend the center anytime between 8:00 am and 2:30 pm, Monday through Friday. We ask that you are in before 8:30 am. If you will be later than that please call and inform us of the time you expect to drop your child off. If you need to pick up between the times of 11:30 am to 2:00 pm, we ask that you call the Elementary Office (270-797-3811) EXT: 1005 in advance.

Documents to be completed and returned before attending are:

- Child Enrollment Forms
- Federal Food Program Forms
- State issued Immunization Form

Current immunization certificates are required of all students prior to attendance in the Dawson Springs Independent Schools. This is in compliance with KRS 158.035 and the Policy of the Dawson Springs Board of Education.

Student Eligibility

PreK Eligibility	Little Panther Academy (Mon-Fri) 8 AM-2:30 PM	As of Aug 1, 20XX	
	3 yrs w/ delay		
	3 yrs- Parent eligible for Child Care Assistance Program	CCAP Application	Online Application
	3 yrs- Tuition	\$100 per week	
	4 yrs w/ delay		
	4 yrs AT Risk	CCAP Application	Online Application
	4 yrs= Tuition	\$100 per week	

Child Care Fees

Our Little Panther Academy is a “Full Time Only” center following Dawson Springs Independent School District calendar. This guarantees that your spot will not be taken during your absence. CCAP eligibility is an option and parents are responsible for Copays.

Monthly Rates:

Tuition for 2022-2023 School Year (175 days in a school year):

\$3,500 per year

Bill monthly at \$350.00 per month for 10 months (Aug-May)

- At this time, we accept cash, checks, and money orders. A service fee of \$25 will be charged for any returned checks.
- A child not picked up by 3:00 pm will incur a \$5 fee for every 10 minutes thereafter.

The Director of the center reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at his/her discretion, or for the following possible reasons:

- Non-payments or excessive late payments (6 weeks = termination).
- Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent agreement.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.
- Expired immunizations.

Parent Involvement

Parent participation is an important part of Little Panther Academy. Parents are encouraged to participate in a variety of ways in order to increase student progress. Home visits and parent-teacher conferences are one important component to successful parent involvement. Little Panther Academy hosts Family Nights regularly that provide fun training opportunities for parents as well as the opportunity for your child to show off their knowledge and skills learned in the classroom.

Communication

Proper communication between parents and staff of the Center is extremely important. Teachers will communicate with families through the Remind app on a regular basis. In real-time, parents will receive updates such as diaper changes, feeding and naps through the app. You are welcome to call to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher--even just to become better acquainted! Concerns about any aspect of our program, or your child's care, may be expressed to the center director. Remember to LIKE us on our [FACEBOOK](#) page.

Little Panther Academy makes every attempt to keep parents up to date on the activities of the center and in the community. Remind app is a very important communication tool. We ask that you stay connected with your child's teacher through Remind. Together, as partners we will be able to provide your child with a fun and safe learning environment.

Remember to communicate in writing any changes in your child's schedule. We must be informed, in writing, regarding any changes in the person picking up your child. You may add or delete names of authorized adults allowed to pick-up your child on the Child Information Record.

The Director must be informed of any of the following changes:

- Address and/or phone numbers, or e-mail address
- Health/immunizations updates, or:
- Other pertinent information related to your child.

Drop-off and Pick-up Policies

Parents are expected to accompany their child into the center or hand-to-hand exchange. The teachers are glad to assist you and your child at your drop-off time. Parents must sign their child in and out using the sign-in form provided by the staff at the exchange.

*Students who use DSIS transportation will be required to sign their child in when the bus picks their child up and school staff will sign the student out at drop off.

Only the individuals listed on the Child Information Record, or a written permission note from the parent, or in a phone call with description, will be allowed to leave with a child. The staff is expected to request a picture I.D. from any unfamiliar person (including grandparents). If there is any concern, the staff of Little Panther Academy have the right to deny a person's request to pick-up a child.

REGULATIONS FOR PUPILS RIDING SCHOOL BUSES

The Dawson Springs Board of Education has elected to provide transportation for pupils who are enrolled in the public schools. Pupils have the privilege of riding a Dawson Springs School bus to and from school provided they comply with the directions of the driver and the Regulations for Pupils Riding School Buses.

The following regulations have been developed in order to provide all pupils with the safest possible transportation. It is the responsibility of pupils to know and follow these regulations in order to maintain their privilege of riding the school bus.

The Dawson Springs Board of Education will be responsible for students when boarding, riding, and unloading from a bus.

AT THE BUS STOP

- Be on time. Do not expect the bus driver to wait on those who are tardy.
- Do not run toward or across the street in front of a bus while it is in motion.
- Always cross the street in front of the bus and at a safe distance ahead of the bus to be seen by the bus driver. (Minimum of 10-12 feet) Cross only on the driver's signal.
- Never stand in the road while waiting for the bus. Wait in an orderly line off the highway or street. Wait until the bus stops, then walk to the door and board bus in an orderly manner. Do not push or shove others.
- Pupils should board the bus and immediately take a seat without disturbing other passengers.

