

HOUSTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

PRE-K PROGRAM 2019-2020 HANDBOOK



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Houston County BOE Pre-K Sites

Bonaire Elementary
100 Elm Street
Bonaire, GA 31005
929-7826 ext 56605

Centerville Elementary
450 North Houston Lake Blvd
Centerville, GA 31028
953-0400 ext 31401

Hilltop Elementary
301 Robert Bryson Smith Pkwy
Bonaire, GA 31005
929-6113 ext 30113

Lake Joy Primary
995 Lake Joy Road
Warner Robins, GA 31098
953-0465 ext 62465

Lindsey Elementary
81 Tabor Drive
Warner Robins, GA 31093
929-7818 ext 45269

Miller Elementary
101 Pine Valley Drive
Warner Robin, GA 31088
929-7814 ext 55772

Northside Elementary
305 Sullivan Road
Warner Robins, GA 31093
929-7816 ext 44816

Perdue Primary
150 Bear Country Blvd
Warner Robins, GA 31088
218-7500 ext 61500

Russell Elementary
101 Patriot Way
Warner Robins, GA 31088
929-7830 ext 57834

Tucker Elementary
1300 Tucker Road
Perry, GA 31069
988-6278 ext 23115

C B Watson Primary
61 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
Warner Robins, GA 31088
929-6360 ext 59361

Eagle Springs Elementary
3591 Highway 41N
Byron, GA 31008
953-0450 ext 39451

Kings Chapel Elementary
460 Arena Road
Perry, GA 31069
988-6273 ext 25273

Langston Road Elementary
315 Langston Road
Perry, GA 31069
988-6160 ext 20160

Matt Arthur Elementary
2500 Hwy 127
Kathleen, GA 31047
988-6170 ext 38171

Morningside Elementary
1206 Morningside Drive
Perry, GA 31069
988-6261 ext 24262

Parkwood Elementary
503 Parkwood Drive
Warner Robins, GA 31093
929-7822 ext 46272

Quail Run Elementary
250 Smithville Church Road
Warner Robins, GA 31088
953-0415 ext 36415

Shirley Hills Elementary
300 Mary Lane
Warner Robins, GA 31088
929-7824 ext 37217

Westside Elementary
210 North Pleasant Hill Road
Warner Robins, GA 31088
929-7820 ext 47781

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Houston County Pre-Kindergarten Program is to provide developmentally appropriate educational opportunities for four-year-old children and their families. The program will promote a partnership among the child, family, school, and community to encourage life-long learning.

Overview

The Houston County Board of Education Pre-Kindergarten Program serves four-year-old children and their families. We emphasize developing the potential of each child through a well-rounded, age-appropriate instructional program.

The 2019-2020 school year marks the 24th year that the GA Pre-K Program has been available to eligible children through the Houston County School District.

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS STUDENT CALENDAR 2019-2020

August 1, 2019	Wednesday	First day of school
September 2, 2019	Monday	HOLIDAY -Labor Day
October 7-11, 2019	Mon-Fri	HOLIDAYS – fall break
October 14, 2019	Monday	HOLIDAY for students only
November 11, 2019	Monday	HOLIDAY -Veterans Day
November 25-29, 2019	Mon-Fri	Thanksgiving Holidays
*December 20, 2019	Friday	½ day for Students NO AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS
December 23 – January 3		Christmas Holidays
January 6, 2020	Monday	HOLIDAY for students only
January 7, 2020	Tuesday	Second semester begins
January 20, 2020	Monday	HOLIDAY -Martin Luther King, Jr.
February 17, 2020	Monday	HOLIDAY -Presidents’ Day
February 18, 2020	Tuesday	HOLIDAY for students only
March 30 – April 3, 2020	Mon-Fri	HOLIDAYS – spring break
*May 22, 2020	Friday	Last Day – ½ day for Students NO AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Standards

The Pre-K Program implements the HighScope Approach to its curriculum. Research-based and child-focused, HighScope uses active participatory learning as well as methods that promote independence, curiosity, decision making, cooperation, persistence, creativity, and problem solving in young children. The HighScope Curriculum focuses on creating engaging classrooms and routines that encourage adult-child interactions and support children’s play with a variety of learning opportunities.

