

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Cook County Preschool! We are excited to begin the 2022-2023 school year. Thank you for choosing to give Cook County Pre-K the opportunity to serve your child. We believe Cook County Preschool is a wonderful, happy place for children to learn. We pledge to you and your child to provide a solid foundation of educational experiences in a positive, safe environment.

We encourage you to participate actively in your child's education by taking advantage of the many opportunities for parent involvement. Please feel free to call your child's teacher if you have questions or concerns. Our door is always open.

Sincerely,

Cook County Preschool Faculty & Staff

Cook Pre-K Faculty and Staff
2022-2023

Administration

Mrs. Jeanne Dixon
Principal, Grades PreK-2

Mr. Matt Holley
Assistant Principal K-2, Pre-K Director

Heather Tomlinson
Secretary/Bookkeeper

Lisa Eppes
Parent Involvement Coordinator

Teacher

Elizabeth McClain
Doraleen Acree
Kennedy Gregory
Celena Green
Connie Hilliard
Hanna Sumner
Felicia Allen
Tracy Boyd
Cindy Norman

Paraprofessional

Keri Ann Colwell
Renee Brisk
Carolyn Covington
Jessica Touchton
Stephanie Spence
Pam Birdine
Rita Waldon
Shirley Pinkney, Grace Massey
Gwyn Thornton

**Cook County Preschool
Student Handbook
2022-2023**

MISSION STATEMENT

Cook County Schools will provide an exemplary education to all students in a safe and positive environment.

VISION

To stimulate learning and creativity that will prepare our students for success and lifelong learning.

School Hours

Normal school hours for students are from 8:00 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will be considered tardy. Please refer to the attendance policy for further information.

STUDENTS ARE NOT TO ARRIVE AT SCHOOL BEFORE 7:20 A.M. THE DOORS WILL BE LOCKED UNTIL 7:20 A.M.

Morning Drop Off

Car students should arrive **after 7:20 a.m.** Students should be dropped off at the Pre-K entrance only when an adult is on duty outside at the drop off point.

Afternoon Pick Up

Pre-K car riders can be picked up at 2:30 p.m. at the Cook Primary Main Entrance of the building.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend school. School begins Friday, August 5, 2022, and ends on Friday, May 24, 2023. To be counted present, the student must be in class at least one half of the school day. Students who arrive after 11:30 a.m. or are checked out before 11:30 a.m. will be counted absent. The first step in establishing good school habits and routines is regular school attendance. You are encouraged to have your child at school unless he/she is ill. Students should not miss more than 15 days of school. This will be closely monitored to determine whether dismissal from Pre-K is necessary.

A written excuse will be required for all student absences. Please send a note with your child when he/she returns to school after being out for any reason. If you take your child to the doctor, please ask the doctor or nurse to write an excuse.

*** Five unexcused absences – Parent or guardian will be notified by phone, conference, letter, email, or other appropriate means.

*** Six or more unexcused absences – Student will receive a referral to the Principal or administrative designee for Student Support Team (SST) intervention. Prior to the first SST meeting, a school social worker, school nurse, or other appropriate staff member will attempt to contact the student's parent or guardian. The school social worker will participate as part of the SST to assist with the development of interventions and strategies for improvement of the student's school attendance.

*** Ten unexcused absences – Student’s name will be referred to the Cook County Truancy Education and Mediation Team (TEAM) by the school social worker. The school social worker will serve to coordinate efforts between the school SST and TEAM in monitoring attendance.

Tardiness

Students are tardy if they arrive at school **after 8:00 a.m.** Students who are tardy must check in through the front office to obtain a tardy slip before going to class.

According to the BRIGHT FROM THE START Operating Guidelines, children who do not attend on a regular basis or are routinely late to the program will be referred to the Pre-K Project Director and Transition Coach. A meeting with the parent will occur to determine the reasons for the problem and identify ways to resolve the problem. Inability to resolve the problem after documented interventions will be referred in writing to the Prekindergarten Program Assistant Director of Instructional Services. **Children who do not attend class or are late for two consecutive weeks without a medical or other reasonable explanation must be removed from the roster.**

Excused Tardies/Early Checkouts

* A written explanation is required to excuse a tardy or an early checkout.

If your child is tardy or checked out early for a **doctor’s appointment**, please ask the doctor or nurse to write an excuse. If the school nurse sends your child home, he/she will **not** be required to bring a written excuse.