RIDING THE BUS

- The driver is in charge of the bus and students are to follow the directions of the driver. The driver may assign students to specific seats.
- Pupils are to ride their assigned bus.
- No persons other than those assigned to a bus are allowed on the bus.
- Promptly report to the driver any damage to the bus. Persons causing damage shall be required to pay the cost of the damage.

- Pupils are to remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Pupils should not engage in any activity which might divert the driver's attention away from safely driving the bus. Such activities are:
 1. Loud talking, laughing or unnecessary confusion
 2. Unnecessary conversation with the driver
 3. Extending any part of the body out of the bus
- Pupils shall not engage in any activity which might damage or cause excessive wear to the bus or other property.
- The following activities are prohibited at all times:
 1. Improper behavior including: vulgarity, foul language, disobedience fighting, pushing, shoving and similar offensive acts.
 2. Smoking or other use of tobacco
 3. Possessing knives, guns or other weapons
 4. Bringing animals on the bus
 5. Listening to music
 6. Use of cell phone without driver's permission
 7. Throwing articles or objects into or from the bus
 8. Tampering with mechanical equipment, accessories or controls of the bus
 9. Obstructing the aisle in any manner
 10. Occupying more space in a seat than is required (all items which are brought aboard the bus should be such that as can be held in the student's lap)
 11. Littering the bus
 12. No food or drinks - etc.

ON THE TRIP HOME

- Pupils are permitted to leave the bus only at the regular designated bus stop. Any change must be with the parent's consent and approved by a school administrator.
 - If a parent or assigned person to pick up is not at the designated bus drop off, the driver will radio the office and the student will be returned to school to be picked up by a parent or person designated to pick up the child at the elementary office.

Custody Orders

Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking-up a child in our care. The center must be notified immediately of any changes in custody orders. Certified custody orders must be given to the center director.

Holidays/ School Calendar

Little Panther Academy follows the [Dawson Springs Independent District School Calendar](#).

Unexpected Closings

Center will be open on public school designated "snow days". On a rare occasion our center may be forced to close due to a situation beyond our control (e.g., ice storm, electrical outage, no water service, children & staff safety). Our center will also be closed if we are under a State of Emergency order. Every attempt will be made to inform parents of an emergency closing. Parents will be called if we are closing early. Information about closings will be shared through the Remind App. During these closings, payment is still required.

Tornado and Disaster Procedure

In the event of a tornado or disaster warning, children will be taken to designated areas. They will remain there until the all-clear signal is sounded. This procedure is given to all families in September of each year. Practice drills will be conducted quarterly.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs of the children participating in our program may be taken from time to time and may appear in the newspapers, magazines, brochures, or other publicity materials. Your permission for photographs including your child, to be used without compensation, is part of this agreement.

Developmental Screening and Assessment of Child Progress

All enrolled children participate in developmental screening within 90 days of enrollment. A referral (if needed) is made within 30 days of screening. Children are assessed formally and informally to ensure that teachers plan curriculum goals and activities to support individualized learning. Teachers observe, record, and document children's development, participation, and learning throughout the year in the children's natural play environment.

Our formal assessments are done twice a year, (October and April). All our assessments are

kept in the child's portfolio, which follow the child from group to group to show the

progress in cognitive, language, physical social and emotional areas of development that

are consistent with our program curriculum and philosophy. Our families are part of our assessment process with regular communication, partnership and involvement.

Treasures and Possessions

Each child will need a blanket and toddler-size sheet to use at nap time. The center provides a tote for each child to place their bedding in. Your child's name must be clearly written on the sheet and blanket. Each classroom has a laundry day each week for washing the childrens' bedding. A small pillow or small stuffed toy is also permissible.

Center will not be responsible for any lost items. It is in everyone's best interest to keep all toys/items from home at home.

*Important...there are three things we feel must remain at home: toy guns, gum, and money.

Clothing

Because of the wide range of activities, it is recommended that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing. Please avoid flip-flops since they are hard to keep on and are a danger when running/playing.

Water activities, sand play, and occasional bathroom accidents necessitate that an extra set of clothing be kept at the center at all times. All extra clothing should be marked with the child's name and placed in a labeled bag. Clothing should include underwear, socks, pants, and shirts. If wet or dirty clothes are sent home, please return a clean extra set of clothes the next morning.

LPA will ensure that children are safe and comfortable when outdoors. Children should be dressed accordingly: light jacket, cap, rain boots (for damp days) in fall and spring; heavy winter jacket, mittens, scarf, hat, and snow boots in winter. An extra sweater or sweatshirt at school is recommended for sudden changes in temperature. All clothing, including coats and boots, must be labeled clearly with your child's name. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Diapers and Potty Training

Parents supply all diapers and wipes at Little Panther Academy.

