

**Pittsburg Unified School District**

**Early Childhood Education  
Full Day and Part Day Preschool Programs**

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

**Board of Education**

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**Dr. Janet Schulze, Superintendent**

**Steve Ahonen, Program Director**

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**FORMS:** *To be received and filled out during the registration process:*

Caregiver Background Check, Child Care Data Collection, Emergency Card, Personal Rights, Parent's Rights, Consent for Medical Treatment, Pre-Admission Health History, Home Language Survey, Internet/Media Release, Physician's report.

## WELCOME

Welcome to Pittsburg Unified School District's Early Childhood Education Program. Responding to the need for quality early childhood education to eligible families, Pittsburg Unified School District operates Preschool classes at each of our elementary schools.

### State Preschool Program

Parkside Elementary  
985 W. 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
Pittsburg, CA 94565

Los Medanos Elementary  
610 Crowley Avenue  
Pittsburg, CA 94565

Heights Preschool  
40 Seeno Avenue  
Pittsburg, CA 94565

Marina Vista Preschool  
50 East 8th Street  
Pittsburg, CA 94565

Highlands Elementary  
4141 Harbor Street  
Pittsburg, CA 94565

Willow Cove Preschool  
1880 Hanlon Way  
Pittsburg, CA 94565

Foothill Preschool  
1200 Jensen Drive  
Pittsburg, CA 94565

Stoneman Elementary  
2929 Loveridge Road  
Pittsburg, CA 94565

### Early Childhood Education Main Office

351 School Street- North Campus  
Pittsburg, CA 94565  
(phone) 925-473-2370  
(fax) 925-473-4371

**The State Preschool Program** serves children 4 years of age to Kindergarten for income eligible parents. Note: Children three years of age are eligible if space is available.

All children are given opportunities to develop emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually in a safe environment by caring, qualified staff.

We invite you to share your suggestions, ideas and feelings with the staff. We expect that you will be a responsible, supportive parent and we look forward to a successful relationship.

Should you need additional information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. Our Early Childhood Education Office is located on North Campus at 351 School Street. Please direct all questions to the main office at 925-473-2370.

We are here to serve you and your family.

Sincerely,  
Steve Ahonen, Program Director

\*\*Special Education classes are funded through PUSD Special Education Department. Please Contact the Special Education office at 925-473-2342 for additional information regarding students with special needs.

# *Early Childhood Preschool Program*

## **HISTORY**

The State Preschool Program was established in 1956 when legislation was passed which authorized a statewide system of preschool programs designed to provide equal educational opportunities for children whose family met certain eligibility criteria.

Pittsburg Unified School District received funds to operate a State Preschool in 1967. Four classes were established in elementary schools throughout the PUSD. In 1969, when Martin Luther King School closed as an elementary school, the preschool program was moved to the MLK site and co-mingled with the existing Children's Center Program.

This Program is regulated by the California State Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division. Pittsburg Unified School District is responsible for program administration, budget preparation and management, employment and evaluation of staff, personnel policies and maintenance of the site.

Currently, the preschool program serves up to 384 children in eight AM and eight PM classes at the following sites:

Foothill Elementary  
Heights Elementary  
Highlands Elementary  
Los Medanos Elementary

Marina Vista Elementary  
Parkside Elementary  
Stoneman Elementary  
Willow Cove Elementa

## **STATE PROGRAM GOAL**

According to the State, the program goal of a Child Development Program is to provide an efficient and effective early education and developmental system, as determined by community needs, offering a full range of services in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment. There are six key dimensions:

1. *Standards, Assessments and Accountability*- to ensure that all educational programs are based on high and challenging standards and are accompanied by a process for monitoring and determining effectiveness.
2. *Teaching and Learning*- to ensure that all students are provided with integrated and coordinated programs based on student needs and educationally sound and legally acceptable educational practices.
3. *Opportunity (equal educational access)* – to ensure that all students have equitable access to, and the opportunity to participate in and benefit from, high-quality curricular and extracurricular activities.
4. *Staffing and Professional Growth* – to ensure that students have access to qualified teachers, administrators, and other staff members and that all educators have access to high-quality professional growth opportunities.
5. *Parent and Community Involvement* – to ensure that parents and members of the community, including business, industry, and labor, have the opportunity to assist in and support the educational process through participation in decision making, training and volunteer activities, and the creation of partnerships.
6. *Governance and Administration* – to ensure that all schools conduct high-quality programs that are effectively managed and operated within appropriate legal parameters.

