

Wakefield Country Day School

Parent Handbook

Preschool | Pre Kindergarten | Kindergarten



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The mission of Wakefield Country Day School is to develop each student's character and intellect through active involvement in a structured curriculum founded on classical principles and in an environment that encourages scholarship, diligence, self-discipline, and respect for and service to others.

Welcome to Wakefield Country Day School! We are pleased that you have chosen our school for your young child, and we are confident that you have made the right choice. All of us at Wakefield Country Day School are committed to the development of each student's character and intellect, and that process begins with the pre-school, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten programs. We look forward to working closely with you to nurture your child during this important year. Please never hesitate to ask anyone at WCDS a question or to make a suggestion. We appreciate your feedback.

1. PRESCHOOL | PRE-KINDERGARTEN | KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

A. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

The Wakefield Country Day School preschool, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten programs are designed to cultivate a child's natural desire to explore and learn within a structured environment. Early childhood is the time to lay the foundation for future learning. We acknowledge that children learn, grow, and develop at different rates and with different learning styles. In order to develop a well-rounded child, enthusiastic about learning, WCDS provides learning opportunities in both group and individual settings, enabling each student to succeed on his or her own level.

In keeping with Wakefield's tradition of emphasizing core academic subjects, the children are introduced to, and instructed in, reading and language, math, science, history, geography, Spanish, music, art, library, and sports. Social development, getting along with others, and group problem-solving are also incorporated into these core subjects in order to develop independent, responsible, respectful individuals. The program provides a secure environment for children to develop mentally, physically, and socially. The quality of the program produces youngsters who are prepared and well-equipped to become successful WCDS students.

At WCDS, we acknowledge the wisdom and role of parents as educators of their children. We practice and teach respect for the authority of parents and endeavor to sustain close communication with parents. Some of the avenues for school/family communication include Back to School Night and Orientation, parent/teacher conferences, weekly bulletins, parent handbook, and written communication from individual teachers. We encourage the participation of the whole family in the life of the school through events such as Fall Festival and Carnival, Ski Mondays, International Day, Medieval Festival, Grandparent's Day, and field trips.

Our early childhood program is licensed by the Virginia Department of Education and meets, or exceeds, all state and local guidelines. The program is staffed with dedicated, trained teachers who receive continuing instruction in CPR, first aid, MAT (medication administration training), emergency health care, daily health observation, and professional development.

Admission to the early childhood program requires that children be reliably toilet trained and developmentally ready for school. Each child is interviewed by the teacher to assess readiness. The program admits students of

any race, color, creed or national origin and entitles them to all the rights and privileges of the program and activities.

We recognize record keeping as an important aspect of our program. Comprehensive, individual student records include, but are not limited to: application for admission, proof of immunizations, verification of birth, emergency contacts, medical information, and assessments. These records are located in the office.

The preschool and pre-kindergarten classrooms are located next door to one another, and each has an internal bathroom. A connecting interior door between the classrooms allows students to have access to both bathrooms and enables teachers to assist one another and allows students to join in combined activities. The kindergarten classroom is located in a building that houses grades K-5. There is a bathroom located in the kindergarten classroom as well as a shared bathroom in the hallway. All three classrooms are bright, cheerful, and equipped with age-appropriate learning materials.

B. ACADEMIC PROGRAM FOR PRESCHOOL

The preschool program serves children who have turned three by May 1st of the entrance year. The program is designed for Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. with an option of early departure at 2:00.

The preschool program offers children a highly interactive and dynamic learning experience in a multi-disciplined based environment. Students are engaged in direct listening and thinking activities as well as hands-on sensory lessons throughout the day. The approach builds the foundation for future academic achievement through authentic and meaningful exploration of science, mathematics, language, culture, reading, writing, process art, and enrichment activities.

