

Pre-K

Parent Handbook

2019-2020



Bryan County Schools

Dr. Paul Brooksher - Superintendent

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Dear Parents,

Thank you for enrolling your child in the Bryan County School System Pre-K Program. It is our goal to ensure that your child learns in a safe, challenging, exciting, and fun atmosphere. We want to partner with you in helping children learn and grow. Please let us know your concerns and we will happily address them.

This handbook is designed to be a tool to inform you about the procedures in place to keep our schools safe and orderly. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher or school administrator if you have any concerns/questions.

We look forward to working with you and your family throughout your child's school year!

Welcome to Pre-K!

Respectfully,

Shila Cantele

Pre-K Director



Parent Orientation

Each school holds a parent orientation at the beginning of each year. The Parent Orientation is required and has to be conducted within the first 20 days of school. Orientations will include specific information about our HighScope Curriculum, Assessment, Family Engagement, Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (**GELDS**), and other general program information.

Dress Code

Pre-K Students:

Students will wear attire appropriate for the occasion. Comfortable tops, shorts/pants, and tennis shoes are recommended. This makes playground activities, bathroom times, and other activities easier for children.

Please send children dressed appropriately for the weather and for activities such as painting, outdoor play, working on the carpet, etc. Children are involved in activities which may soil their clothes. Choose garments that your child can fasten him/herself. Please label clothing with your child's name. Cowboy boots, sandals, clogs, etc. are not practical for children in our program. Please leave all valuables (jewelry, money, watches, hair bows, etc.) at home. We cannot be responsible for lost items.

Adult Attire:

All parents and adults visiting the campus should dress in a manner appropriate for our program and follow the BCS volunteer dress code guidelines.



Attendance

Regular school attendance is a key component to a child's academic success. Children who do not attend on a regular basis, routinely arrive late or routinely leave early, may face disenrollment. If a child is sick or will not attend for any reason, please provide a written explanation (doctor's note) of any absences with each occurrence as necessary by the time your child returns to school. Children who are absent from school for an excessive amount of time unexcused (not related to illness or family emergency) will be reported to Bright from the Start.

Parents of the children who were selected for BCS Pre-K commit to sending their child to school for the complete instructional day, 180 days per year.

- If you pick up your child early, he/she will miss part of their instructional day.
- Excessive absences, early dismissals, and tardiness will be reported to the proper authorities, and action will be taken to insure regular school attendance.
- Letters referencing the system's attendance policy will be sent home the week the student misses the **5th** and **10th** day of school. A letter similar to the following sample, will be sent home each absence after the 10th absence.
- If absenteeism persists, the School Social Worker may make home visits.
- If a child is absent 10 consecutive days, disenrollment is automatic.

Do I have to sign my child in and out each day?

No, students must be accompanied by an adult (18 years or age or older) into the school when they are tardy or being dismissed early. The adult must sign the child in on the attendance sheet located in the front office. When the child is being dismissed early, the adult must sign the child out on the attendance sheet located in the front office. The adult who signs out the child must be named on the white card on file.

BFTS Pre-K Policy

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) requires that children enrolled in the lottery-funded Pre-K programs be in school for a minimum of 6 ½ hours daily and attend 180 days during the year. (Exceptions are made for sickness or family crisis.) Tardy arrivals and early checkouts disrupt the routine and are strongly discouraged. Pre-K parents should note that Bright from the Start (BFTS)- Georgia's DECAL policy specifies, "Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing more than two days per month without medical or other reasonable explanation. Inability to resolve the problem after documented interventions should be referred.... for disenrollment consideration." Furthermore, "Children who do not attend class for 10 consecutive days without a medical or other reasonable explanation **must** be removed from the roster."

Every school has a waiting list for Pre-K students. If a child is disenrolled for attendance reasons, the slot is immediately filled with the next student on the waiting list.