## **DESIRED RESULTS**

In order to monitor child development programs in California, there are six components of the desired results structure for children and their families:

- Children are personally and socially competent.
- Children are effective learners.
- Children show physical and motor competence.
- Children are safe and healthy.
- Families support their children's learning and development.
- Families achieve their goals.

## **STAFF**

The program is staffed by teachers with Children Center Permits having educational preparation in early childhood development, which enables them to work with young children. Support staff consists of instructional aides, speech therapists, a school psychologist, along with office, custodial and cafeteria staff.

## **ADMISSION PROCEDURES**

Admission procedures are simple, but may require some time. (Parents need to allow at least 45 minutes). During this time the Early Childhood Education Program and Policies will be explained. Your child may not be admitted until all enrollment forms are complete and immunizations are up-to-date. Proof of a physical examination, including a TB Test, (or test as determined by your medical provider) and results signed by a doctor are required within thirty (30) days of enrollment or services provided for you child may be terminated. Parents may also be required to provide documentation of a recent TB test if they will be regularly volunteering in their child's classroom.

## **AREA SERVED**

Eligibility for subsidized preschool services is determined by State criteria. Pittsburg Unified School District Preschool programs provide services to residents of Pittsburg, (94565 zip code). However, 10% of the families served may reside in Antioch, (zip codes 94509, 94531).

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

All state preschool classes are held Monday through Friday for a total of 3 (three) hours in the morning or in the afternoon. Morning preschool is held between the hours of 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM, depending on the site. Afternoon preschool is held from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM at all sites.

Parents or an authorized adult (18 years or older) must come into the building to sign children in and out and include the actual arrival/departure time. The State requires a full signature. Children will not be released to adults who are not listed on the parent's emergency card, or to persons under 18 years of age. This is required to insure the protection of your child.

Please drop off and pick up your child on time. If you find that you are not able to arrive on time, it is your responsibility to send someone else or call in advance to let us know that you will be late.

Every parent is required to maintain two backup people who could pick up their child within 30 minutes of being contacted. If late pick up occurs three times in one year, your child may be dropped from the program. Extreme lateness may also result in termination.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Our funding depends on attendance and excused absences. We need your cooperation to ensure full funding for the year. If your child is out ill, you may call the office, send a note to your child's teacher or write a note on the sign-in sheet stating why your child was not in school.

### Excused Absences:

- Illness or quarantine of child (including medical or mental health appointments)
- Illness or quarantine of parent (including medical or mental health appointment)
- Court ordered visitation (Court order must be on file)
- Family emergency (Ill sibling, death or illness of family member)
- Best Interest of Child (See Best Interest Days)

Examples of unexcused absences are child does not want to come to school, rainy day, overslept and missed my ride. Unexcused absences that exceed five (5) days in one year will affect eligibility, and may result in termination of services.

## **BEST INTEREST DAYS**

Your child is allowed ten (10) Best Interest Days per school year. These are days which you can use at your own discretion, for example, to take a vacation, visits with non-custodial parent, religious or cultural holiday, visiting with relatives, traveling out of state.

## **CALENDAR**

*See Clerical Staff for District Calendar*

## **CHANGES IN INFORMATION ON ADMISSION FORM**

Parents are required to notify the Early Childhood Education office of any change in the information on the admission forms: home address and telephone number, accurate, reliable up-to-date names and telephone numbers of parent substitute who can be notified and will come for your child in case of emergency.

## **CLOTHING**

Children are active in our program. They will be using expressive materials including paints, water and sand. They will also be involved in many climbing and running activities. Please dress your child comfortably in simple, washable play clothes. Long dresses and sandals are dangerous. Tennis shoes are preferable to hard-soled shoes. Socks should be worn at all times. In cool weather, be sure to send a jacket or sweater. PLEASE LABEL YOUR CHILD'S CLOTHING TO PREVENT LOST ITEMS.

In case of an accident requiring a change of clothing, all parents are responsible to provide an extra set of clothing to avoid embarrassment for the child, clearly identifying child's name. Extra clothing will be kept in each child's cubby hole.