1. Language and Reading

The primary focus for preschool is listening and speaking. Listening to a variety of children's literature (including poetry and non-fiction), participating in show-and-tell, following simple two or three step directions before, during, and after reading time, are all ways children develop language and comprehension skills. The letters of the alphabet and phonemes are taught purposefully throughout the day as they are encountered in reading, writing, songs, games, and other activities. Students will learn to recognize what an alphabet letter is and be able to understand the concept of how words are created. They will learn to identify the beginning letter sounds of words, recognize their first names in print, and begin to understand print concepts of left to right, top to bottom, and front to back.

2. Math

By comparing, matching, grouping, ordering, and counting a variety of concrete materials, the preschoolers will begin to explore math concepts through hands-on experience. Oftentimes, the after reading activities will be math based.

The students will work towards recognizing basic shapes, identify colors, count aloud to ten, recognize numbers 0-10, and count a few objects one to one. They will understand concepts of more/less, same/different, empty/full, and all/none. The students will learn to arrange objects by size, and sort objects into groups whose members are alike.

3. Handwriting

Cutting with scissors and drawing are the foundational skills needed for the demands of handwriting. The preschoolers will develop and strengthen fine motor skills through a variety of object handling activities, such as finger painting, finger knitting, painting and gluing with Q-tips, using tweezers, modeling with dough and creating with clay. Lacing cards, stringing beads, and tracing letters will further develop eye-hand coordination.

4. Enrichment Activities

Arts and crafts, music, cooking, games, dramatic play, exploration of the natural and scientific world, and life skills are everyday components of the preschool schedule, while field trips, parties, performances, and community speakers are much anticipated special events.

5. Preschool SAMPLE Schedule

9:00-9:15	Morning Activities
9:15-9:45	Circle
9:45-10:30	Centers/Outside play
10:30-11:00	Specials*
	Spanish - one day a week
	Physical Education - two days a week
	Art - one day a week
11:15-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:45	Quiet Time
12:45-1:00	Story Time
1:00-1:30	Specials or Arts and crafts
	Music - one day a week
	Library - one day a week
1:30-1:50	Free time/Outside play
1:50-2:20	Recess & Snack
2:20-3:00	Rest Time /Story Time
3:00-3:45	Specials or Arts and crafts
	Cooking and Baking
	Reading Buddies - one day a week

** Specials may occur twice a week for students attending more than three days*

6. Co-Teaching and Collaborative Activities

The Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten teachers, together with a classroom aide, work collaboratively to broaden the educational experiences of their students. During most Specials classes, field trips, and school recitals and/or performances, the Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten students are combined so they have time to interact with each other and learn how to work, play, and share within a larger group.

C. ACADEMIC PROGRAM FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN

The pre-kindergarten program serves children who have turned four by May 1st of the entrance year. It is operated Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 3:45 pm with an option for early dismissal at 2:00. Students may choose either the four or five day program.

The pre-kindergarten program is based on the belief that young children learn best by being engaged and participating. We provide a cross-curricular program where Pre-k students will be given many opportunities to actively think, question, experiment, and problem solve within a positive, trusting environment.

1. Language and Reading

Through literature, expressive drawing, vocabulary, writing, and oral expression, the students are encouraged to develop their auditory and language skills. This is accomplished using alphabet manipulatives, easy readers, phonics and rhyming games, worksheets, and songs.

The students will identify upper- and lower-case letters and the sounds they make, including beginning, middle, and ending sounds. Pre-kindergarten students will sing our letters/sounds song as well as songs learned in each unit. The students will identify written names of classmates and be able to greet one another in German. They will make and sound out word family flip books and be able to solve simple word riddles. The students will participate in poetry, finger plays, and syllable clapping. They will use speaking skills to tell a story and explain a picture and understand left/right, top/bottom, large/small, same/different, and more/less. The students will draw conclusions, make analogies, sound out CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) words, identify rhyming words, and recognize sentences through punctuation. They will copy a simple sentence and illustrate.

2. Math

The math program uses counting, problem solving activities, concrete materials, and manipulatives (geo-boards, tangrams, etc.) to provide the students with the opportunity to learn math facts and skills. Problem solving skills are encouraged and developed throughout the year as children solve and illustrate simple story problems. Topics covered include numbers, shapes, identifying and sorting, measurements, addition and subtraction, estimation, calendar, money, time, and patterns.