Date: _____

To: Parents/Guardian of _____

Re: Dates of unexcused Absences/Tardies/Early Dismissals: _____

Dear _____

As part of Bryan County Schools Pre-K program, it is very important that your child attend school every day to receive high quality instructional services and to be Kindergarten ready. If your child continues to be absent from school without a valid excuse, he/she may be considered for disenrollment by Bright from the Start.

We have met with you several times seeking a mutual solution to this matter. Since your child is approaching 10 days of unexcused absences/tardies/early dismissals, this matter will be referred to the Bright from the Start committee to determine whether your child's enrollment status will continue. Please contact the school if you are willing to work with us regarding this problem. Otherwise, you may want to consider alternative placement for your child. Please be mindful that it is not mandatory for your child to attend Pre-K.

The goal of the Pre-K program is for every child to be academically successful. Attendance is a necessity for this goal to be fulfilled. We appreciate your attention in this matter.

Yours truly,

Principal

BCS Pre-K Attendance Protocol 2019-2020

- Three unexcused absences/tardies/early dismissals... Call/Email Parents
- Five unexcused absences/tardies/early dismissals... Letter from Principal
- Seven unexcused absences/tardies/early dismissals... Parent Conference
- Ten unexcused absences/tardies/early dismissals... Letter from Principal
- Over 10 unexcused absences/tardies/early dismissals... Referral to BFTS
- Ten consecutive unexcused absences... Automatic Disenrollment
- Disenrollment proceedings.... Pre-K Director recommends to BFTS committee for disenrollment

The goal of the Pre-K attendance protocol is to assist families in establishing and maintaining regular school attendance patterns.

Assessment

Georgia's Pre-K Program uses a statewide assessment for four-year-olds. It is called Work Sampling System (WSS). WSS assesses the level of performance for each child in the program. It is an assessment completed in the classroom by the teacher as children engage in their routine daily activities throughout the school year. Teachers observe and record student performance every day. They collect student work samples that show development and growth over time. Teachers use this data to complete a Developmental Checklist and upload the information into an online portfolio for each child. The Developmental Checklist includes sixty-nine performance indicators under seven domains of learning (language/literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, social/emotional development, health and physical development, and the arts). The indicators within the seven domains of learning are directly correlated with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (**GELDS**). The GELDS guide the instruction in the classroom and are correlated with the Kindergarten Georgia Standards of Excellence. Information from the checklist is used to determine each individual child's performance level and school readiness. The information is then reported on the Narrative Summary Report that teachers share with parents.

Conferences

A minimum of two family/teacher conferences will be offered to families during the school year. During this conference the Georgia's Pre-K Progress Report will be shared with families. While sharing the Georgia's Pre-K Progress Report with families, the teacher will provide information about your child's performance in language/literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, social/emotional development, health and physical development, creative expression, approaches to play and learning, and cognitive processes. The Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) can be used as a discussion guide during teacher conferences about your child's progress.

Days and Hours of Operation

- BCS Pre-K classrooms are open normal school hours of the parent school.

LPS – 7:55am – 2:55pm

RHPS – 9:00am – 4:00pm

MES – 7:40am – 2:40pm

- All Pre-K classrooms follow the Bryan County Schools district calendar.



Transportation

- Transportation via school bus is available within each school's attendance zone for students who live further than 1.5 miles away from the school.
- Parents are responsible for transportation if the student is attending a class outside his/her assigned attendance zone.
- Pre-K students who ride the school bus must have a parent or an adult supervisor present at the bus stop with them before they load the bus and after school waiting for them when the bus arrives at their stop.

Family Involvement

Orientation

Each school will conduct a parent orientation within the first 20 days of the program. The orientation will include more specific information about the curriculum Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (**GELDS**) and general information.

Field Trips

Whenever possible, teachers are encouraged to plan field trips both inside and outside the classroom environment to familiarize children with their community and broaden their educational experiences. The number of field trips will vary amongst programs. Parents who participate in field trips may be charged a fee.

