

Tri-County North Wee Panthers Family Handbook

2024-2025



Welcome to Tri-County North's Wee Panther Preschool! We are excited you have joined our preschool family. If you have any questions about our handbook, our classroom, or our policies, please ask. This program complies with all State of Ohio Preschool rules and regulations and Tri-County North's Board of Education Policies.

Our Philosophy and Mission

Children learn best through play and experiences. We firmly believe that children learn by doing, getting messy, investigating their questions, and problem solving with their friends. They learn by playing games, using their imaginations, expressing their emotions, creating, and exploring the world around them.

Teachers will set up intentional play activities and explorations that meet the needs of individual students. Teachers will question and extend child thinking and play to help them learn and grow. Teachers provide high quality education and care for every student who comes into their classroom. Teachers intentionally plan and organize the classroom so students have the opportunity to develop in the areas of social emotional, language and literacy, math, science, creative arts, fine motor, and gross motor.

It is our goal for students to develop the dispositions and skills to become lifelong learners and be successful in kindergarten and life (both socially and academically).

Eligibility/Registration

In order to register for preschool, each child must meet the following criteria:

- Be 4 years old by August 1
- Proof of current required immunizations
- Current Medical Statement
- Student's Certified Birth Certificate (not a birth record)
- Original custody paperwork from the court (if applicable)
- Three proof of residencies with parent's name and street address (see full list of acceptable documents below.)
- Complete all forms and pay registration fee

Proofs of residency can be:

Closing statement on house

Copy of rent receipt (must show tenant's name, address, landlord's signature and landlord's phone number)

- Paycheck stub
- Bank statement (checking or savings)
- Insurance forms or bills (medical, auto or property)
- Real estate tax statement
- Utility bills (electric, gas, phone, cell, cable/satellite, sewer, water, trash, etc.)
- Credit card statement
- Voter registration record (card)
- Motor vehicle registration
- Change of address card from Lewisburg post office (copied & stamped by post office)
- Most recent federal, Ohio or local income tax return
- Invoice for moving expenses
- Documentation from Job & Family Services (per the discretion of the Registrar)
- Ohio driver's license
- Landlord Affidavit (can be obtained in the District Office and must be signed by the landlord AND notarized to be valid)

Enrollment

Once your child has been enrolled in a session, please do not switch sessions as class lists and schedules are determined upon enrollment.

Tuition/Payment

Tuition for Wee-Panther's preschool is as follows:

AM/PM Sessions: \$1,800 annually(a \$108 savings)/\$212 monthly.

Full Day Session: \$2,800 annually(a \$188 savings)/\$332 monthly.

Tuition payments may be paid annually or monthly (9 payments).

If paid monthly, payment is due the first day students are in attendance of the month. (September – May).

A registration fee of \$25 is due upon application. All registration fees are non-refundable and non-transferrable, except in cases of refusal of admittance to the school.

A \$100 book, material and snack fee will be charged annually to cover the costs of books, supplies, arts and crafts, and student T-Shirts for field trips. This fee is due by September 1st of the current school year. A late charge fee of \$25 will be assessed after this date.

If tuition payments are not received, there will be a ten dollar per day late fee. If your account exceeds one week overdue, your child will not be allowed to come to school and will be dismissed from our school.

For full day students only, we do accept the Early Childhood Education (ECE) grant. To apply for the ECE grant, please complete the "Free lunch form." You will be notified whether you have been approved or not. The ECE grant is on a sliding scale that is income based.

Hours of Operation and school Calendar

Wee Panther's Preschool holds morning sessions, afternoon sessions, and a full day session which are in session Monday through Thursday and operates during Tri-County North's calendar year.

Morning hours: 8:30 AM-11:15 AM

Afternoon hours: 12:30 PM-3:15 PM

Full Day hours: 8:30 AM-3:15 PM

If your child is in the full-day session, please do not bring them to school after 10:00 AM as it interferes with lunch and nap time, unless previously agreed upon with your child's teachers.

Calamity Days

Wee Panthers Preschool will follow the district's calamity plans for the Elementary School.

2-hour delay: no AM session. Full day students will start at 10:30 with the rest of the elementary school.

Early dismissal: no PM session, and full day students will be able to ride the buses home with the rest of the district.

