

**Cumberland County
School System**

TNVPK Program



**Pre-K
Parent Handbook**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Program Mission, Vision, and Goals**
- **Academics**
- **Parent Responsibilities**
- **Attendance Policy**
- **Family Involvement & Promoting Literacy**
- **Health Care/Sickness Guidelines**
- **Miscellaneous Pre-K Information**
- **Behavior/Discipline Policy**
- **Qualifying for TNVPK**
- **Summary of Child Care Approval Guidelines**
- **Important Phone Numbers**



Mission

The Cumberland County Schools Voluntary Pre-K Program (VPK) works in partnership with families and the community in order to provide a high quality and developmentally appropriate early childhood education program that strives to identify and meet the diverse needs of each participating student. Our mission requires that we provide developmental sound methods of instruction, which are based on solid research, in order to educate the whole child.

Vision

Our vision is to teach children so that they develop cognitively, and are able to express themselves through language, writing, art, music and imaginative play. Our goal is to make the students feel physically and psychologically safe and comfortable with other students and adults within the school environment.

Goals

Our goals for the children are to maximize development in the following areas:

- Social Growth
- Self-Control
- Physical Development
- Emotional Development
- Reading Readiness
- Science Skills
- Pre-Math Skills
- Creative Ideology
- Social Studies

ACADEMICS

We teach Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS) to our Pre-K children. Pre-K is an academic program with a strong foundation in literacy. Our goal is to prepare each Pre-K child to be ready for Kindergarten. Your Pre-K teacher will provide additional information, and you may access the state standards at

TNELDS URL:

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/standards/tnelds/std_tnelds_4yo_2018.pdf

Student progress is continuously assessed with weekly, monthly, and quarterly assessments.

Cumberland County Schools Voluntary Pre-K program utilizes the Connect 4 Learning Curriculum.



Each Cumberland County Pre-K student will be taught a safety curriculum. This curriculum is taught by the school counselor and requires parental permission. The title of the curriculum is: “Keeping Kids Safe”. It is a curriculum from the Tennessee Department of Education.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION

It is the parent's responsibility to provide the following documents to the school's front office. Failure to submit these documents could result in removal from the Pre-K program.

- Certified Copy of Birth Certificate
- Copy of Social Security Card (*optional*)
- Current Immunization Record
- Proof of Physical (Official Medical Form)
- Cumberland County Schools & TNVPK Registration Forms

SIGN CHILD IN AND OUT

Parents must daily accompany their child into the school building for morning sign in and sign the child out at the end of the school day, as designated by each school site. If you are unable to pick up your child, you must make alternative plans and alert the school in writing. Anyone picking up your child must be on your approved pick-up list and provide a photo I.D. Parents are to follow the Pre-K arrival and dismissal schedule, as this will differ from the regular school schedule due to traffic and safety concerns. Parents should be prompt with scheduled arrivals and dismissal times. Tardies include late arrival and/or late pick-ups.

DAILY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure that your child is well rested every day.
- Ensure your child attends daily as they are well enough to attend.
- Make sure your child comes to school daily with necessary items (i.e. communication folders and required paperwork).
- Ensure you read ALL correspondence from the school-it can be found in their folder.

ATTENDANCE

The TNVPK Program is a voluntary program, fully funded by the State Department of Education. Parents may withdraw their child at any time. However, if you accept enrollment in the program, attendance is expected. According to state guidelines, full-time enrollment is required for entry into the program and excessive unexcused absences or tardies could result in parent conferences and potential dismissal from the program.



VPK Attendance Policy

Young children's growth and development is maximized through consistent participation in a high-quality environment. Establishing consistent attendance routine in pre-K will increase students' chances of success in all future experiences, K-12. With this in mind, the department has adopted a pre-K attendance policy that went into effect August 01, 2017

Excused Absences:

The following are acceptable reasons for excused absences:

1. The child is hospitalized;
2. The child is incapacitated due to a serious injury;
3. The child contracts a communicable disease (virus or flu);
4. The child has other ongoing health related ailments which temporarily prevent attendance (such as asthma);
5. There is a death in the family;
6. Limited medical/dental/therapy appointments (these should be made outside school hours unless absolutely necessary); and
7. Other reason(s) as approved by site-level administrator.