Examples:

Excused Tardy – Any tardy resulting from events beyond a parent’s control such as an accident, a road closed due to an accident, an area power outage, or a late bus.

Excused Early Checkout – Emergency or illness

Unexcused Tardies/Early Checkouts

Examples:

Unexcused Tardy – Over-sleeping, heavy traffic, errands, train delays

Unexcused Early Checkout – Any non-emergency situation

*** Students accumulating three (3) days of unexcused tardies to school will receive a referral to the Principal or Principal’s designee.

*** At the school system’s discretion, students establishing a pattern of early checkouts may be referred to the Principal or Principal’s designee for disciplinary or other appropriate action.

*** Ten or more tardies may result in immediate referral to support agencies outside the school system as the Principal deems appropriate. Among these agencies are the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), law enforcement, Juvenile Court, Family and/or Youth Connections, or other external agencies.

Visiting a School

Cook County School District welcomes parents and other community members into our schools for special events, meetings, tours and other occasions. However, keeping our students and staff safe while at school is something we take very seriously. In order to increase security at all of our school buildings, we have started using the School Check- In Visitor Management System to track visitors. This system will be used in conjunction with our existing exterior door buzzers and security cameras.

If you'd like to enter the building farther than the school office, you must register by presenting a valid, government-issued ID to the school's office staff. Registration takes a few minutes the first time because it requires an office staff member to complete the process. It will be quicker during subsequent visits.

Why do we need a visitor management system like School Check- In?

Part of keeping our students safe is knowing who is in our buildings at all times. The School Check- In system allows us to track visitors, contractors and volunteers in our schools, and assist with student checkout. School Check- In conducts a limited background check against the national database of registered sex offenders.

Visitors entering a school beyond the office receive a printed ID sticker that must be worn and visible during the entire stay. This makes it easier for our school staff to know who is allowed inside the school.

What forms of ID will the system accept?

School Check- In accepts any state-issued ID, including state-issued driver's licenses and state ID cards. It also accepts military IDs, government IDs.

What if I don't have a valid form of ID or don't want it scanned?

If you don't have a state- or government-issued ID or don't want your ID scanned, there is still a way for you to get access to our schools, but you will not be able to enter the school without a staff member escorting you. You will need to speak directly with school office staff members, who will provide school with some form of legal document showing your legal name, date of birth, you will also be asked your relationship to the student and reason for visiting. Office staff will manually confirm your identification from your legal documents and run a background check.

What type of background check does School Check- In run?

School Check- In scans your name, date of birth and a photo for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders, but it does not check criminal or traffic history.

Will you scan my ID every time I visit?

Yes. The first time you come to the school office, office staff will scan your ID and register you in the system. Your registration will be good at all Cook County buildings. After you have registered, you will be able to have your ID quickly scanned in the school office when you visit. If you are entering the building beyond the school office, an ID sticker will print for you to wear during your stay. ID stickers make it easy for school staff to know you checked in and are approved to visit.

What information does School Check- In scan and keep?

School Check- In collects and stores your full name, date of birth, first four digits of your license number and photo when your ID is scanned. It does not keep a digital copy of your ID.

How does School Check- In keep my data secure?

School Check- In uses firewalls, intrusion prevention systems, host integrity monitoring and port filtering, as well as the latest security processes to protect all of its systems and data. All information entered into School Check- In gets encrypted using 256-bit AES encryption. School Check- In does not share data with any third parties.

What if I have an outstanding warrant or am undocumented? Will you report me to the police or immigration?

The National Sex Offender Public Registry and Cook County School District's student information system are the only two databases that School Check- In checks. The system will not alert office staff or even know if you have an outstanding warrant or are undocumented.

Cook County School District does cooperate with police. If authorities contact us to alert us to someone who might pose a threat to school safety, this information can be entered into the system so administration gets alerted if that person visits one of our schools.

Are vendors and other regular school visitors who enter the building required to have an ID scanned?

Yes. Everyone who enters the building beyond the school office will be required to have an ID scanned and wear a printed ID sticker.

What happens if I am a registered sex offender but have a child at the school?

Upon scanning your ID, a silent alert goes to office staff members so they can meet with you privately.