Snow day/calamity day for Tri-County North, preschool will not be in session.

If make-up days are required, preschool will hold occasional Friday make-up days for the groups impacted. Dates will be announced as needed.

Licensing

Wee Panther's Preschool is licensed by the Ohio Department of Education. The preschool will continue to have inspections and they will be available online and posted in a conspicuous location to review.

All employees have criminal and child protection services background checks. All employees have current First Aid and CPR certifications as well.

Curriculum

Wee Panther's Preschool uses multiple curriculums that are evidence-based to facilitate learning in meaningful, interactive, and hands-on ways. Designed

activities will foster learning through teacher-led, student-led, and independent activities.. We offer lessons and activities in the areas of language and literacy, math, science, creative arts, gross and fine motor, and social skills (character education). It is based on current research, state and national standards, common core, and aligned with Ohio's kindergarten curriculum. The curriculums used are Alive Studio's Classroom's Alive! Zoo, and the Creative Curriculum.

Special Education/Accommodations

Wee Panther's Preschool will accommodate, create, and implement a child's IEP if necessary. Children will complete a universal screening at the beginning of the school year, and through the Response to Intervention (RTI) process, observations, and staff collaboration, students will all receive the varying amounts of support necessary for them to be successful.

Potty Training

All students who are entering Wee Panthers Preschool should be fully potty trained through nap, unless they are being currently served under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP prior to preschool entry.) If your child is being serviced under an IEP and is not potty trained, you will be responsible for providing Wee Panther's Preschool with diapers, wipes, and any creams that are necessary that can be stored and kept at school, along with extra clothes in case of accidents.

Universal Screening/Assessments

The universal developmental screenings that students will receive are the Brigance Early Childhood Screen III, which will be administered to students on a one-on-one basis at the beginning of the school year. The other universal screen preschool staff will utilize is the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) that parents will complete during the first week of school. These allow preschool staff to get a snapshot of your child's abilities and skills as a basis for us to design instruction to our individual and specific students. All students will also participate in the Early Learning Assessment (ELA)

Universal Speech/Language screening

All children entering into Wee-Panther's Preschool will have a universal speech and language screening completed. The speech therapist will communicate results with families as needed.

Vision and hearing screening

All preschool children will have vision and hearing screening completed by the

school nurse through the school year. The school nurse will communicate results with parents as needed.

Teacher Training and ongoing education

Teachers are required to continue education and complete at least 20 hours of state-approved training to stay current on best practices.

Parent Teacher conferences

Parent teacher conferences will be held in the fall and spring and coincide with Tri-County North's district calendar. It is a time we can talk about your child in all areas of development, review their student portfolio, and collaboratively develop goals for your child. If you would like to discuss your child's development and progress outside of these times, please schedule a time with your child's teacher. During Spring conferences, we will meet to discuss your child's progress and possible transition to kindergarten!

Communication

It is important for us to work as a team to ensure your child's success in preschool. If you ever have any questions, concerns, or other important information that you believe I should know, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teachers through email, Parent Square, or through their classroom phones. Teachers may communicate with you through daily parent folders, weekly/monthly newsletters, and face-to-face at pickup/drop-off.

Parent Participation/Volunteers

Parents are encouraged to participate whenever possible in the various preschool activities. Parents have access to all areas of the building used for childcare during hours of operation. Parents may join in on all the preschool fun, including class parties, field trips, special meals, or just to have some fun with us! Teachers are available to discuss your child's progress and needs at any time, but please make an appointment with your child's teacher ahead of time so we may fully focus on the children during our time with them. You are required to enter the building by the main office and sign in with the elementary school secretary before coming to the classroom. If you would like to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips, you must complete fingerprinting for FBI/BCI background checks, must be Board Approved, and must provide written interest to the building principal.

As concerns or questions may arise, please bring them up to staff as they

occur! Often concerns can be addressed at the classroom level, as our staff strives to maintain a positive relationship with parents/guardians of our students.

Rosters of the names and telephone numbers of the parents/guardians of the children attending the facility are available upon request. The parent roster will not include the name or telephone number of any parent who requests that his/her name or telephone number not be included.

Learning Environment

The learning environment at Wee-Panther's Preschool will incorporate various learning centers and structured and unstructured learning opportunities.

