

Wausau School District
4K & Early Childhood Programs

PARENT HANDBOOK

WSD 4K & EC School Office: 715-261-0265
First Student: 715-842-2268

2016-2017

Dear WSD 4K and Early Childhood families,

Welcome to the 2016-2017 school year. The 4K and Early Childhood staff eagerly anticipates forming a strong and positive partnership with you and your child. Since you are your child's foremost influential teacher, collaborating together will best prepare your child for future academic and social success. We will communicate regularly by group emails and phone calls as well as bi-weekly newsletters. If possible, please plan to attend our "Parent at School" event the first week of each month.

In this handbook you will find many useful items such as our safety, snack, and bus policies, information about transporting and visiting the 4K Learning Academy, our school calendar, and important educational and curricular priorities. Our policies are crafted to keep your child safe in the most stimulating learning environment possible. Please note that to improve the safety of our students, staff, and parents, the district has secured entrances at district buildings. When entering the 4K Learning Academy, you will need to be buzzed in after the school day has started. All visitors are required to check in at the school office before proceeding anywhere in the building. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

The Wausau School District Parent/Student Handbooks will be available for you to view online. To access them, go to: wausauschools.org/forparents.htm (scroll down to find the Parents/Student Handbook). Please note that there are policies in the District Handbook that relate to such things as media events, field trips, prescription procedures, etc. Also included are the Wausau School District's Key Interests which are the basis of all current and future educational decisions.

You will find our 4K rules on a poster you can hang at home. The expectation for all of our children is that "we make good choices." The five rules are the cornerstone of our work on social-emotional and behavior skills at school. All of the rules can easily be applied at home. Talk about the rules and praise your child enthusiastically when you see him/her follow them.

We welcome you as part of our District 4K family, where state-recognized programs and fun, individualized learning opportunities occur every day so that every student gets the same opportunity for success. Please feel free to call your school office with any questions. If you have questions specific to 4K please contact our 4K & Early Childhood Programs office at G.D. Jones at 715-261-0265. Sarah Fisher is our friendly, dedicated administrative assistant available to help you.

Your friends in the education of your child,

Kara Rakowski, 4K Principal & Early Childhood Coordinator and Staff

4K Academy FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. WHAT TIME IS SCHOOL IN SESSION?

AM session: 8:25 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. **PM session:** 11:40 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

2. WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES WHEN MY CHILD RIDES THE BUS?

If your child is riding the bus, please remember that the bus may be late the first few days. **If for any reason your child will not be riding the bus on a particular day, please call First Student at 715-842-2268.** They will notify the driver that your child will not be riding; calling saves time and fuel. Please be ready at least 10 minutes before your scheduled pickup time. The times can vary due to absent students. When your child is dropped off, **an adult must meet the bus.** Again, be waiting for the bus at least 10 minutes before the scheduled drop-off time. If an adult is not present, the child will be returned to school and the parent will need to pick the child up at the 4K Academy. We understand that emergencies may arise, but being brought back to school is extremely stressful for the child. If your child is returned to school two times, we will ask you to come in for a meeting with the principal and social worker to brainstorm solutions for a smooth bus ride home for your child.

If you have moved or changed daycare providers since completing the bus request form, please contact the 4K & EC Programs office at G.D. Jones at 715-261-0265 so we can update your address and notify the bus company.

Due to the time it takes First Student to set up routes, no busing changes or additions will be made from August 8 until September 12. Parents of students who enroll during this time period will need to transport their child until busing arrangements can be arranged.

After September 12, bus changes may be made. Please allow one week from the time we get the paperwork until the bus arrangements are made.

3. HOW CAN I ADD OR CHANGE BUSING FOR MY CHILD?

Please make all busing requests through the 4K & EC Programs office at G.D. Jones School at 715-261-0265. Please do not call First Student.

Information for any bus changes can be taken over the telephone. Remember any daycare must be located in our transportation/attendance areas assigned to your 4K site.

4. WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES WHEN I TRANSPORT MY CHILD?

Many parents choose to transport their child to the 4K Learning Academy. If you choose to do so, please make sure your child is at school by the start time (8:25 am or 11:40 am) to avoid loss of valuable instructional and learning time for your child. **Parents must accompany their child into and out of school during pickup and drop off times.** If you are dropping your child off, **doors will be open five minutes prior to start time, i.e. 8:20 a.m. and 11:35 a.m.** Please wait in the designated spot with your child until a school adult supervisor is available. The parent may then leave and the supervisor

will walk the children to their classrooms. Please provide supervision for all children in your care and do not leave children unattended in vehicles.

If you are picking your child up from school, the **doors will be unlocked five minutes prior to dismissal, 10:55 a.m. and 2:10 p.m.** Please wait in the designated spot and a school staff will bring the children to that area at dismissal time. Please do not go to the classroom for your child as it creates confusion and congestion in the hallways. For the safety of you and your child, please avoid crossing between parked buses and always use the crosswalk.

When the school day starts, the doors are locked and you will be buzzed in at the main entrance only. All visitors are required to check in at the office and put on a visitor badge before proceeding anywhere in the building. It is our policy that every visitor must check in at the office and wear a visitor badge except during pickup and drop-off times.