Required Procedures:

1. Each site or district should have a contact person. This is the person with whom parents can address attendance concerns. Contact information should be distributed with the policy.
2. If a child has four (4) or more consecutive absences, - or four (4) or more absences within one (1) month -- the site-level administrator must contact the family and determine the child's participation status. The site-level administrator must document all attempts to contact the family and the outcome of those attempts and/or communications.
3. If a child misses five (5) or more days in a three (3)-month period, the site-level administrator will contact the family to develop an attendance plan.
 - a. The attendance plan will be designed to help the family establish regular attendance or, if necessary, to plan for alternative services. The plan will be developed by the family and appropriate school personnel, including, but not limited to: the child's primary pre-K teacher; the site-level administrator; the IEP team (if applicable); and additional staff serving the school and family, which may include a counselor, social worker, family support personnel, teacher assistant, or other school staff supporting the child and family. The attendance plan must:
 - I. identify the reasons for the absences;
 - II. include a specific plan and date for establishing regular attendance or alternatives services that meet the child's education goals; and
 - III. include documentation of services and student outcomes to determine effectiveness of the attendance plan.
4. Every effort will be made to ensure the child has access to a quality school program. However, these spots are made available through a state grant and are limited by funding. **Students who have more than five (5) days unexcused per month, or then (10) days unexcused in a year, may be terminated from the program for failure to follow the attendance policy.** District-level personnel must submit required dismissal documentation to the Department of Education's VPK director for approval. **A district shall not dismiss a student without first implementing an attendance plan,** unless there are special circumstances to be considered, such as the family moving and being unreachable after multiple attempts by the district. In these cases, the state VPK director may grant approval due to special circumstances.
5. Once dismissal is approved, a waiting list applicant who meets eligibility determinations for the VPK program may fill the vacant position. Future eligibility for the terminated child to re-enter the program will depend upon vacancies after a 30-day waiting period and a parent conference to establish a faithful, binding Home/School Compact.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & PROMOTING LITERACY

Working together we will ensure your child succeeds both academically and emotionally. We are eager to have parents involved as much as possible. The following is a list of possible ways parents may become more involved in their child's TNVP classroom:

- Parents may assist with field trips and/or other class activities.*
- Attend scheduled parent meetings, conferences, open houses and school functions (fall festival, student programs, literacy events).
- Reading classroom and school newsletters, that include suggested readings, participate in activities at both home and school.
 - Participate in the school PTO/PTA.
 - Attend and/or participate in the On My Way to K program.
 - Here are some suggested links to promote early learning and literacy:

<http://kidcentraltn.com>

<https://readingfoundation.org>



Early Literacy foundation resources:

<https://governorsfoundation.org/>

- Immerse your child in literacy by reading with your child at least 20 minutes every day. (can be done in smaller increments)
- Talk often and listen to your child retelling a story or creating a new ending to a story.
- Take an active role in your child's preparation for learning and continue joyful experiences at both home and school.

Ask your child Who, What , When ,Where and Why questions.

***All parent volunteers must be approved by the BOE prior to participation. This involves completing the volunteer paperwork. Volunteers may have to complete background check w/ fingerprinting when applicable.**

HEALTH CARE/SICKNESS GUIDELINES

The following is a list of illnesses that would require your child to be sent home. Our school nurse will assess and determine if the parent should be contacted. If we see any of the following illnesses that interfere with your child's well-being or the educational environment we will contact a parent/guardian to pick up your child.