Graduation

Bright from the Start does not recommend “graduation” for four-year-old children as an appropriate activity. More appropriate activities include, but are not limited to: a field day, an open house, family/child picnic, dinner, etc.

Your Involvement

Whenever possible, families should actively participate in the Pre-K program and maintain open communication with the Pre-K program staff. Research shows that active family participation in children’s learning experiences contributes to success in school. Volunteering in the classroom is highly recommended, because it helps the children and is informative and rewarding for families. Contact your child’s teacher to find out about opportunities to volunteer your time, talents, and experiences in your child’s classroom. All volunteers must attend a Bryan County Schools volunteer orientation.

Curriculum

Bryan County Schools Pre-K classrooms utilize research-based instructional strategies on a consistent and pervasive basis county wide. The instructional program is based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) for grades K-12 aligned to Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). BCS adopted the HighScope curriculum as a tool to implement the standards.

Teachers utilize the HighScope curriculum and the PreK Content standards. All instruction focuses on activities that are developmentally appropriate for four-year-old children. Classroom activities are student centered allowing children to actively be involved in learning. A variety of materials are available in each classroom to meet the individual needs and interests of the children.

The Pre-Kindergarten classroom is structured to provide a positive, flexible, and relaxed environment for the purpose of achieving desired goals. Opportunities to explore, discover, experiment, create, understand, and learn are fluid and ongoing. A variety of experiences provided in the Pre-Kindergarten learning environment result in a unique abundance of behavioral, academic and social growth for the Pre-Kindergarten child. Social manners are taught and stressed. The classroom is divided into various work areas: art, manipulatives, blocks, housekeeping, language, math, and science.

Specific Goals in Pre-K:

1. Become independent, responsible and confident, ready for success in school and their future lives.
2. Begin to acquire reading, writing, number, problem solving, and social skills in the classroom and at home.
3. Learn to plan many of their own activities, carry them out, and talk with other children, their teachers, and their parents about what they are doing at school.
4. Learn by using materials they choose, taking part in classroom activities, solving problems, and working and playing with their classmates, teachers, and parents.
5. Prepare children for a smooth transition to Kindergarten.

Discipline

When a student chooses to participate in behavior that is contrary to the order and discipline of the school, consequences will be implemented to correct the behavior. Consequences are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those that are consistent with the expectations for behavior in our schools. Behaviors which might warrant administrative intervention include, but are not limited to:

- Defiance/Disrespect/Non-Compliance
- Disruption
- Abusive Language/Inappropriate
- Language/Profanity
- Fighting/Physical Aggression
- Harassment/Bullying
- Inappropriate Display of Affection
- Property Damage

Children may be disenrolled from the BCS Pre-K Program if they are hurting themselves or others and/or are chronically disruptive to the extent that they are not benefiting from the program. The Response to Intervention (RTI) process will serve as a catalyst to assist parents, students, and teachers in devising a plan to correct the problem. In addition, assistance will be given to families to help them obtain resources that will help the child benefit from the program. This process may require parents to attempt a meeting for planning purposes only. Disenrollment for behavior is the last step taken after all other attempts to help the child have been exhausted.

Lottery Procedures

To apply for an available Pre-Kindergarten slot for the upcoming school year, parents & children must meet the following guidelines:

Age

- Students entering Pre-K must be four on or before September 1, 2019. Students who are five and have never been in a Georgia Pre-K program who have been in a Georgia Pre-K program less than 30 days will not be considered for enrollment in our program because of the entry age for public kindergarten and first grade (see below).

Georgia Rule - Entry Age for Public Kindergarten and First Grade:

- A child must be five years old on or before September 1st to enter a public Kindergarten. The child must be six years old on or before September 1st to enter first grade. School systems must verify age before enrollment.
- A child who was a legal resident of one or more states for a period of two years immediately prior to moving to Georgia and who was legally enrolled in either a public Kindergarten or first grade, or a private Kindergarten or first grade accredited by a state or regional association, would be eligible to enroll in Georgia schools, provided that the Kindergarten is five years old by December 31st or the first grader is six by that date.