### **COMMUNICATION**

A monthly newsletter is sent to all families in the Early Childhood Education preschool program. Individual teachers send home weekly newsletters to inform parents of current units of study as well as upcoming classroom events. Families also have access to information through our school site web page. Parent resource areas with parent bulletin boards are located at each site; this is where parents can gather and avail themselves of resource materials and informational flyers.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information given on enrollment forms shall be kept in confidence and released only with the written consent of the parent, with the exception of access that is legally required by Community Care Licensing and the California Department of Education officials. Personal information shared in parent/teacher/administrator will be handled with professional tact and shared with other staff members on a "need-to-know" basis.

### **DISCIPLINE**

It is important that all children gain the necessary skills to behave in a socially accepted manner, solve their own problems and develop a high sense of self-esteem through their interactions with children and adults in our environment. We do not use corporal punishment of any kind.

### **EMERGENCIES**

In case of an accident, every attempt will be made to reach a child's parents. If a parent cannot be reached, the child will be taken to hospital emergency room for immediate attention. Continued efforts will be made to reach parents and emergency contacts. In life threatening incidents, "911" will be called. If a trip to the emergency room is required, the child will be accompanied by a staff person who will stay with the child until parent/designated parent substitute arrives at the hospital.

### **ENROLLMENT CRITERIA**

Enrolment in our half day preschool program is based upon criteria and priorities established by the California Department of Education for 3 & 4 year old children.

Eligibility shall be established by 1, 2, 3, or 4 (below)

1. Family is a cash aid recipient
2. Family is income eligible
3. Family is homeless
4. Family has a child that is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation or receiving child protective services through the county welfare department

Income eligible means that a family's adjusted monthly income is at or below 75% of the State Median Income, adjusted for family size and adjusted annually. Preschool children are enrolled for three hours per day in either the morning, AM, or the afternoon, PM, depending on the attendance area of residence.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips may be scheduled throughout the year. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the classroom experience. Parents will be notified and asked to participate, as necessary. All field trips will be properly supervised in accordance with the current licensing child/adult ratio.

## **FIRST DAY**

Prior to your child's first day of school, you are encouraged to visit your assigned preschool site with your child to meet the teachers and other students.

Adjustment is easier on the first day of school if you plan to stay for a few minutes with your child. This may ease the transition from the safety of home to the uncertainty of school. Prepare your child at home before coming to school by talking to him/her about how you both feel. Let your child express whatever fears or concerns he/she may have. Be very positive in reassuring your child and talking about the upcoming experience.

## **FOOD FROM HOME**

Children should not bring food to school unless they have enough to share with everyone in their class and it has been prearranged with the classroom teacher. The only exception would be a child on a restricted diet with a letter from the child's doctor.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

All State Preschool Classes are held Monday through Friday for a total of 3 (three) hours in the morning or in the afternoon. Morning Preschool is held between the hours of 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM depending on the site. Afternoon Preschool is held from 12:00 Noon to 3:00 PM at all sites.

## **ILLNESS**

Children who are ill will not be accepted in school. Check your child before he/she comes to school. If necessary to continue prescription medication at school, please sign a release form allowing us to dispense prescription medication to your child. We will give prescription medication to your child if the prescription medication has your child's name, a current date and the dosage written on the label.

We must have emergency names and telephone numbers for individuals who will pick up your child should he/she become ill at school and you are not able to come.

With some illnesses, your child will be excluded from school for more than one day. Also, a doctor's note may be required before readmission.

If your child develops a contagious illness, parents should notify the school so that other parents can be notified of possible exposure to infection. Participating program children and their parents/guardians confirmed with infectious illness or disease may be quarantined from the program until cleared by physician's release.

## **LOST & FOUND**

Parents are encouraged to label all clothing articles that belong to their children. Unidentifiable clothing or other articles are brought to the lost and found area in the Main Office at 351 School Street. Articles with names in them will be returned to the owners. All items not claimed by the end of each semester will be donated to a homeless shelter.

## **RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION or WORSHIP**

Pittsburg USD shall refrain from all religious instruction or worship within part day preschool programs. At no time will families be discriminated against because of religious affiliation or family worship practices.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Pittsburg Unified School District does not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, national origin, religion, mental or physical disability. We welcome the enrollment of children with disabilities and understand the requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make reasonable accommodations and implement those accommodations for such children.



## **NUTRITION**

Meals and snacks are nutritionally balanced according to federal standards. All children attending receive breakfast or lunch free of charge through the National School Lunch Program.