Pre-k students will identify numbers 1-20, count to 30+, solve problems from pictures, match objects and shapes, represent and extend patterns, determine group sizes, use one-on-one matching in groups, and use units of measurement to compare length. They will learn to sequence numbers and events, tell how many in all when there is a separating or joining action, tell time to the hour, and construct simple graphs.

3. Science

The science program develops children's natural curiosity by introducing scientific observations and concepts. The students use group/individual experiments and hands-on activities to explore, and better understand, the world of science.

Pre-k students will identify the five senses, parts of the body, types of animals and habitats, stages of plant life, insects, types of dinosaurs, and planets. They will name the seasons of the year and types of weather and identify ocean animals and their characteristics. The students will witness the metamorphosis of tadpoles, caterpillars, and chicken eggs.

4. Social Studies

The social studies program provides the students with opportunities to expand their knowledge of the world. The children explore world geography, history, and government through the use of literature, maps, field trips, and activities. The social studies program provides a sense of self and community in the students.

The students explore American Indian tribes and customs, Pilgrims, Christopher Columbus, Martin Luther King, famous presidents, and other important people of the past. The students will use a globe and maps to locate and identify continents, oceans, countries, and states.

5. Handwriting

Through early writing experiences, young children begin to comprehend the written language. Attempts to write through scribbling and inventive writing help them understand the written word as a means to communicate ideas and information.

The students will be introduced to proper stroke and letter formation for upper/lower case letters, and numbers. They will understand top to bottom and left to right progression. The students will learn proper paper position, pencil grip, and posture.

6. Enrichment

Pre-k students will participate in arts and crafts, music, poetry, cooking, baking, gardening, games, circle time with calendar and show-and-tell, field trips, gross and fine motor skills development, and public speaking/recitation.

The students will learn socialization and life skills such as manners, negotiation, getting along with others, and making wise choices.

7. Pre-Kindergarten SAMPLE Schedule

9:00-9:30	Circle, show-and-tell, unit discussion
9:30-10:15	Group work
10:15-10:30	Recess
10:30-11:00	Specials* Spanish, Physical Education, Art, Music, Library or Reading Buddies
11:00-12:00	Lunch, free time
12:00-12:30	Language Arts & Math
12:30-1:30	Individual work, games, outdoor play
1:30-2:00	Specials* Spanish, Physical Education, Art, Music, Library or Reading Buddies
2:00-2:30	Rest Time/Recess
2:30-3:10	Arts and crafts
3:10 – 3:45	nack, read aloud, outdoor play

** Specials occur twice a week for students attending five days*

D. ACADEMIC PROGRAM FOR KINDERGARTEN

The kindergarten program serves children who have turned five by May 1st of the entrance year. It is operated Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 3:45 pm.

1. Language and Reading

The reading program will teach sound/symbol correspondence of the letters and how to blend sounds into words. It will help the student develop the ability to put words into simple coherent sentences and prepare them for higher levels of reading and comprehension.

The students will develop listening and speaking skills, and visual and auditory recognition. Kindergarten students will learn consonant and vowel sounds and spellings, blending, vocabulary, poetry, fiction, alphabetical order, and simple sequential order. They will draw conclusions, predict outcomes, make comparisons, develop a writing goal, plan a composition, and write a first draft.

2. Math

The math program explores a wide variety of mathematical activities through hands-on experiences, discussion, and exploration.

The students will count by 1's to 120, by 5's to 100, and by 10's to 100. They will act out word problems, find answers for addition and subtraction stories using manipulatives, compare and order numbers, investigate characteristics of 2 and 3 dimensional geometric shapes, identify ordinal positions, tell time to the hour, count pennies, nickels, and dimes. They will measure and compare objects, understand basic concepts of probability, estimate and compare weight and lengths of objects, create and read graphs to answer simple questions, and estimate the number of objects in a collection. Through calendar activities the students will identify the month, year, date, and day of the week. They will count the number of days they attend school and use manipulatives to exchange 1s for 10s and 10s for 100s.