According to Cook County Board of Education policy, the superintendent may grant permission for a parent, guardian or custodian of a student to be on district property for the limited purpose of attending meetings with district staff or in other situations where the student may benefit. Permission will be granted sparingly, if ever, and only in situations where the parent, guardian or custodian will be supervised at all times or will not be alone with a child. If the superintendent does not grant permission, the parent, guardian or custodian may seek permission from the board. The superintendent will inform the principal and other relevant district staff of the scope of the permission granted.

Do other schools and institutions use a system like this?

Yes. Some surrounding districts use School Check- In to help ensure school and student safety.

Additional Check In/Out Procedures

Before checking out your child, parents should present identification to obtain a check-out slip from the front office. Teachers are not allowed to release students without a check-out slip. In order to avoid confusion and to ensure safety of all students, all check-outs need to be made **prior to 2:05 p.m.** **Students should not be checked out unnecessarily.** Students will be released **only** to those persons listed on the registration or health card.

Please be aware of the following:

- **Parents may not remove students from loaded buses.**
- **We do not accept telephone messages or faxed notes concerning transportation changes. If it is necessary to change the way a student goes home, the transportation change must be in writing from the parent.**

Withdrawals

In order to officially withdraw a child from Cook County Pre-K, you must complete necessary withdrawal forms with the school secretary. **If a child is absent for two consecutive weeks, and the parent has not contacted the school with an excuse for the absences, the child will be automatically withdrawn from Pre-K.**

Classroom/Bus Behavior (Discipline Plan)

We expect students to make appropriate choices at school and on the bus. Student behavior is addressed in the classroom with time-out and/or loss of privilege. Teachers expect students to follow classroom and school rules and procedures. Continual misbehavior or extreme situations at school or on the bus will result in one of the following:

- Parent/teacher conference
- Parents being called to pick up the child
- Conference with principal with possibility of suspension from school or bus

- Extreme situations and repeated behavior are reported to Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, which may result in the student's disenrollment.

Transportation

If your Pre-K child is transported by a bus, an adult must put the child on the bus in the morning and be at the bus stop in the afternoon. **If an adult is not present, the bus driver will not load or unload the child.** This policy ensures the safety of your child.

Parents must write a note if there is a change in a student's address. The teacher or the front office must receive this note prior to 2:00 p.m. The bus driver or the teacher will not make a change in your child's address unless there is a note by the parent.

No transportation changes will be made by phone, faxed messages, or emails. Students tend to get confused and upset when they are not sure what they are to do; therefore, we cannot accept verbal messages from a student. **Also, please be consistent with your child's daily transportation.** At this age, a regular routine is best for the child.

Student Information Changes

It is essential that you keep Cook County Preschool **updated with information changes** for your child. This includes home address, work and home phone numbers, emergency contact person, job changes, and babysitters. This is to ensure that we can reach you in case of an emergency.

Health Issues

Contagious Illness- Children experiencing contagious illnesses such as pink eye, head lice, fever, viral infections, chicken pox, etc. will not be permitted to attend school until the threat of spreading such illnesses no longer exists. **If your child experiences certain symptoms (diarrhea, fever, vomiting, head scratching, etc.) prior to the school day, please do not send them to school.** Students with ringworm may attend school, but the site must be covered with a band-aid.

Medication- Parents will be asked to sign a medication release form prior to your child's first day of school. **If your child needs medication during the year, you MUST send the medication accompanied with a signed written note with specific directions for the amount, time, and date to be administered.** Please avoid writing notes with statements such as "if needed" written on it.

Breakfast/Lunch/ Snacks

Breakfast will be delivered to classrooms between 8:10 and 8:35 a.m. each day. **STUDENTS WHO ARRIVE AT SCHOOL AFTER 8:35 a.m. WILL BE TOO LATE FOR BREAKFAST.**

All students may eat breakfast and lunch at no cost in the Cook County School System. Since the school provides nutritious meals, we encourage our students to participate in the Cook County Schools Nutrition Program. **If you choose to send your child's lunch, please send a healthy lunch in a lunch box.** Students are also encouraged to bring healthy snacks from home.

School Insurance

School insurance covers children for accidents that might happen at school or going to and from school. Twenty-four hour coverage is also available. Insurance information will be sent home during the first week of school and must be returned directly to the insurance company.

Balloons and Flowers

Balloons and flowers **are not permitted on the bus**. If balloons and flowers are sent to school, please make arrangements to pick them up.