Our teachers are experienced in training young children in how to use the bathroom. It is essential that the parent and teacher communicate about the needs of the child and work together to make this developmental milestone positive and successful. We recommend that when in training, your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing. Overalls, zippers, and snaps are difficult for small children to manage--especially in a hurry! While potty training, parents are to provide lots of thick training underwear, socks, and outer clothing.

Birthday Celebrations

It is our policy to provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks. We do recognize birthdays and other celebrations throughout the year. Parents are welcome to send (store-bought only) healthy options. We do ask that you please do not bring in any type of sweets such as cookies, chocolate and cupcakes. Inform your child's teacher in advance about what kind of treat you plan on bringing. This is for the safety of all of the children. Please do not bring in any treats that contain peanuts or peanut products.

If a birthday is to be celebrated away from school and the entire class is not invited, please mail the invitations. If the entire class is invited, you may distribute the invitations into the cubbies. Our center will not distribute mailing lists or phone numbers.



Meals

The center will provide breakfast, lunch and a snack each day. Center participates in the Federal Food Program and follows the guidelines for meal preparation and suggestions. We try to provide healthy, delicious meals that children will enjoy. If you have any questions about the menus, please talk to the Director. Water is a very important component to a child's well-being. For our Preschool, please provide a bottle for water only and we will work to send it home daily.

Breakfast starts at 8:30 am

Lunch starts at 10:30 am and ends after the last class eats

Snack starts at 1:30 pm and ends after the last class eats

*Meals and snack times are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Immunizations and Physicals

Immunization certificate: Except as otherwise provided in KRS 214.036, no child shall be eligible to enroll as a student in any public or private elementary or secondary school without first presenting a certificate from a duly licensed medical or osteopathic physician stating that the child has been immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, rubella, and rubella in accordance with the provisions of this section and KRS.214.010, 214.020, 214.032 to 214.036 and 214.990 and the regulations of the secretary for human resources. The governing body of private and public schools shall enforce the provisions of this section.

Medical Examinations are required by Kentucky law and will be required of all students entering the Dawson Springs Independent Schools for the first time. All students entering grade 6 must have a second physical including an MMR vaccination. Our School Based Health Clinic is able to conduct these examinations during school hours during the spring semester of the student's fifth grade year. For more information concerning health needs, call our School Based Clinic at 270-797-3811 (ext. 1210)

Illness

You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the center. However, if while in our care your child becomes ill or displays an unknown rash, our child's teacher will consult the director and you may be called to come take your child home. When called, you (or an alternate emergency person) are expected to come immediately. This is to protect the health of your child and his/her classmates. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. If your child is too ill to play outside with his or her class, then your child is too ill to attend the center.

The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home:

- Unknown rash
- Fever of 100.4° or higher
- Highly contagious conditions such as head lice (we have a no-nit policy), chicken pox, strep throat, pinworms, mumps, impetigo, conjunctivitis (pink eye), etc.
- Diarrhea (3 loose or watery stools) or vomiting. Consideration will be taken if your child is allergic to certain food/drink products, teething or on antibiotics.

Your child may return to the center after:

- Fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of Tylenol or other medication. They may return the next day if it is an ear infection.
- In the case of chickenpox, your child is free to return when all of the lesions are scabbed over.
- In the case of head lice, your child may return after you have followed treatment with appropriate shampoo (such as Kwell or RID) so that all the live eggs are gone.
- In the case of a contagious illness, your child should take an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning.

*If questions were to arise regarding appropriateness of a child's return to the center, the final decision will be that of the Center Director or Assistant Director.

Medicine

Parents of students who take medication while at school must follow the following guidelines:

- Parents of students who are taking medication must deliver the medication to school in person.
- The medication must be in the original container bearing the pharmacy label which includes the directions from the physician, the physician's name, the name of the medication, the date and the student's name. The school reserves the right to call the parents, the doctors and the pharmacies to confirm medication.
- The parent must sign an authorization form in the office for the administering of medication by school personnel.
- The parent is encouraged to send or bring limited amounts of medication to school and to schedule times of administration so that a minimum number of doses will be given during

the school day. Parents should ask the providing pharmacist to accommodate medicine to be brought to the school.

- ***Students can not bring their own medication of any kind to the school.***

- Medicine given on a short-term basis (antibodies, cough syrup, etc.) will be given by the clinic.

Injury

Every consideration will be taken to ensure the safety of your child while in our care. Should an injury occur, the parent will be informed on Remind. We ask that you acknowledge the report within a 2 hour period or a Minor Incident Report will be completed and placed in the child's cubby. A parent or guardian will be notified regarding any injury suspected of needing immediate care by a physician.

In the event of a major medical emergency or an accident, the director will call 911 first. The child will be transported to the hospital noted on the Child Information Record (or the closest hospital). The parent/guardian will be called immediately thereafter.

Changes in Policy

The fees, procedures, and policies stated in this handbook are subject to change at the discretion of the Center Director.

I have read the Little Panther Academy Parent Handbook and agree to abide by all the policies and procedures therein.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you for selecting Little Panther Academy as your child care provider.