Dramatic Play- helps children express themselves, practice life skills, improve social skills, increase self-esteem, build vocabulary, and solve problems.

Blocks- allows children to interact and explore many different concepts, such as spatial relationships, number skills, balance, organization, shape and size discrimination, cause and effect, and classification. Social-Emotional learning is also promoted in the block area as children cooperatively play, problem solve, and explore their creativity.

Fine-Motor manipulatives- improves fine motor skills and small-muscle development and coordination. These will include legos, laces, puzzles, etc. This will help children develop the fine motor muscles needed to properly hold a pencil, zip their clothes, and tie their shoes.

Creative Arts- allows children to explore themselves through different mediums, such as visual arts (drawing, coloring, building, creating, etc.,) and performing arts (drums, maracas, scarf dancing, etc.)

Discovery/Science- Children are allowed hands-on exploration of the natural world around them where they can make observations, investigations, predictions, and experimentation.

Sensory- Allows children an opportunity to explore various textures, properties of various substances, and promotes development in other areas, such as math, science, and language. Sensory play allows students to develop their fine motor skills through explorations, such as lacing, pouring, scooping, and pinching. Various items that may be found through the year are: water, sand, beans, rice, macaroni, etc.

Meeting Time- Group gathering time where learning takes place incorporating music activities, stories, calendar activities, and large group learning with a focus on language skills, math skills, listening, and social skills. During this time we will also discuss the calendar and weather,

promoting math skills.

Story Time- Help children appreciate literature. Reading stories helps to enhance a child's vocabulary and comprehension skills, and provides a practice for phonemic awareness skills, such as rhyming, beginning sounds, and syllabic segmenting.

Small Groups- activities including art, language arts, math, science, and social studies will be led by teachers and independent groups. During this time, goals and objectives addressed in IEP's (if applicable) will be incorporated.

Gross-Motor- Gross motor activities will allow children to use their muscles and imaginations while engaging in fun, healthy exercise, running, jumping, swinging, and climbing. These activities will take place on the playground, gym, motor room, or classroom depending on the weather and day of the week.

Snack Time: Allows children to try new, healthy foods. Children will have the opportunity to practice manners, expand their vocabulary, and practice speech and language skills.

Materials and Equipment- All materials and equipment used in the preschool and extended care setting are selected to be age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate and will support the curriculum and program planning.

Drop-off and pick-up

Full day students are eligible to ride the bus to and from school, or may be dropped off and picked up.

AM students may ride the bus to school or be dropped off, however they must be picked up by 11:15 AM at door #11.

PM students must be dropped off to school by 12:30 PM at door #11, and are eligible to ride the buses home or be picked up.

There will be no mid-day bus route.

Please respect these times so we can focus our attention on learning during our day.

The doors will open for AM/Full Day drop-off at 8:30. Doors will be locked at 8:45 daily. If you arrive past 8:45 AM/12:30 PM, you will have to bring your child to Door #2 for late entry. Students who will be picked up early from class will also have to check your child out at the main office (door #2.)

****A late pick-up fee of \$2.00 a minute will be charged for any child in our care after their designated pick-up time. Recurring late pickups may result in the dismissal of your child from the Wee-Panther's Preschool.**

***Only custodial parents/guardians and those listed on approved pick up list will**

be allowed to pick up a student. Identification is required at pick up. It is required that anyone listed on your emergency contact list must be at least 18 years of age. We cannot release your child to anyone under the age of 18.

Attendance

All students will have attendance taken daily. If your child will be absent or tardy for any reason, please notify the front office or your child's teacher immediately.

Photographs & videos

As a way to document student learning and share all of the wonderful activities and learning happening in the classroom, photos and videos of our learning may be taken. On various social media we will post ideas, photos, student work, and samples from the classroom. We may also post group photos of students during various activities to our ClassTag community. A photo release form is required to be signed. Your child will not have their photo taken unless we have written permission.

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency, Wee Panther's Preschool will follow the Emergency Response plan Tri-County North Local Schools has developed. Please know that Wee Panther's Preschool will make every attempt to notify you, so it is vital you keep your emergency contact information up to date..