Georgia Pre-K has adopted a set of high-quality, research-based early learning standards for children birth to age five called the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). The purpose of the GELDS is to promote quality learning experiences for children and address the question, “What should children from birth to age five know and be able to do?”

They are appropriate and attainable standards for Georgia's youngest learners and are designed to be flexible enough to support children's individual rates of development, approaches to learning, and cultural context.

The standards (GELDS) are written as a continuum of skills, behaviors, and concepts that children develop throughout this time of life. They are divided into age groups for convenience and serve as a framework for learning. The GELDS are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) and CCGPS for K-12.

Pre-K students are assessed with the Work Sampling Online (WSO) assessment system which is aligned to the GELDS. The WSO system is an electronic portfolio collection of evidence of student performance with which teachers rate and describe student progress.

Evidence of student performance is collected for across the various segments of instruction in the school day such as in the sample schedule below. Each classroom, however, will have its own unique daily schedule. A lead certified teacher and an assistant teacher (paraprofessional) are employed for each Pre-K classroom. Both staff members help with instructional delivery and evidence collection as appropriate as well as with planning and supervision. The lead teacher is responsible for assessing the students and conducting the parent conferences to discuss progress. Each Pre-K family will participate in two parent conferences to discuss student progress as assessed by the WSO assessment system. Communication through newsletters, emails, telephone conversations, and other means will be ongoing as well.

Sample Pre-K Daily Schedule

8:00-8:30 Arrival/Table Activities
8:30-8:45 Circle Time/Large Group
8:45-9:00 Story Time
9:00-9:15 Phonological Awareness Activity
9:15-9:30 Music with Movement
9:30-9:50 Large Group Literacy Activity
9:50-10:40 Outdoor Play
10:40-11:10 Small Group Time
11:10-11:25 Story Time
11:25-11:55 Lunch Time
11:55-12:55 Rest Time
12:55-1:05 Story Time
1:05-1:15 Planning
1:15-2:15 Center Time
2:15-2:30 Clean-up Time
2:30-2:40 Journals
2:40-2:55 Instructional Activity Related to Topic Development
2:55-3:15 Closing Activity
3:15 Departure

Enrollment and Selection

The purpose of the GA BFTS DECAL Pre-K Program is to provide high-quality educational/instructional services to eligible four-year-old children. The Houston County School

District Pre-K Program adheres to the age-eligibility requirement as defined in the GA Pre-K Operating Guidelines.

Age Requirement

Children must be four years of age **on** September 1, 2019, based on acceptable documentation and reside in Houston County to apply for the HCSD Pre-K program. Children whose birthdates are from September 2, 2014, through September 1, 2015, are eligible for participation in the 2019-2020 school year.

Children who are five years of age on September 1, 2019, are age-eligible to enroll in their Houston County School District zone **kindergarten** program. A child who will be five years of age on September 1, 2019, and has not previously attended any GA BFTS DECAL Pre-K Program (for more than 30 days) as a four-year-old, may petition for enrollment in the Houston County School District Pre-K program **AFTER** the school year has begun. Once all four-year-old applicants have been placed, and if there are vacancies available, five-year olds will be considered. Consideration will be given to the child's date of birth, physical maturity, emotional maturity, and prior experiences when making the decision to grant the request to enroll the child in the Houston County School District Pre-K program at age five as opposed to kindergarten. Parents will be required to sign a **Parent Acknowledgement Form (Pre-K Operating Guidelines Appendix A)** indicating that the child did not previously attend Georgia's Pre-K Program for longer than 30 days. Contact the HCSD Pre-K Coordinator, Blanche Lamb, at blanche.lamb@hcbe.net or at 478-988-6200 ext. 10193 to initiate this process or for further inquiry.

Children who are six years of age on September 1, 2019, and are age-eligible for first grade are not eligible for enrollment in Georgia's Pre-K Program.