- Fever of 100° or higher.
- Vomiting (after one episode)
- Diarrhea (after one episode)
- Rashes: If the child develops a rash with unknown cause
- Colds: persistent runny nose or cough (non-allergy related)

**Child must be picked up as soon as possible
after a parent is contacted.**

If your child has been ill, the student should be fever free (without fever suppressant) vomit or diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to school

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

If a child requires medication at school, the school nurse will administer the medication. Parents can allow the school nurse to give general medicine by checking the appropriate boxes on their enrollment forms. Parents must bring prescription medicine to the school nurse in the original prescription bottle and fill out the school permission form. It is the parent's responsibility to drop off and pick up medications from the school nurse.



MISCELLANEOUS PRE-K INFORMATION

SCHOOL YEAR - We follow the Cumberland County School System calendar. This includes holidays and inclement weather closings.

TRANSPORTATION - Cumberland County's Pre-K program **does not** provide transportation to and from school. It is the parents/ guardians responsibility to ensure transportation for daily commute. Pre-K students are able to ride school busses for field trips only.

PRE-K SCOPE OF SERVICES - This Scope of Services document can be found with the following link. It is also located on our CCS Pre-K website.

<https://content.myconnectsuite.com/api/documents/f631753d4c0047488d07e26621e041a0.pdf>

CLOTHING TIPS- Please send your child in appropriate & child friendly clothing. Washable clothes that the child can handle independently at toileting are best. The countywide school dress code does apply to the Pre-K Program. Tank tops are allowed but no shirts with spaghetti straps. Shoes must be worn at all times; tennis shoes are an excellent choice. Flip flops shoes are discouraged in Pre-K. Please make sure that you have a change of clothes at school for an accident that is seasonally appropriate.

PERSONAL ITEMS- Please **do not allow** your child to bring toys, gum or other items from home. We provide numerous manipulatives for school use; this reduces potential conflict between students and prevents damage or loss of personal items.

TENNESSEE IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DtaP or DT if appropriate)
- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV)
- Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib): age younger than 5 years only
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV): age younger than 5 years only (July 1, 2010)
- Measles Mumps, Rubella (1 dose of each, usually given together as MMR)

- Varicella (1 dose or history of disease)
- Hepatitis A (1 dose by 18 months of age)

CUMBERLAND COUNTY CODE OF BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

The following lists of misbehavior and disciplinary procedures are designed to protect all members of the educational community in the exercise of their rights and duties to maintain a safe learning environment where orderly learning is possible and encouraged. These misdemeanors apply to student conduct on school buses, on school property, and while students are on school sponsored outings.

- Classroom disturbances
- Abusive language
- Lying
- Refusal to carry out directions
- Disruptive Classroom behavior
- Fighting
- Stealing

For the complete Code of Behavior and Discipline policy [CCBOE Discipline Policy](#)

PRE-K DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Most behaviors and discipline issues in Pre-K are handled in class with the teacher and school principal.

However, should a Pre-K student demonstrate extreme behaviors

- 1) Teachers will reach out to the county-wide behavior specialist for suggestions
- 2) Consistently follow the suggestions, if behavior still persists,
- 3) Meet with parents/guardians to develop a behavior plan,
- 4) Should behavior continue, modify the hours the student attends. Cut the day in ½ and gradually increasing by 30 - 45 minute increments to build back up to full day.

Cumberland County does not suspend or expel students from Pre-K.

QUALIFYING FOR TNVPK

The Voluntary Pre-K program was developed to help at-risk children to be more successful in school. TCA 49-6-101-104 provides guidelines for grant funding and eligibility requirements. Everyone is encouraged to apply; however, based upon state guidelines, we accept students in a 2 round process as described below.

Round 1

- Meets current State Income Eligibility guidelines
- Student is four years of age on or before August 15 birth date deadline.

Round 2

- Any other four year old that lives in Cumberland County and meets the on or before August 15th birth date deadline.

WAIT LIST - A list of potential students will be kept at schools and/or Central Services, should openings become available during the school year.