5. WHAT IS THE EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING PLANS FOR 4K?

When it is necessary to close school during the middle of the day, school closing or delay information will be sent to you via School Messenger®, the District's electronic notification system, and announced over radio and television stations. Parents of 4K students are responsible for picking up their child at the Learning Academy. Students will not be transported by bus. In the event there is a 2-hour delay, all pre-school classes are canceled.

6. WILL MY CHILD GO OUTSIDE EVERY DAY?

YES! PLEASE DRESS YOUR CHILD FOR OUTSIDE RECESS EVERY DAY! Research has provided evidence of the far-reaching power of regular exercise in improving the learning and emotional and physical well-being of students. Regular exercise creates an environment in which the brain is ready, willing, and able to learn. **If it is cold or rainy, we will use the gross motor area as a substitute.**

7. WHAT IF I WANT TO PICK MY CHILD UP EARLY?

All visitors, including parents, are required to register in the office before going to visit a classroom. If you wish to pick your child up early, please stop into the office to check your student out of school.

8. WHAT IF MY CHILD IS SICK?

Please call First Student at 715-842-2268 (if your child rides the bus) and call the school office to report your child's absence. We need to know how long you think your child will be out of school and the reason for the absence.

9. CAN I VOLUNTEER?

WE NEED and APPRECIATE ALL VOLUNTEERS. You may volunteer once during the school year or on a regular basis. Volunteers are an integral part of an efficient, high-quality school. This also gives your child the message that "school is an important place to be." You can access the volunteer sign-up at <http://www.wausauschools.org/forparents.htm> (scroll down to find Volunteer Opportunities). Any time you can afford contributes to our school success!

10. HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT MY CHILD IS DOING IN SCHOOL?

Parents are welcome to talk with teachers, 4K principal or building principal if they have any questions. To reach the 4K principal call the 4K & EC Programs office at 715-261-0265. Watch for the 4K CONNECTION, the 4K newsletter, every other week. **In addition, you will be invited into your child's classroom every month to observe a lesson and participate in an activity with your child.** This has been an extremely popular activity for both parents and students.

The Wausau School District has a "phone messenger" system that will call you and leave a voice message with any emergency information or reminders. You may receive messages from both the 4K Learning Academy and the school building.

11. WHAT OTHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE OFFERED?

As part of the 4K program, we offer over 90 hours of opportunities for families to learn more about their child's development as well as fun parent-child activities around the community. Please watch for email and phone messages regarding these activities.

12. WHAT ABOUT SNACKS?

To comply with our district snack policy in regulating the ingredients of snacks, we ask parents to pay a \$40.00 fee and we purchase the snacks. If you choose to celebrate your child's birthday at school please consider sending a non-food birthday treat. Any food items sent for sharing must contain an ingredient label, be nut free, and made in a nut free facility. Items that are determined to place children's health at risk will be discarded or returned to parents.

13. CAN MY CHILD GO TO 4K FOR TWO YEARS?

Please note that 4K programming is intended for one year only. Requesting a second year of 4K is considered retention and will be subject to Wausau School District policy that requires a case-by-case approval. Thank you for planning accordingly.

14. WHAT SUPPLIES DOES MY CHILD NEED?

EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPPLY LIST

- 1-3 pack glue sticks
- 2 large boxes of facial tissue
- Sensory supplies (pick **one** only – new and in package) flour, salt, oats, cornmeal, bird seed, vegetable oil, rice, or noodles with large hole for stringing
- Backpack large enough to hold a folder
- Extra change of clothes for your child labeled with name in a Zip-lock bag
Diapers/wipes for your child to have at school (if needed)
- Student activity fee for the entire year. This covers a daily snack and two field trips. Cash or check made out to the "WSD 4K & EC PROGRAMS."
 - Class meets 5 days a week = \$40.00
 - Class meets 4 days a week = \$35.00
 - Class meets 3 days a week = \$30.00
 - Class meets 2 days a week = \$25.00

4K SUPPLY LIST

- 1 -4-oz. bottle of white glue
- 1 box of crayons, 16 or 24 count
- 2 CRAYOLA watercolor sets, 8-color count – NO OFF BRANDS
- 1 package of CRAYOLA washable markers - classic
- 2 large boxes of facial tissues
- 1 -3-pack of clear or white glue sticks – jumbo size – NO PURPLE GLUE
- 1 box of quart- or sandwich-size Zip-lock bags
- 1 box of gallon Zip-lock bags
- Large backpack, big enough to hold a two-pocket folder** (which we will supply) and snow pants for winter. Please avoid wheeled backpacks for safety reasons.
- Extra set of clothing in a Zip-lock bag with child's name printed on bag.
- \$40.00 Student activity fee for the entire year (if writing a check, make payable to the "WSD 4K & EC PROGRAMS). This covers a daily snack and two field trips.