Registration

- Registration is completed via the online form on the Bryan County School System website: www.bryancountyschools.org.
- Completed online registration applications should be submitted by Thursday, February 28th at 11:59 pm to be included in the lottery.
- Students are chosen to attend the Bryan County Pre-K by a lottery drawing which is held at each school in the spring of the year. Students who live in Bryan County must be registered for the Pre-K school within their district zoned area. All students who are not chosen at the lottery drawing will be placed on the waiting list for the site where the application was submitted.

Lottery Exempt (BCS staff)

- All students must meet BFTS age enrollment guidelines.
- BCS employee's children who reside in the home of the employed parent are exempt from the BCS Pre-K Lottery and are automatically enrolled in the BCS Pre-K program (documentation may be required).
- BCS employee's Pre-K children will follow the same attendance zone eligibility as BCS employee's children who are K-12 students.

Lottery Rules (General Public)

- Selection is based on a lottery drawing that is conducted prior to the upcoming school year.
- Priority is given to children within a school's attendance zone.
- If all spaces in an attendance zone are not filled by in-zone students, then the out of zone lottery drawing results will be used.
- If one sibling is drawn, the other sibling(s) are automatically entered as well, (provided all siblings meet the BFTS age requirement) unless they were the last slot being drawn in the lottery. At that point the parent will have to decide whether to leave the child in the class or not. The remaining sibling(s) will then be placed as the first alternate in the lottery drawings. We prefer to separate siblings into different classes, unless there is a special need and it has been addressed to the site director at the Pre-K program.
- Students are randomly placed and equally distributed by “boys and girls” in each classroom. If a student has an IEP, the Exceptional Student Services department may help with their placement into a classroom.
- Students who have been drawn from the lottery and placed in a classroom, but do not show up for the beginning of school within the first five days will be removed from the roster and a student will be pulled from the waiting list to replace them. Every effort will be made to get in touch with the parents of this child before removing them from the roster.
- Students who are not “potty trained” by the time they enter Pre-K must be actively training at home and parents are requested to provide pull-ups.

Lottery Procedures

- Determining admittance in McAllister (MES) and Richmond Hill Primary (RHPS) Pre-K:
 - If there are less in-zone applicants than available slots, all applicants are admitted.
 - If there are more in-zone applicants than available slots, there will be a lottery drawing to determine who is admitted.
 - All in-zone applicants will be drawn and given a lottery number.
 - All in-zone applicants at MES drawn after the number of available slots will be on the in-zone waiting list at MES. If there are available slots in the MES zone and the MES waiting list has been exhausted, the next child on the RHPS waiting list will be offered the slot. BCS transportation will not be offered for these out of zone children. The parents will decide whether to accept or deny the offer.
 - All in-zone applicants at RHPS drawn after the number of available slots will be on the in-zone waiting list at RHPS. If there are available slots in the RHPS zone and the RHPS waiting list has been exhausted, the next child on the MES waiting list will be offered the slot. BCS transportation will not be offered for these out of zone children. The parents will decide whether to accept or deny the offer.
 - Any in-zone applications turned in after the lottery, will be granted in-zone status and will be given the next available in-zone lottery number or placed on the Pre-K Waiting List.
- Determining admittance at Lanier Primary School (LPS) Pre-K:
 - If there are less in-zone applicants than available slots, all applicants are admitted.
 - If there are more in-zone applicants than available slots, there will be a lottery drawing to determine who is admitted.
 - All in-zone applicants will be drawn and given a lottery number.
 - Any applications turned in after the lottery will be placed on the Pre-K Waiting List.



1. What are the age requirements to enroll in Georgia’s Pre-K Program?

A child must be age-eligible (four-years-old on or before September 1) and a Georgia resident. Acceptable proof of age and residency must be on file the day the child begins the Pre-K program.