3. Science

The science program encourages children to discover the excitement and relevance of science through hands-on experience. Students will delve into non-fiction texts to activate prior learning, generate a list of questions about topics to be studied, while at the same time examine the structure of non-fiction texts. They will explore life science, animals and plants, earth science, weather and seasons, physical science, and objects around us.

The students will identify types of plants and their structures, including roots, stems, leaves, and flowers. They will understand plant growth/changes, and how plants are used for clothing, food, and shelter. The students will understand the environment is made up of living and non-living things including land, air, and water. They will identify seasons, weather patterns, animals, and body parts. The students will investigate and understand that magnets influence some materials, make some things move without touching them, and have useful applications.

4. Handwriting

The Zaner-Bloser handwriting program helps the children become proficient in manuscript letters, focusing on the correct form, size, position, and spacing of letters.

The students learn proper posture, paper position and pencil grip. They will learn proper placement of strokes to form letters, proper spacing between letters, words, and sentences, proper placement of a letter in relation to the lines and consistent degree of slant. Proper letter formation will be practiced while writing daily diary entries.

5. Social Studies

The social studies program acquaints the children with important events and people in history, and the places around the world in which they occur. Emphasis is placed on the foundations of our Country from the Native Americans to the Early 1800s.

Kindergarten students will recognize national holidays and their relevance, significant people of the past and their contributions, and traditional patriotic traditions. They will use globes and maps to identify important places.

6. Enrichment

Kindergarten students will participate in arts and crafts, show-and-tell, and public speaking/recitation. Poetry book and calendar illustrations will be created following directed drawing techniques. Basic computer and tablet skills will be introduced. Students will independently turn on the computers, log in, and navigate the available apps and web-based activities. Several field trips throughout the year provide hands-on educational learning experiences.

7. Kindergarten SAMPLE Schedule

9:00-9:15	Morning message, calendar activities, word of the day, poetry
9:15-10:00	Daily Journal Writing and Individual Guided Reading Conferences
10:00-10:30	Recess
10:30-11:00	Specials* Spanish, Physical Education, Art, Music, Library or Reading Buddies
11:00-11:30	Lunch, Share Diaries
11:30-11:50	Recess
11:50-1:15	Group Reading Instruction (Integrating Science and Social Studies Curriculum)
1:15-2:00	Specials* Spanish, Physical Education, Art, Music, Library or Reading Buddies
2:00-2:45	Phonics and Word Study
2:45-3:45	Recess, Read Aloud Snack, Show n Tell

E. FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The foreign language program for Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, and Kindergarten students introduces the sounds and expressions of the Spanish language through song, movement, stories, drawings, and games.

The students learn numbers, colors, weather expressions, days of the week, family members, parts of the body, clothing, and animals. They learn the concepts of large/small, on/under, in front of/behind, and affirmative and negative expressions.

F. MUSIC PROGRAMThe Music Department adheres to the nine national music standards as prescribed by NAfME (National Association for Music Education): Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music; performing on instruments, alone and with others, improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments; composing and arranging music within specified guidelines; reading and notating music; listening to, analyzing, and describing music; evaluating music and music performances; understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts; and understanding music in relation to history and culture.

The purpose of the music classes at Wakefield Country Day School for the Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes is primarily to have fun making, listening to, and being involved in creating and learning about music.

The Preschool classes are encouraged to clap, play percussion instruments, and use creative movements to learn about rhythms and sound. They also begin learning the instruments of the orchestra.

Rhythms and sounds are expanded in Pre-K as the students learn how to keep a beat and listen to see if the sounds get faster or slower, and louder or softer.

Music class for Kindergarten becomes much more involved as they are required to sing and memorize music. Pitched percussion instruments are introduced, with exploration of the glockenspiel serving as a focal point.

In addition to singing and dancing in these music classes, videos are also used for the purpose of teaching the children to listen. As the children listen and watch they will have discussions about musical instruments and/or how the music relates to what is happening in the video.