Application/Registration

Parents must register their Pre-K eligible children at the HCSD Central Registration Complex and for the school for which they are zoned according to the Houston County Board of Education zoning policies. (*HCSD employees should contact the Coordinator for Special Programs regarding additional enrollment requirements for their personal children*). Parents should schedule an appointment with the Central Registration office online at <http://houstoncs.schoolinsites.com/?DivisionID=15756&DepartmentID=16674&ToggleSideNav=ShowAll> in order to complete the registration/application process. Walk-in appointments are accepted, however wait times can be significantly longer. Priority will be given to appointments scheduled. The required on-line forms must be completed prior to the appointment in order to complete the application process. These forms can be found on the same website.

All parents must provide Central Registration with a certified copy of the child's birth certificate (or other approved document to verify age), social security card (or waiver), two proofs of Houston County residency (a lease or mortgage statement plus either a utility bill, property or income tax statement, automobile registration or insurance notice, or mail from a government agency), parent/guardian photo identification, and any guardianship/custody orders that may apply. All HCSD and/or GA Pre-K required registration and enrollment forms must also be completed as a part of the application process.

During the Pre-K registration period, publicized annually, applications are accepted and the information is placed into an electronic system for a random lottery selection for possible placement into the program at each school level, although HCSD employees will have priority placement prior to the lottery drawing. When more applications have been submitted than classroom slots, the lottery placement extends to the assignment of students to the waiting list in the order of their random lottery number drawn. To support family units, children who are siblings from a multiple birth, will all be considered for enrollment if any one of the children is randomly selected. A family applying for a HCSD Pre-K program slot after the electronic lottery selection has been finalized will be placed in order on the waiting list for their zoned school and may be accepted into the program as vacancies occur. Parents should contact their zoned school to be placed on the waiting list. Active duty military families with orders to relocate to Houston County can be considered with proper documentation.

School administrators schedule children into the individual classrooms in effort to provide diverse experiences and maximum support for each learner. Parent input can be taken into consideration since parents are the primary educators of their children but specific requests cannot be guaranteed. The HCSD Pre-K program adheres to the O.C.G.A. 20-2-71 for placement of twins or higher order multiples in classrooms.

Attendance

Completed and current DPH *Certificate of Immunizations Form 3231*, and DPH *Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening Form 3300* are **required** within the first 30 and 90 calendar days for continued enrollment.

Regular attendance in HCSD Pre-K is expected and is in accordance with standard procedures of the HCSD attendance and tardiness rules, with the HCSD student calendar, and with the time schedule of the school enrolled. Parent contact will be made after 5 unexcused absences. A parent conference and an attendance contract will be required after 10 unexcused absences. A parent conference with the Pre-K Project Director will be required after 15 unexcused absences. A request for disenrollment will be submitted after 20 unexcused absences. Also, a parent contact will be made after 10 unexcused tardies/early dismissals. A parent conference and attendance contract will be required after 15 unexcused tardies/early dismissals. A parent conference with the Pre-K Project Director will be required after 20 unexcused tardies/early dismissals. A request for disenrollment will be submitted after 25 unexcused tardies/early dismissals.

A parent must agree to send the child to the Pre-K program for 6.5 hours of instructional time for the full school year. (*Please note exceptions for ½ school days as established by the school calendar) A child who is chronically tardy or absent can be disenrolled from the program. A child who is not enrolled in the After School Program and is not picked up at the end of the Pre-K day on a regular basis can be disenrolled. Pre-K students who do not attend school for **10 consecutive days without a medical or other reasonable explanation** will be referred to GA BFTS: DECAL for **disenrollment** from the program.

Parents should submit documentation from physicians visits that require an absence or tardy to occur. Parent notes should be provided for general illnesses which cause absences or tardies to occur. All notes should include specific dates and times (as applicable) and signatures. Advanced notice to teachers regarding appointments is strongly encouraged to help teachers plan for the student's return to class.

Illness

When your child requires medication during school hours, please discuss this with the School Medical Technician in the school office. Teachers are not allowed to dispense any medication.