Out of Zone Students - If your child is accepted to an out of zone school, they are not guaranteed to be able to attend that school the following year. Parents/guardians will have to submit an out-of zone request for future enrollment in an out of zone school.

The Cumberland County TNVPK adheres to the State Board of Education School Administered Child Care Rules, Chapter 0520-12-01 and receives an annual Certificate of Approval.

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUMMARY OF CHILD CARE APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

This is a section-by-section summary of the State Board of Education School Administered Child Care Rules, Chapter 0520-12-01. Childcare centers inspected by the Department of Education must meet the requirements as defined by the rules in Chapter 0520-12-01 to receive a Certificate of Approval. The unabridged School administered Child Care rules are available on the Tennessee Secretary of State website, www.tn.gov/sos, or by writing the Office of School-based Support Services, Tennessee Department of Education, 9th floor Andrew Johnson Tower, 710 James Robertson Pkwy, Nashville, Tennessee 3724309375

1. Ownership, Organization and Administration, Chapter Section 0520-12-01-.05 - A Child Care Center must have an adequate budget. Records, including health, must be kept on all children.
 - There must be a transportation plan for each child, including the names of persons to whom the child may be released. Staff records must be kept on each employee that includes educational background, reference checks, TBI check, in-service training, physical exams and performance reviews.
 - The center must have their Certificate of Approval posted, provide parents with a copy of the policies and procedures along with a copy this summary and offer a pre-placement visit.
 - Parents must have access to all areas of the center when their child is present.
 - The parents must receive an educational program regarding child abuse detection, reporting and prevention.
 - If the center provides transportation, the driver should be appropriately licensed, there must be liability insurance and the children must have adequate space and supervision. Transportation provided by the center or under center authorization shall comply with state law.
2. Supervision, Chapter Section 0520-12-01-.06
 - Each group must have adult supervision at all times and adult/child ratios should be followed. There must be a second adult available when more than 12 children are present.
 - Swimming and field trips require ratios to be doubled.
 - Each group must have their own space.
 - Infants and toddlers must have their own space and cannot be grouped with older children.
 - At naptime ratios may be relaxed for groups except infants and toddlers.
 - Minimum staffing requirements per groups of children (adult: child ratio) must be maintained.

Please refer to ratio charts for specific adult: child ratios for each age group

1. Chart 1 - Single Age Grouping and Adult: Child Ratio Chart

Maximum Group Size and Adult Child Ratios							
Single-Age Grouping	8	12	14	16	18	20	No Max
Infants: 6 wks. – 15 mos.	1:4						
Toddlers (12 mos. – 30 mos.)		1:6					
2 years (24 mos. – 35 mos.)			1:7				
3 years					1:9		
4 years						1:13	
5 years						1:16	
School-Age (K and 12 years)				1:20			
13 to 18 years				1:30			

2. Chart 2 - Multi-Age Grouping and Adult: Child Ratio Chart

Multi-Age Grouping	8	16	18	20	22	24	No Max
Infants/Toddlers: 6 wks. – 30 mos.	1:5						
2-4 years		1:8					
2.5 - 3 years (30 – 47 mos.)			1:9				
2.5 - 5 years				1:11			
2.5 – 12 years	1:10						
3 – 5 years (includes 3 – 4years)					1:13		
4 - 5 years						1:16	
5 - 12 years							1:20
13 to 18 years							1:30

3. Staff, Chapter Section 0520-12-01-.07

A. Responsibility for Staff and General Staff Qualifications:

- The director shall be responsible for the day to day operations, including staff and program.
- An assistant director or other staff member shall be designated to be in charge in the absence of the director and all staff shall be notified of this designation.
- No individual with a prohibited criminal history may work, substitute or volunteer in a program
- Staff must have knowledge of child behavior and development.
- Staff must be physically, mentally and emotionally stable.
- All new employees must have orientation and child abuse prevention training before working with the children.
- The director must have a High School Diploma (or Department recognized equivalent), and Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) certificate for completing thirty (30) clock hours of orientation training, or the equivalent as recognized by the Department and 4 years experience working with children.
- All caregivers must be 18 years of age and one caregiver in each group must have a high school diploma.
- Directors must have 18 clock hours in-service training each year and caregivers 12 clock hours.