Calendar

A calendar containing important information such as parent involvement activities, etc. is sent home each month. Please take time to carefully review the calendar and post it in a visible place so that you will know when we will be away from school.

Parent Involvement

A major component of our program is the participation of the parents in the children's education. Each month, you will have the opportunity to be actively involved with your child's education.

Parent and Child Together (P.A.C.T.) Time - This is a time when you or another adult (grandparent, aunt, uncle, or friend of the family) may come to the classroom to work with your child. Approximately every other month, a scheduled P.A.C.T. Time will appear on the monthly calendar. Please make every effort to come and be a part of this valuable experience with your child.

Parent meetings and workshops are held throughout the school year. Notices will be sent prior to each event.

Field Trips

Field trips are positive learning experiences for you and your preschool child. Due to the Board of Education insurance stipulations, only **Pre-K** children are allowed to participate in the Pre-K field trips.

Field Trip Procedures Include:

1. Child must come to Pre-K for attendance and lunch count on the day of the trip. Children who are counted on the lunch roster will be charged for lunch even if they leave with parent prior to eating lunch unless the lunchroom is notified 2 days prior to the field trip.
2. **Child must ride the bus to the field trip destination.**
3. Parents attending the field trips should arrive **no earlier than 10 minutes prior to departure**. Many important preparations and tasks are happening in the classroom. Please do not disturb your child's class.
4. Only students and school personnel are allowed to ride on school buses.
5. When canned drinks are requested, please send only canned drinks. Glass, plastic, 2 liter, etc. are not acceptable.

Supplies

The following supplies are needed for school this year:

1. **Bookbag-** The children need a **regular size** bookbag. Clear bookbags are no longer required. Please do not send the miniature size or rolling bookbags. **Label bookbags with the child's name and the teacher's name.**
2. **Towel-** A towel is needed for rest time. Please do not send a blanket or a pillow. Our cots are stacked up, and blankets or pillows may cause a problem with stacking them.
3. **Change of Clothes-** Please send a complete change of clothes (shirt, pants, socks, underwear). There may be accidents or spills during the year. As wet clothes are sent home, please send replacement clothes. **Also as the weather/temperature changes, please send a replacement of clothing that is appropriate for the weather change.**
4. **Snacks-** Please send a snack for your student every day. Students are encouraged to bring healthy snacks from home. **Juice will be provided.**

❖ Please label all items.

Please send and check your child's bookbag daily. This is our way of communicating with you. Your cooperation ensures that all messages sent home will be read by a parent/guardian.

Please tell your child of any important information being sent in their bookbag and remind them to give it to their teacher.

Phone Calls

The teachers and students are involved with instructional activities throughout the morning. If you need to speak with your child's teacher, please call between 1:00-2:00 p.m. or leave a message with the secretary unless there is an emergency, and the teacher will contact you at a convenient time.

Toys

There is an abundance of toys available at Pre-K, so please do not send toys from home with your child. According to the Cook County Board of Education Code of Conduct, a student shall not possess, use, handle, or transmit any object that reasonably can be considered a weapon.

Seclusion or Restraint of Students JFG(2)

Cook County Schools shall require that all schools and programs within the district comply with State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.35 concerning "seclusion" and "restraint," as those terms are defined within the rule.

Rationale:

Cook County Schools is committed to the mission of providing a safe learning environment for all students. However, it may be necessary at some times to utilize physical restraint of a student in situations of immediate danger. This policy provides the requirements regarding the use of physical restraint of students.

Definition:

Physical restraint is direct physical contact from an adult that prevents or significantly reduces a student's movement.

Physical restraint does not include providing limited physical contact and/or redirection to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing guidance to a location, or providing comfort.

Use:

Physical restraint of a student may be used only in those situations in which a student is an immediate danger to self or others and is not responsive to less intensive behavioral interventions including verbal directives or other de-escalation techniques.

Physical restraint will be terminated when the student is no longer an immediate danger to self or others or if the student is observed to be in severe distress.

Requirements:

The designated staff members must be trained in the use of physical restraint utilizing a common restraint curriculum selected for Cook County Schools. The curriculum will include information about positive techniques, prevention strategies and de-escalation strategies as well as restraint techniques. Staff members will not participate in a restraint prior to being trained in the restraint curriculum and in this policy.

Parents will be provided information about the program's policy governing the use of physical restraint.

Parents will be notified in writing within one school day when physical restraint is used with their student.