Parental assistance is urgently needed in providing pertinent medical information upon the enrollment of the child in school. Please assist the school by notifying the office of any change in student data (medical or otherwise) that will ensure your child's success for a safe and healthy school year. This includes any special dietary needs.

Preventive and emergency school-based health services are provided to public school children in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Twelfth. The Health Related Services department uses "Best Practice" standards that strive to eliminate barriers, increase attendance, and identify health related concerns that influence learning.

Please refer to the following guidelines when considering **returning a sick child to school**:

1. A child should be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning.
2. A child with strep throat must be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning.
3. A child with possible conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be seen by a doctor and may only return to school with a doctor's note.
4. A child with chicken pox may only return to school when all lesions have crusted over. Please provide a note from the doctor releasing the student to return to school and to excuse the absence(s).
5. All open, draining, or contagious skin areas (i.e. ringworm, Molluscum Contagiosum) must be able to be contained by a bandage/covering. Please provide a note from the doctor releasing the student to return to school and to excuse the absence(s).
6. A child with scabies will be allowed to return to school the following day after the first treatment.

KEEP A CHILD HOME, if she/he:

1. Has had a **fever* of 100 degrees or higher** in the past 24 hours
2. Is nauseous and/or vomiting and/or has diarrhea
3. Has been exposed to a contagious disease and is exhibiting signs/symptoms of the disease
4. Have undiagnosed skin rashes, or contagious conditions such as scabies or chicken pox. Students will be excluded from school until the rash is gone or when cleared by a physician for any contagious illness. Your doctor can help determine the exact cause and ensure you receive proper treatment.
5. Live lice on the scalp. A child will be allowed to attend if only nits are seen.

Children who have been at home because of illness should **not** be brought to school for parties and/or special events.

*A fever refers to a temperature of 100 degrees or more **without the use of Tylenol or Advil or other fever reducing medications**. The school will not administer aspirin, or products that contain aspirin, due to a high occurrence of Reyes Syndrome associated with viral infections and the use of aspirin.

Please send a parent or physician's note to the homeroom teacher within three days of the absence; otherwise, the absence is unexcused.

The information provided is not intended to replace physician's advice. When your child is ill, please contact your health care provider.

Discipline

Behavioral expectations will be taught in the classroom as an integral part of the daily curriculum through explicit instruction, role playing, modeling, stories and other means. Classroom/School rules will be designed, taught, and reinforced regularly. Classroom management should focus on proactive strategies of engaging the learners in meaningful activities that captivate their interests. Low profile, reactive techniques such as positive guidance, re-direction, or alternative activities shall be used as necessary. The intent of any behavior management technique is to support the child's ability to become self-disciplined. When necessary, staff will implement a positive discipline approach with choices followed by consequences to promote accountability. Consequences shall be consistent, age-appropriate, and as closely related to the behavior as possible so that they are understandable to the child. Expectations shall be taught prior to any behavior that may result in disciplinary action. Teachers should help children develop self-control and appropriate relationships with peers and adults. Parents and staff should explicitly teach children positive alternatives to inappropriate behaviors resulting from emotional impulses. Teacher planning, preparation, and proximal supervision are key for student success.

Schools will request parent support as needed to help in the classroom as well as at home. This may include parents assisting in supervising the child during the school day or extending instruction on behavioral expectations at home. Schools and parents must work together in partnership to ensure each child's success. Parents should ensure that schools have all current contact information where they can be reached if their support is needed. Although a last resort, immediate suspensions may be imposed if a child is causing harm to himself/herself or others or if the child is unable to successfully participate in program activities. Continuous behavioral concerns will require the school and parents to collaborate on a plan of intervention with strategies to enable student success. Students not showing progress in response to interventions may need to be referred to the school psychologist for evaluation. Referral for disenrollment or long-term suspension may be considered when serious health and safety issues are present.

Transportation

Bus **transportation** is provided within most school zones. Parents must check with Houston County BOE Transportation Department for details on busing routes and stops at (478) 329 2218 ext. 0 or ext. 1.