4. Equipment for Children, Chapter Section 0520-12-01-.08

- All indoor and outdoor equipment shall be well made, safe and kept clean.
- There must be developmentally appropriate equipment for all age groups with variety.
- Children must have a place for their belongings.

- Large pieces of equipment must be secured.
- Infants are to have space to climb, crawl and pull up without the restraint of playpens or cribs.
- There must be enough equipment so children have choices.
- There shall be an outdoor play area when children are in care for 3 or more daylight hours.
- Children up to 5 years of age must be offered a naptime if in care for 6 or more hours.
- There shall be equipment for napping or sleeping for each preschool child who is in care for six (6) hours or more.
- For napping children, cots or 2 inch mats must be provided and each child must have a cover to place under them and another available to place over them.
- Infants must have individual cribs with open tops.

5. Program, Chapter Section 0520-12-01-.09

A. Schedule and Routines.

- Routines such as snacks, meals, and rest shall occur at approximately the same time each day.
- There shall be a balance between child's choice and adult-directed activities.
- Other activity choices shall be available to children during television/movie viewing or computer use.
- Parents shall be informed of movie showings and video/computer games and their ratings.
- Computers, if used, shall be located in view of a caregiver for monitoring purposes.
- An opportunity for outdoor play shall be extended to children of all ages who are in care more than three (3) daylight hours; when the temperature range, after adjustment for wind chill and heat index, is between thirty-two (32) degrees and ninety-five (95) degrees Fahrenheit and not raining.
- A reclining rest period of at least one hour shall be provided for all preschool children in care for six hours or more.
- Each child shall be allowed to form his own patterns of sleep.

B. Behavior Management and Guidance.

- Spanking or any other type of corporal punishment is prohibited. ("Corporal punishment" is the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for behavior of which the punisher disapproves.)
- Praise and encouragement of good behavior shall be used.
- When a child is engaging in unacceptable behavior the caregiver shall, prior to disciplining the child, first distract the child's attention and substitute a desirable activity.
- Attention spans and skills of children shall be considered so that caregivers do not require children to engage in developmentally inappropriate behavior.
- Toilet training shall never be started until a child has been in the program long enough to feel comfortable and is able to communicate a need to use the bathroom.

C. Educational Activities

- A daily program shall provide opportunities for learning, self-expression, and participation in a variety of creative activities such as art, music, literature, dramatic play, science, and health.
- Indoor physical activities, requiring children to use both large and small muscles, shall be provided for children of each age group.
- For ages three (3) through school age, the curriculum shall include instruction in personal safety as needed but at least once a year.

D. Nighttime Care

- If children receive night care, caretakers must provide a calm, nurturing environment and a routine hygiene plan must be in place.

6. Health and Safety, Chapter Section 0520-12-01-.10

A. Children's Health

- Children's health records shall be maintained as directed under subchapter 0520-12-01-.05.
- Each child shall be immunized according to the current Department of Health guidelines unless exempted pursuant to subchapter 0520-12-01-.05(8). Programs serving non-school-age children shall maintain written policies for dis-enrollment of children who fail to comply with Department of Health immunization guidelines in a timely manner.
- Parents of every child enrolled shall be notified immediately if any communicable disease has been introduced into the program.
- Parents must be notified if their child is hurt and becomes ill.
- Medications must be labeled with instructions and must be kept under lock.
- Documentation of administration and side effects of any medication given must be kept.
- Smoking is not permitted in the presence of children.
- The diapering area must be appropriate, near handwashing lavatory and cleaned after each diaper change.