2. What is considered acceptable documents for proof of age?

Examples of acceptable proof of age include: Original/certified birth certificate copy, passport, green card, pink card, or Federal I-94 card and hospital record of live birth. Immunization forms and Medicaid cards are not acceptable documentation for proof of age.

3. What is acceptable documentation for proof-of-residency?

Proof of Residency – Residency is established by providing two items from the list below:

1. Current month lease agreement (GA Realtor signed rental lease or Notarized generic lease) **or** home purchase agreement or mortgage **(REQUIRED)**
2. Current month utility bill or document verifying utility services established for primary residence
3. Previous year or most recent tax return
4. Current year Department of Family & Children Services documents
5. Current year Medicaid card
6. Current weekly or monthly paycheck stub

4. Can I pick up my child early a few days a week?

Georgia’s Pre-K Program operates just like a school classroom. Parents commit to sending their child to school for the complete instructional day, 180 days per year. Children can be disenrolled for being chronically tardy in the morning or being picked up prior to the end of the instructional day.

5. Can I bring lunch for my child?

Georgia’s Pre-K requires centers and schools provide a complete nutritional meal for children. Local schools/sites may set policies regarding bringing food to school. If your child has identified special food requirements, contact your Pre-K provider for individual guidance.

6. What is “excessive” in regards to the tardy/early dismissal policy?

Chronic tardiness is defined as late arrival or early departure more than once per week.

7. How do I know who offers Pre-K in my area?

You may search for Pre-K locations by clicking [here](http://decal.ga.gov/ProviderSearch/ChildCare) (<http://decal.ga.gov/ProviderSearch/ChildCare>) this will take you to the Pre-K Provider Search on the BFTS website. Or a site listing can also be obtained by calling 1-888-4GA-PREK or (404) 656-5957.

8. What should I bring to registration?

Parents/guardians should bring proof of Georgia residency, social security card, and age documentation.

9. How much does it cost to register for Pre-K?

Pre-K providers cannot charge a registration fee for the 6.5 hour instructional day.

10. Will my child participate in graduation at the end of Pre-K?

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning does not recommend “graduation” for four-year-old children as an appropriate activity. More appropriate activities include, but are not limited to, a field day, an open house, family/child picnic, dinner, etc.

11. When will Pre-K Registration be held?

Each site can set their own registration dates, so check with the providers in your community.

12. Why doesn't my child's class take field trips?

Field trips are recommended but not a required part of Georgia's Pre-K. Schools/centers are encouraged to offer special educational experiences, which may include, but are not limited to field trips.

13. What do I need to know to enroll a child in Georgia's Pre-K Program?

To learn how to enroll a child in Georgia's Pre-K program can be obtained from the article "Enrolling in Pre-K".

This article is located at Pre-K > Georgia's Pre-K Program > [Enrolling in Pre-K](http://dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/EnrollingInPreK.aspx)
<http://dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/EnrollingInPreK.aspx>

14. The Pre-K classes/school that I want are full. What do I do now?

Most programs maintain a waiting list of students who are interested in attending Pre-K at their program. You will need to contact the program and request that your child's name be placed on their waiting list. The site will contact you directly if a slot becomes available for your child. You may also search for additional pre-k sites in your area by using the online [Provider Search](#) (instructions provided on the search page) or calling 404-656-5957 (toll-free at 1-888-4GA-PREK) and asking for the Pre-K consultant of the day. If you need additional assistance, please call the department (1-888-4GA-PREK) and ask to be connected with the Pre-K consultant assigned to your area.

Pre-K

Parent Handbook Agreement Form

2019-2020



Please read the following statement and sign the form.

We have received the 2019-20 Bryan County Schools PreK Parent Handbook as a family and agree to honor its policies, rules and statements.

PreK Child's Name

Parent Signature

Date