Health Information

Your child should be kept home or will be sent home for the following health issues:

- Fever (temperature 100 degrees F or greater) – child should be fever-free for 12 hours before returning to school
- Vomiting/frequent diarrhea
- Upper respiratory illness with frequent cough/drainage
- Strep throat – until 24 hours after treatment has begun
- Pink eye – until 24 hours after treatment has begun
- Undiagnosed or untreated skin rash or sores that cannot be covered

You can help your child stay healthy by encouraging frequent and thorough hand washing. Hand washing is the single most important defense against disease.

Medications

A medication form completed by the parent must be on file at the school office for all medications, both prescription and over the counter. A doctor must sign the form for any prescription medication. Please contact the school's health aide with any questions regarding your child's medications.

The Wausau School District does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability. Federal law prohibits discrimination in education and employment on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability. Anyone who believes that the Wausau School District has inadequately applied the principles and/or regulations of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 or the Americans with Disabilities Act, may file a complaint with the WSD Equity Director at the Longfellow Administration Center, 415 Seymour Street, Wausau, Wisconsin 54402-0359, or by telephone at 715-261-0500

Wausau School District 4K & EC Programs Mission, Vision, Core Beliefs

Mission: The mission of the Wausau School District's Early Education Program is to provide every child with the foundation to become a lifelong learner through school, family and community partnerships in a safe, caring and enriching environment.

Vision: "Individualized, engaged, active learning for all with high expectations."

"ILEARN": We have high expectations with *i*ndividualized *l*earning in an environment that is *e*ngaging, *a*ctive, *r*eflective, and *n*urturing for all, with family and community collaboration.

Beliefs:

- 1) All students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process. (key interests #1,2,3,7)
- 2) All students (e.g. special education, limited English proficiency, talented and gifted, etc.) need curriculum accommodations and resources to improve their performance. (key interests #2,3)
- 3) Students learn best when staff maintains high expectations for learning. (key interests #3, 5,
- 4) A safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning. (key interest #6)
- 5) Teachers, administrators, parents, and community share the responsibility for helping students learn. (key interests #4, 8)

Wausau School District Key Interests

- 1) Advance student learning, achievement, and success by keeping it at the heart and as the filter for our decision making.
- 2) Utilize research-based curricula that reflects 21st Century themes and applications and are responsive to the needs and potential of all students, preparing them for a global society.
- 3) Provide real-life, diverse learning opportunities with practical applications in the classroom and beyond.
- 4) Inform and engage the community in shaping educational strategy and formulating responses to change.
- 5) Attract, retain, and develop a high quality, diverse, creative, and innovative workforce of leaders.
- 6) Provide safe, secure, flexible, inviting, and well-maintained environments that nurture student well-being and enhance teaching and learning.
- 7) Identify, integrate, and expand technology to foster adaptability and maximize learning for all.

- 8) Foster mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborations that expand learning opportunities and resources

TEACHING AND LEARNING

WAUSAU SCHOOL DISTRICT 4K CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Children learn through exploring and play! There is a great deal of new research indicating that the skills we teach and when we teach them are critical to development, including a child's success in reading and his/her ability to regulate his own feelings and make friends. Because of rapid brain development, this critical learning has to take place as early as possible through the partnership of parents and teachers. In early childhood programming, children are provided with opportunities to explore and apply new skills through child and teacher initiated activities. We use the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards as the foundation to the Wisconsin Common Core State Standards and our Wausau School District Program Goals to guide our curricular and assessment decisions. The following is a summary of curriculum components:

Happily Ever After: This literacy component of our curriculum is rooted in solid, current research. Each three-week unit consists of 10 lessons that are designed to prepare children for future reading success. "Take-home" books are sent home with each story. You will get parent letters with each unit giving you ideas about how to practice skills at home.

Phonic Soup: This is a sound awareness program where children learn to produce and listen for individual consonant and vowel sounds in a way that is concrete and meaningful. This is accomplished by having students experience a visual-tactile-auditory connection between common environmental noises and three-dimensional objects, referred to as "sound toys." For example, the sound that is commonly associated with the alphabet letter "Z" is taught by making a connection with a zipper "sound toy." The student holds the zipper and zips it up and down while making the "z" sound associated with the letter "Z."

Handwriting Without Tears: This is our handwriting curriculum. Research supports the active teaching of writing as it is an expression of what we are thinking and reading. Plus it builds fine motor skills.

The Pyramid Model-Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL): Our staff has advanced training in helping children to identify and regulate their emotions, problem solve their frustrations, and follow rules and expectations. You will hear a lot about "Tucker Turtle."

Nursery Rhymes: As part of our curriculum, we use traditional nursery rhymes and finger plays. Nursery rhymes also greatly enrich young children's vocabularies and supply some early lessons in the ways our language works and encourages thinking skills.

Assessments: Our students are checked regularly on benchmarks in all areas of development and assessed specifically on vocabulary development, social emotional development, and a fall and spring 4K Developmental Assessment. Across our WSD 4K programs we use the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS - PreK) instrument to measure students' developing knowledge of important literacy fundamentals, monitor progress, and design instruction to children's specific needs.

Reporting: During the year, you will meet with your child's teacher for conferences two times (1st quarter and 3rd quarter). You also will receive a standards-based report card twice a year (2nd

quarter and 4th quarter).