Each use of restraint will be documented by staff participating in or supervising the restraint using the Cook County Schools incident report form.

A log of the use of physical restraint will be maintained by each school site administrator and will be submitted regularly to the special education director.

Incident reports will be reviewed by Cook County leadership staff or restraint curriculum trainers on a minimum of a monthly basis.

Reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that incidents of physical restraint are observed by another staff member who is trained in the restraint curriculum.

Documentation of training in the restraint curriculum will be maintained by each school site principal and submitted to the special education director at the completion of each training activity. No Cook County staff member shall participate in the restraint of a student without being trained according to Cook County's chosen restraint curriculum.

Students in immediate danger to himself/herself or others will be moved if possible by the team to a supervised area until behavior is no longer a threat to himself/herself or others.

Prohibited Actions:

The use of prone restraint, mechanical restraint and chemical restraint is prohibited.

The use of seclusion is prohibited. Seclusion is a procedure that isolates and confines the student in a separate area until he or she is no longer an immediate danger to himself/herself or others.

Physical restraint is prohibited as a form of discipline or punishment, when the student cannot be safely restrained, or when the use would be contraindicated due to the student's psychiatric, medical, or physical conditions as described in the student's educational records.

Bullying Policy Descriptor JCDAAG

The Cook County School District believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All schools within the district have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff, and volunteers. Behavior that infringes on the safety of any student will not be tolerated. A student shall not bully, harass, or intimidate another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: direct physical contact such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults such as teasing or name-calling; the use of electronic methods to harass, threaten or humiliate, and social isolation and/or manipulation. The school district policy prohibiting bullying is included in the student code of conduct and includes but is not limited to the following:

- Any student who engages in bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee.
- Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached after consulting the school principal, the student or the parent of the student should contact the local superintendent or his or her designee.
- The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

All students and/or staff shall immediately report incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation to the school principal or designee. School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling on a school bus to and from school or a school-sponsored activity and during a school-sponsored activity.

Bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken after each incident of bullying and upon a finding of guilt. Disciplinary action after the first incident of bullying may include but is not limited to the following:

- Loss of a privilege
- Reassignment of seats in the classroom, cafeteria or school bus
- Reassignment of classes
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Detention
- Expulsion (through appropriate due process hearing)

- Assignment to an alternative school (through appropriate due process hearing)

If necessary, counseling and other interventions should also be provided to address the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who are victims of bullying and students who commit an offense of bullying.

Students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders may report incidents of bullying to an administrator, teacher, counselor or other staff member by using the school district's complaint procedures or by calling the Georgia Department of Education's 1-877 SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline. Please note: Any form of electronic bullying (cyberbullying) using school equipment, school networks, e-mail systems or committed at school is strictly prohibited.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year as part of the student code of conduct.
- The school shall keep a report of bullying and the results of an investigation confidential.
- Staff are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur or upon receipt of any report of bullying.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident to the school principal designee.

The following actions will be taken when bullying is reported:

1. Investigate

Upon receipt of any report of bullying, schools will direct an immediate investigation involving appropriate personnel. The investigation should begin no later than the following school day. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s) and staff members and reviewing video surveillance if available. School police, school counselors, school social workers and/or other support staff should be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances of the matter.

2. Notify

At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, parents/guardians of the accused and the victim must be notified. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.

3. Discipline

Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student should be charged with bullying and given an age-appropriate consequence which shall include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances.

Students in grades six through twelve found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative school through appropriate due process by disciplinary hearing officers, panels, or tribunals.

Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.

4. Follow Up

Follow up is important to the accused and the victim. Implement a planned method to provide after-care and follow up. Reiterate to all the previously stated prohibition on retaliation.

Weapon Notice

O.C.G.A. § 16-11-127.1

Carrying weapons within school safety zones, at school functions, or on school property

(a) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) "School safety zone" means in or on any real property owned by or leased to any public or private elementary school, secondary school, or school board and used for elementary or secondary education and in or on the campus of any public or private technical school, vocational school, college, university, or institution of postsecondary education.

(2) "Weapon" means and includes any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind, and any stun gun or taser as defined in subsection (a) of Code Section 16-11-106. This paragraph excludes any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.