## **PARENT ADVISORY GROUP**

Parents and guardians of students participating in the preschool program are encouraged to become involved in the School Site Council at their child's school of enrollment. We believe that involvement by families at their child's school increases a student's opportunity for success.

The Pittsburg USD state preschool program will also convene a Parent Advisory Group. This parent group will consist of a volunteer(s) from each preschool site. This group will have the opportunity to provide feedback to staff and make program suggestions in order to improve the quality of the preschool program. This group will meet two times during the school year.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Our program focuses on children and parents. Good health, sufficient nutrition and a nurturing environment are critical factors that influence a child's ability to learn. We believe that parents are a child's first teacher as well as a child's most important guide. Therefore, the family has the greatest influence on a child's learning potential.

A parent's increased understanding and skills can help enrich and reinforce the total growth of the child. As a result, we have developed a parent education program to offer support and skills to assist parents and guardians with raising happy and responsible children.

We offer a variety of parent educational opportunities to meet the needs of a diverse parent population, which may include the following:

- Parent Education meetings
- Classroom activities
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Nutrition Programs
- Yearly Parent Surveys
- Parent Advisory Group
- Newsletters

Through our parent education program, parents are provided with the opportunity to learn more about the total development of their children.

An orientation which includes a review of our handbook is mandatory for all families prior to attending our program. Back-to-School Night may also serve as a second orientation to our programs. Parents get to meet with their child's teacher. Parents are also given the annual Principal's Report. This report includes an overview of the school handbook, training on the District Uniform Complaint Policy and Reporting Sexual Harassment, as well as an overview of the School Readiness Program.

We encourage parents to talk to the teachers on a daily basis about things happening in your child's life. It helps us to understand your child when, for example, he did not sleep well the night before or had a nightmare. Please inquire about the day your child has had at school.

Twice a year, teachers invite parents to sign up for conferences. During this time both parents and teachers have a chance to discuss the child's development and work toward defining specific goals for the child. Conferences are a good opportunity for you to share insights about your child at home while finding out more about how he/she is doing at the Center. More frequent conferences may be arranged by the teacher or the parent to discuss any problems.

It is helpful for the staff to know of parent's preferences and concerns as we plan for the children's experiences. We encourage parents to talk informally or request conference time to discuss any part of the program which generates positive or negative consideration. No parent should ever let any upsetting circumstances pass without a discussion with a staff person.

## **REST**

Rest is an important part of every person's day. At our Preschool sites, every child is allowed to rest daily. Preschool children rest for short periods during the day by having quiet time.

### **TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT**

Every effort is made to keep our students enrolled in our program. However, in accordance with our policies, enrollment may be terminated. Enrollment may be terminated for the following reasons:

- The school experience is too stressful for an individual child.
- The child's behavior is having an adverse effect on other children.
- The child's behavior is an endangerment to staff.
- The child is picked up 15 or more minutes after the designated time, three (3) times during the year.
- Family fails to comply with the health and safety policies.
- The child has 5 or more unexcused absences.
- Family fails to maintain eligibility requirements.

A *Notice of Action* form will be sent to the appropriate parent or guardian fourteen (14) days (or 19 if *NOA* is mailed) before date of termination. Arrangements will be made for a dismissal conference if termination of enrollment becomes necessary.

### **TOYS**

Toys from home are not allowed at school unless requested by the teacher for share days. Items are too easily lost or broken and young children often find it difficult to share a personal or much loved toy.

### **VISITORS**

Parents are invited to visit without notice during all hours of operation. All visitors must check in with the office before walking onto school playgrounds or into the classrooms.

### **PARENT ENROLLMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a parent with a child or children in the Pittsburg Unified School District's Child Development Programs, I agree to:

1. Report any changes in status within 10 days to the preschool office at 351 School Street. Changes include emergency contact information, home address, family income and additions to family size.
2. Follow the late pick up policy.
3. Obtain immunizations in a timely manner and follow the health policies.
4. Notify the school with the reason for my child's absence and bring a doctors' note, if required for three (3) or more consecutive days of absences or certain illnesses.
5. I will sign my child in and out daily using my full signature or notify the office of the adult (18 years of age or older) who will be responsible for my child.
6. Cooperate fully with the discipline policy.
7. Attend a preschool orientation which includes a review of the school handbook prior to attendance.
8. Agree to abide with regulations and policies as stated in this parent manual.