Safety/Emergency Drills

We strive to make sure our children are safe at school every day. Children will never be left alone or unsupervised; children will be instructed on the proper use of materials and equipment; staff have immediate access to telephones in case of emergency; fire, emergency, and weather alert plans are posted in each classroom; Emergency Medical Authorizations will be on file for all children; and chemicals and potentially dangerous materials are kept out of reach of children. We also make sure that our children are prepared for a variety of emergencies by practicing school safety drills in accordance with the State of Ohio's Required Safety Drills.

Emergency Supplies

Our classroom is equipped with an emergency backpack. It contains gloves, wipes, flashlights, a small first aid kit, hand sanitizer, a copy of our Emergency Response Plan, each child's contact and emergency information, and any life saving medications (Epi-Pens, inhalers, etc.)

Illness

Your child may not be accepted for care if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees or above
- Contagious skin or eye irritation
- Unexplained rash or sore
- Discharge from eye, nose, or ears
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea, more than 2 times in 24 hours
- Any illness that keeps a child from participating in regular activity

If your child displays any of these symptoms while in our care, we will call you and your child will need to be picked up within one hour. Your child will need to be symptom and fever free for 24 hours before returning to school (24 hours fever free without fever reducing medication).

At any time if Wee Panther's Preschool has reason to believe that your child has a communicable disease, we can request that he/she be seen by a doctor and that a note be provided from the doctor stating that your child is not contagious, is able to attend, and participate in a group care facility. If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness, you need to notify Wee-Panther's Preschool so we can notify other families.

Injury

In case of a minor injury, we will administer basic first aid. All significant injuries that may require further medical attention parents will be notified by the school nurse via Parent Square, email, or phone call. Parents will also receive written notification via an injury/illness form for all injuries and illnesses.

Medication

If your child has a prescribed medication an additional form will need to be filled out so the medication can be given to the child at school. The medication will need to be brought to the school by an adult in the original medication bottle that matches the medication order form.

Immunizations

Your child must be up-to-date on immunizations as required by the Ohio state regulations, students may be withheld if immunizations are not up to date within the first 14 days of the start of preschool. A copy of your child immunizations will be kept in their file.

Food Allergy or Special Diet

If your child has a known food allergy or special diet, a note from your child's doctor will need to be provided to the school nurse in order for your child to receive meal accommodations.

Meals/Snacks

Each day children will be provided with a morning snack, afternoon snack, and Full Day students will receive a lunch. We ask that parents sign up for at least one day a month to provide a healthy snack for their class through Parent Square. All snacks provided are required to meet USDA requirements, and monthly menus will be available to review. Snacks served must consist of two of the following:

- A meat or meat-equivalent (protein) group
- A bread/bread alternative group
- A milk group
- A fruit/vegetable group.

*If your child has an allergy or dietary restriction, please let your child's teacher know immediately so accommodations can be made. You may pack your child a snack, but it must meet the USDA requirements.

*For Full Day students, lunches may be purchased, or students may pack a lunch. If your child brings a packed lunch, please include food from the following food groups: dairy, protein, grain, and two foods from the fruit/vegetable group. Lunchboxes will be stored in the classroom, so please clearly mark your child's lunchbox with their name, and include an ice pack if it must be kept cold. Preschool staff are unable to heat any student lunch.

Nap

Full Day students enrolled in Wee Panther's Preschool will have a nap/rest time. Students are able to bring their own blankets, pillows, and a stuffed animal or comfort item they would like from home. These items should be brought to school clean on Monday, and will go home with students on Thursdays to be washed and brought back to school on Monday. The nap/rest time will not exceed 1.5 hours after lunch time. We ask if possible that no students be picked up during rest time, so as to not disrupt your child's and other's rest times.

Dress and Extra Clothing

We request that students wear play clothes that are practical, comfortable, and washable. Please dress children for active play. We will go outside for large muscle activities whenever the weather allows us. Be sure your child is adequately dressed so he/she can enjoy the outdoor activities.

We ask that you provide your child an extra set of clothing, appropriate for

the season, that can be kept at school (socks too) that can be kept in a clean, small, plastic bag. Be sure to put your child's name on ALL clothing that is removable. (i.e. jackets, sweaters, etc.)