Additional Fees

Parents may choose to enroll their Pre-K child into the school's **After School Program** for the appropriate fees as associated with this service. Weekly fees are \$40 per week and daily drop-

fees are \$10 per day. An additional one-time per year application fee of \$25 applies before a child may participate. See the school ASP Coordinator for an application and more details.

Pre-K students wishing to eat breakfast and lunch at school may do so for the same price as K-12 students. Free and reduced pricing for both meals is available through an application process at those schools not eligible for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) where all meals are free. Applications are sent home on the first day of school. Students may also bring their own lunch. Parents can make payments online at www.myschoolbucks.com. The full cost of elementary school meals is **\$1.75 for breakfast and \$2.50 for lunch per day**. Meals are prepared and costs are based on USDA guidelines.

School uniforms are not required. Pre-K students must, however, comply with the Houston County School System **dress code** for elementary schools. Details of the dress code can be found on the Parents tab of the <http://houstoncs.schoolinsites.com/> page under System Student Handbooks.

Additional donations not to exceed \$25 for the year for **field trips** may be requested but not required for field trips. Monetary donations for the purchase of supplies shall not be requested, however parents may choose to donate actual classroom supplies.

School Closings

In the event of school cancellations, parents will be notified by telephone through School Messenger, our automated notification system. The message will also be posted to the HCSD website at www.hcbe.net and HCBOE Facebook page. A Public Service Announcement request will also be sent to the local media, to include 13 WMAZ TV, FOX24 TV, WMGT41 TV, WRWR TV-38, and all local radio stations. Students will not be released to leave school building during a tornado warning.

Rest Time

Part of the Pre-K routine includes a daily rest time. Students are not required to sleep but must rest quietly on their cots/mats. Cots/mats will be provided. Children need to bring two small blankets or towels to school for rest time. Teachers will send these covers home weekly to be washed. This helps to keep a more sanitary classroom environment.

Wetting/Accidents

Pre-K students are expected to use school restrooms without their teachers' assistance; however, accidents do happen. Parents are asked to send a change of clothing, including underwear and socks that can remain in the classroom for their child. The clothing should be updated as the seasons change and returned following an accident.

Students will be encouraged to change themselves if an accident occurs. If the accident is such that the student cannot change himself/herself, a parent may be called to assist. If a parent(s) cannot be reached, school personnel may assist in directing the student in cleaning up.

Family Involvement

Research shows that students who have families that take an active part in their education are more likely to succeed as productive students and adult citizens. The Pre-K program provides a wide range of opportunities for families to share in the educational development of their child. Field trips and Parent and Child Time (PACT), are but a few of the numerous school functions that involve parents and family members. Parent and Child Time (PACT) activities are scheduled during the school year. During these sessions, parents and teachers are actively involved with the students in the classroom. PACT emphasizes that parents are the child's first and most important teachers. Younger siblings may also attend some of these activities with an adult chaperone.

Houston County Board Policy states that all adult family members who plan to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips must submit a Background Check Consent Form for approval. We extend to each of you an open door invitation to join us, and we encourage your full participation and support.

Field Trips/Resource Visits

The Pre-K Program exposes students to exciting and educational real life experiences through field trips. Each student must have a signed permission form for each field trip.

Parents, guardians and other adult family members are encouraged to volunteer as chaperones after approval of the Volunteer Application and Background Check. Some schools may require a training orientation as well. Houston County Board Policy prohibits younger siblings from riding school transportation.

✧Frequently Asked Questions✧

1. **What will I need to send to school with my child?**

The program provides all school supplies. Children sometimes have accidents, so an extra set of clothing appropriate for the season with the child's name on it should always be kept at school. Book bags are helpful in transporting materials and important papers. Two small blankets or towels for rest time are recommended. Personal toys and other items not necessary for school activities should be kept at home.

2. **How should my child dress for school?**

Students should wear casual, comfortable clothing that is easy for the child to take on and off. The clothing should not be too tight or loose-fitting because it could be dangerous or embarrassing to the child. Clothing should be washable as the students will be involved in activities such as painting and playing on the playground. The Pre-kindergarten Program follows the county dress code policy. *****Heavy coats, hats, and gloves are needed during the winter months for required daily outdoor play.**

3. **When may I contact my child's teachers?**

If you must call during class time, please leave a message with the front office so the teacher can return your call after class time. Pre-K Staff may also be contacted through

email.