B. Staff Health

- Staff must have documentation that the staff person is capable of safely and appropriately providing care for children in a group setting. The documentation shall be on file within ten (10) calendar days of employment or starting to work.
- A statement of mental or emotional health shall be obtained from a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist when deemed necessary by the Department.
- Physicals are required every 3 years.

C. Safety

- There shall be a staff member present at all times who has a current certification in CPR and first aid training.
- A first aid kit must be on the premises as well as a first aid chart.
- There shall be no firearms on the premises.
- Emergency telephone numbers shall be posted next to all telephones and be readily available to any staff member.
- Kitchen knives and other potentially dangerous utensils or tools shall be secured so that they are not accessible to children.

7. Food, Chapter Section 0520-12-01-.11

A. Nutritional Needs

- Children will receive meals and snacks based on the amount of time spent in the program.
- Menus must be posted.
- Consideration must be given to daily food requirements when planning the menu.
- Special diets and instructions must be provided in writing.
- New foods shall be introduced to infants and toddlers one at a time over a five (5) to seven (7) day period with parent's approval.
- Parents and caregivers shall work together when weaning an infant to insure consistency in the weaning process.

Weaning shall be delayed until after an infant adjusts to group care.

B. Meal Service

- At mealtime, children shall be seated at appropriately sized tables and chairs, and adults shall supervise them in accordance with subsection 0520-12-01-.06(1)(d).
- Milk shall be placed immediately in the refrigerator.
- All formulas remaining in bottles after feeding shall be discarded.
- Previously opened baby food jars shall not be accepted in the center. If food is fed directly from the jar by the caregiver, the jar shall be used for only one feeding.
- Infants shall be held while being fed as long as they are unable to sit in a high chair, an infant seat, or at the table.

8. Physical Facilities, Chapter Section 0520-12-1-.12

- All facilities shall annually pass an inspection verifying compliance with all applicable state and local fire and environmental requirements.
- There shall be a working telephone in the center.
- A minimum of thirty (30) square feet of usable indoor play space shall be provided for each child.
- Outdoor play areas shall contain a minimum of fifty (50) square feet of usable play space for each child using the area at one time.

9. Care of Children with Special Needs, Chapter Section 0520-12-01-.14

- When children with special needs are enrolled, all reasonable and appropriate efforts shall be made to provide those children equal opportunity to participate in the same program activities as their peers.
- Adaptations to the environment shall be directed toward normalizing the lifestyle of the child with a disability by helping him/her become independent and develop self-help skills.
- The program shall inform parents of any specialized services available from the program, and if the program is aware of any specialized services available through third parties, shall additionally inform the parent of such services.
- Governing agency shall develop policies and procedures, in accordance with 0520-01-09-.23, governing personnel authorized to use isolation and restraint, training requirements and incident reporting procedures.

10. After School Programs serving Adolescents Chapter Section 0520-12-01-.15 - Rules are modified to meet the appropriate developmental stages of the adolescent regarding staff ratios and supervision as well as activities appropriate for this age group.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

COVERKIDS/TENN CARE
1-866-620-8864 or 1-866-268-3786
www.covertn.gov

TO REPORT ABUSE
1-877-54ABUSE or 1-800-237-0004

COMPLAINT HOTLINE
1-800-462-8261
(NASHVILLE AREA) 615-313-4820

Cumberland County Central Office
(931) 484-6135
www.ccschools.k12tn.net
Karri Hobby
Pre-K Supervisor

Crab Orchard Elementary
(931) 484-7400

Frank P. Brown Elementary
(931) 788-2248

Glenn Martin Elementary
(931) 484-7547

Homestead Elementary
(931) 456- 8344

North Cumberland Elementary
(931) 484-5174

Pine View Elementary
(865) 354-1986

Pleasant Hill Elementary
(931) 277-3677

South Cumberland Elementary
(931) 788-6713

Stone Elementary
(931) 484-5636