Toys and water bottles

Please do not allow your child to bring any toys from home, unless it has been requested from their teacher for a show and tell day. We are not responsible for any home toys that are lost/broken at school.

Please send your child to school with a leak proof water bottle daily for students to drink as needed for snack and after play.

Birthdays

A birthday is a very special day for children. To celebrate your child's birthday, you may bring in birthday treats. Please try to let your child's teacher know about a week in advance what you plan to bring so any classroom allergies can be addressed.

Class Parties

There are many times throughout the year we will have class parties. Morning and afternoon classes will be combined for these parties. This may cause a change in schedule for that day, so please pay attention to communication sent home about that party if there is a change in schedule for your child.

Field Trips

It is our goal to provide children with various experiences to explore the world around them. Field trips may be scheduled various times throughout the year. Parents may volunteer to assist with field trips when there is a supervisory need and available space. Not all field trips will require assistance from parent volunteers. Fees may be charged to cover the cost of admittance when required. Emergency Medical Authorization forms will be taken on all field trips, along with any life-saving medication as necessary. Permission slips must be signed and returned to your child's teacher in order for your child to attend the field trip.

Child Abuse Reporting

All staff members are mandated reporters of child abuse. If a staff member has suspicions that a child is being abused or neglected, they MUST make a report to the local children's services agency. The safety of the children is our top priority.

Termination of Enrollment

In some circumstances, it may be necessary to discontinue a child's enrollment at Wee Panther's Preschool, this decision will be based on the best interest for children and staff. Termination of enrollment may be a result of the following:

- Non-payment of tuition.
- Abusive, destructive, and/or dangerous behavior to children, staff, or property by a child, parent, or family member.
- Failure to follow our Family Handbook policies and procedures.

Behavior Management

At Wee-Panther's Preschool we are committed to providing a safe environment for learning. Universal support strategies are available to all students to support their social emotional development by teaching expected behaviors (ex: visual supports, reteaching, class meetings, etc.) and teaching various social skills (sharing, taking turns, problem solving) all year long. We try our best to provide a consistent, challenging learning environment with physical activity which will prevent boredom and promote positive behavior.

If a behavior issue arises, teachers may use a precorrection, verbal redirection, state the expected behavior, give behavior choices, provide visual support, and/or go to the safe spot. The safe place is a quiet, cozy place in the classroom a child can go when they are feeling upset, sad, or just want to be alone. The safe place also has a Calm Down Kit. It is a bucket with items and visual supports to help a child calm down (sensory bottle, squeeze fidget, deep breath chart).

We use Pax/PBIS/Conscious Discipline to teach students appropriate expected behaviors. It is our goal for students to be happy, confident learners who can problem solve and work collaboratively with others. Being able to make positive/expected choices when children are alone and interacting with others is a big part of that.

If a student makes inappropriate, dangerous, or destructive choices, an Incident Report will be used to document the behavior and given to parents at pick up. In certain cases, a referral to the principal's office may be made and the school principal will reach out to families to communicate the disciplinary action taken.

Actual methods of discipline shall apply to all children on the premises and are restricted as follows:

No cruel, unusual, or corporal punishments will be used, such as: punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, biting, etc.

No physical restraints will be used to confine a child by any means,

other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control of themselves. No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, box, or similar cubicle. No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or family, or other verbal abuse. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, or for toileting accidents. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child. Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use. Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration, appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child will be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, well-ventilated space. No staff member shall abuse or neglect children and shall protect them from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

Parent Concerns

Tri-County North's Wee Panther's Preschool values the importance of community support, involvement, and partnerships. If you have any concerns regarding the program, please contact your child's teacher, and every attempt will be made to resolve the conflict. Any complaints should be discussed with the staff members directly involved in the situation, and will make every effort to provide a reasonable explanation, or take appropriate action consistent with the Board Policy and Guidelines. If matters remain unresolved, please direct concerns to the preschool/elementary principal at (937) 962-2673. If your concerns remain unresolved, a written complaint should be filed with the superintendent of Tri-County North Schools. If there is no resolution following these steps, parents may take their concerns to the Ohio Department of Education at 877-644-6338.

Thank you for choosing Wee Panther's Preschool! We are so excited you are joining our family! We will love and respect your child. We will help them grow and develop emotionally, socially, physically, and academically.