4. Will my child be provided meals?

Yes, breakfast and lunch will be offered. Breakfast is \$1.75, and lunch is \$2.50. Lunch and breakfast money should be placed in an envelope with your child's name, lunch number, and teacher's name. Applications for free or reduced meals will be available from your child's teacher, the school office, or the lunchroom.

5. Will my child be provided a snack?

No. There will be a snack time opportunity within the school day, however students must provide their own snacks. Please ask your child's teacher about how snack is managed in that classroom.

5. Can children with special needs be served by the Pre-K program?

Yes, this service is seen as the least restrictive and appropriate environment for your child. Consideration of each child's individual IEP will reflect the appropriate placement.

6. Can my child repeat/be retained in Pre-Kindergarten?

Special requests for children to have the opportunity to repeat the GA Pre-K experience must be made to the GA BFTS DECAL by a committee comprised of the parents, teachers, school administrators and Pre-K project director. Extensive documentation and justification must be submitted prior to mid-April.

Websites for Additional Information

GA BFTS DECAL About Pre-K - <http://decals.ga.gov/Prek/About.aspx>

GA BFTS DECAL Useful Resource Links - <http://decals.ga.gov/BftS/UsefulLinks.aspx?PreK=1>

GA Early Learning and Development Standards - <http://www.gelds.decals.ga.gov/Search.aspx>

Second Step Program - <https://www.secondstep.org/>

CDC Developmental Milestones - <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/>

Free Developmental Screener for Parents - <https://www.easterseals.com/mtffc/asq/>

Pre-K Parent Acknowledgement of Policies and Procedures
(Available on the Houston County Board of Education website at
<http://houstoncs.schoolinsites.com/> on the Parents tab under System Student
Handbooks)

- ✓ I agree to work in **partnership** with the school to support my child in being successful in Pre-K.
- ✓ I understand that my child must have the **required GA DPH Forms 3231 and 3300** completed and submitted to the school by the appropriate deadlines in order to continue participation in the program.
- ✓ I agree to participate in both of the **required parent conferences** to discuss my child's progress, usually held in December and May.
- ✓ I understand that the district is supporting a more efficient system of communication and a healthier environment by providing stakeholders with general information regarding policies and procedures in an **electronic format** on the Houston County School District website. I understand the full details of the policies and procedures can be found there and that hard copies of specific documents may be attained by special request.
- ✓ I understand, and agree with the required **attendance policy for 6.5 hours per day for 180 days** of instruction and will support my child in the program by making sure that he/she is **consistently on time and present**. I also agree that my child will be picked up on time at the end of each program day. I am aware that students with chronic tardies or absences or who are routinely late being picked up can be **disenrolled**.
- ✓ I understand my obligation for the daily fees associated with **breakfast (\$1.75) and lunch (\$2.50)** and how to apply for free or reduced costs for my family.
- ✓ I understand that **after school programming** may be available at my child's school for additional fees.
- ✓ I agree to participate in the success of my child in Pre-K by acting as an **engaged partner** when my child is having difficulties exhibiting safe and appropriate **behavior**.
- ✓ I understand the school **dress code** and will ensure that my child is appropriately dressed each day.
- ✓ I agree to check daily for **school information** sent home with my child. I also agree to promptly complete, sign, and return forms, permission slips, or other necessary documents sent home with my child.
- ✓ I understand the importance of being available for the school to make contact with me during the school day as needs arise. I agree to ensure that my **contact information as well as my emergency contact list** information is accurate and up-to-date at all times. I understand that the District will contact me directly regarding school closures using the telephone number I provide.
- ✓ I understand that I may contact my child's teacher, a school administrator, or the Coordinator for Special Programs with any **questions or concerns**.

Please complete the form below and return to your child's teacher.

(Print) Student Name

Date

(Print) Parent Name

Parent Signature