(b) (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (c) of this Code section, it shall be unlawful for any person to carry to or to possess or have under such person's control while within a school safety zone or at a school building, school function, or school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school any weapon or explosive compound, other than fireworks the possession of which is regulated by Chapter 10 of Title 25.

(2) Any license holder who violates this subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Any person who is not a license holder who violates this subsection shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000.00, by imprisonment for not less than two nor more than ten years, or both.

(3) Any person convicted of a violation of this subsection involving a dangerous weapon or machine gun, as such terms are defined in Code Section 16-11-121, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000.00 or by imprisonment for a period of not less than five nor more than ten years, or both.

(4) A child who violates this subsection may be subject to the provisions of Code Section 15-11-63.

Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your local system's Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

Courtney Holley
Program for Exceptional Children
1109 N Parrish Ave
Adel, GA 31620
courtneyholley@cook.k12.ga.us
229-896-2296

The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school systems request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.
9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.

13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

Section 504 Procedural Safeguards

1. Overview: Any student or parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. The school system's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing.

2. Hearing Request: The Request for the Hearing must include the following:

- a. The name of the student.
- b. The address of the residence of the student.
- c. The name of the school the student is attending.
- d. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
- e. The requested reasons for review.
- f. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
- g. The name and contact information of the grievant.

Within 10 business days from receiving the grievant's Request for Hearing, the Section 504 Coordinator will acknowledge the Request for Hearing in writing and schedule a time and place for a hearing. If the written Request for Hearing does not contain the necessary information noted above, the Section 504 Coordinator will inform the grievant of the specific information needed to complete the request. All timelines and processes will be stayed until the Request for Hearing contains the necessary information noted above.

3. Mediation: The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and school system must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the school system will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.

4. Hearing Procedures:

- The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.

- Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school system, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
- The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
- The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
- The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R. §104.34). One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.
- The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
- The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
- The hearing shall be closed to the public.
- The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
- Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
- Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
- Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
- Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.

5. Decision: The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.

6. Review: If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

Wellness Plan

The Cook County Board of Education (CCBOE) will be taking the lead in limiting student access to unhealthy snacks and beverages as part of our CCBOE Initiative for Healthy Children. The Beverage Companies will begin restocking all our beverage machines on all campuses with healthier drinks, including water, sports drinks, etc. and juices with minimum of 10% juice. Currently, no beverage machines are accessible to elementary students.

This CCBOE initiative meets the requirements of the new state regulations for food made available to children in our schools. We share in the community's concern about nutrition, unhealthy eating habits, and childhood obesity. While the schools are not totally responsible for what children eat, we can do our part to point them in much healthier directions that will benefit them throughout their lives.

We are requiring all campuses to eliminate unhealthy foods – which the United States Department of Agriculture calls “food of minimal nutritional value (FMNV).” Campuses not in compliance with state regulations will be subject to severe state penalties, including reimbursement for food service accounts.

Even though our elementary school students do not have access to these foods through vending machines, we want to make sure that teachers are mindful not to distribute these unhealthy foods to students as rewards and that the cafeteria does not sell them as extra snacks. It is important that your Parent Teacher Organizations and other school organizations know that students are not to receive these foods during the school day or on field trips.

We will eliminate carbonated drinks, sugary candies, high-fat candy bars, chewing gum, and other non-nutritional food items. We will promote bottled water, milk, fruit juices, sport drinks, pretzels, nutritional granola bars, light popcorn, and additional healthy choices.

All students will benefit through this important change in their lifestyles. These healthy food choices will promote a calmer, more productive classroom environment.

The policy (EEE) may be found in its entirety through the Cook County School Website at www.cook.k12.ga.us.

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

Cook County Schools Board Policy Manual is available through the Cook County Website at:

www.cook.k12.ga.us

**Cook County Pre-K
2022-2023**

Parent Acknowledgement

Student's Name _____ Grade PRE-K Teacher _____

By signing below, we acknowledge that our family has received a copy of the Student Handbook which includes the following documents, and we have reviewed the contents with our child. We further acknowledge that we understand the information presented in this handbook:

- School Rules and Procedures
- Attendance Protocol
- Student Code Of Conduct (Discipline Plan)
- Bullying Policy
- Seclusion or Restraint of Students Policy
- Wellness Plan
- Weapons Notice

Also, checking and signing below indicates that we give permission for our child to be:

Yes

No

Participate in various school-related field trips transported
by the Cook County School System bus

Parent/Guardian

Date