G. ART PROGRAM

Students in grades preschool through sixth grade participate in bi-weekly studio art classes. Students are introduced to art as a means of skill development and personal expression. Major trends in art are placed in context to help students understand the cultural significance of the work.

Each year of the program students experience a variety of art materials and techniques including drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, the fiber arts, clay, and sculpture. They learn to recognize the basic elements of art and principles of design at more and more complex levels each year. Through a combination of guided drawing and open choice projects, students improve their basic motor skill levels as well as their problem-solving abilities, all of which goes toward developing their confidence as creative individuals. Many projects have cross-curricular components, inspired by literature, art history, traditional folk crafts, technology, and nature. Students experience how art and creative expression can help them process the world around them.

Art History begins at the pre-school level and continues throughout students' high school art education. Art history lessons are integrated with the studio artwork. As students are exposed to particular approaches to art, relevant artists and historical information is presented to add depth to the educational experience.

An art exhibition rounds out the studio art curricula. At the conclusion of the school year, there is a school-wide art exhibit, with each student selecting a piece of work to be included in this year-end event.

H. LIBRARY

All preschool through kindergarten students will receive an introduction to library skills and various forms of literature. Each class will visit the library weekly, where students will have opportunities to explore a variety of print and electronic resources, as well as enhance their classroom curriculum. Our goal is to encourage a lifelong interest in books and reading. The children will choose and check out a developmentally appropriate book to take home each week.

Preschool through kindergarten students will be exposed to a variety of literary forms in order to develop an appreciation for literature. They will take part in guided reading and will have books read to them. The literature is expanded through crafts, dance, finger plays, and songs.

The students will recognize rhyming words, use listening and speaking vocabularies, understand how print is organized and read, identify parts of a book, and discuss characters, settings and events. They will learn to identify an author's role and an illustrator's role. They will participate in book/topic discussions.

Kindergarten students will have time for silent reading or reading with the librarian. They will learn the specific location of fiction books in the library and the use of the Dewey Decimal system.

I. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The main objective of the physical education program is to foster the love of physical activity through games and movement.

The students will explore the concept of individual and group space, develop gross motor and locomotor skills, set achievable physical goals, and perform age appropriate motor skills. The students will work on increasing balance, as well as hand-eye and foot-eye coordination. They will learn the concepts of fairness, taking turns, and sportsmanship.

J. CLASSROOM OPENING AND CLOSING TIMES

Our classrooms open at 8:30 am. All preschool, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten students must be escorted to the classroom by an adult or older student. School begins at 8:40 am. and ends at 3:50 with the option for a 2:00 pm dismissal for students in Preschool and PreK. The school-wide schedule for holidays and inclement weather is followed.

K. BUS SERVICE

The school offers bus service to all neighboring counties. The buses arrive around 8:30 am and depart at 4:00 pm. All preschool, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten students are escorted to the bus at 3:50 pm. Arrangements for specific bus stops are made during registration at the beginning of the school year.

L. DISCIPLINE

WCDS teachers strive to provide a loving and nurturing environment for their students. At the beginning of the school year, fair, understandable, and clearly defined rules are established. Conflict resolution and respect for others is emphasized. Positive reinforcement and modeling are used to encourage the following of rules. Occasionally a situation will arise when an inappropriate behavior, whether purposeful or unintentional, is committed. When necessary, age appropriate behavioral techniques are implemented.

M. LUNCH

The preschool, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten students eat lunch in their respective classrooms between 11:00 and 11:30 am. Most days the students need to bring lunch from home. Students may purchase milk daily. Students may purchase pizza on Tuesdays.

N. REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued to the students 2-4 times a year and include an evaluation of the child's academic and social development. In addition to scheduled parent/teacher conferences, parents may request a conference at any time by calling the teacher.

O. CONCLUSION

The early childhood program fully supports the overall purposes and objectives of WCDS by providing a program which introduces young children to self-discipline, the joy of learning, phonics, numeracy, and high order cognition. The program produces well rounded, self-assured youngsters ready for the next level of learning.