

McFarland School District



PROGRAM HANDBOOK



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Welcome to the McFarland School District's 4K Program!

The McFarland School District has a history of collaboration with the preschools and child care facilities located in the school district and surrounding area. The physical, emotional, social, and early learning of children are the focus of the school district as well as the community agencies. The early childhood years are very important for children and their parents. When children experience success in responsive, nurturing programs they gain essential skills and knowledge.

Four-year-old kindergarten programs have been growing in number throughout the state of Wisconsin. The McFarland School Board voted to implement 4K with the start of the 2012-2013 school year, a program designed around our community partners. The public school district collaborates with: Child Life Ministries, Ginger Bread House Preschool and Little Spartans Child Development Center. Tuition-free pre-kindergarten is now available to every four-year-old child living within the McFarland School District.

This handbook has been written to provide parents and other interested parties with information regarding our program. We hope everyone will use the handbook to answer many questions that may come up throughout the year. If you have questions not answered in this handbook, please do not hesitate to ask a 4K teacher or call the 4K office at 608-838-3146.



MISSION STATEMENT

We believe that every child in McFarland has a right to a high-quality developmentally appropriate preschool education.

OUR PRINCIPLES

- Universal access and parental choice
- Developmentally appropriate learning environment
- Play based curriculum
- Comprehensive early learning standards and assessments
- Ongoing collaboration and strong parent communication
- Comprehensive services that include family support and education
- Uniformly adequate and equitable resources
- Professional Development
- Strong community partnerships

The following are a few examples of how what appears to be play is actually a learning experience that helps the child prepare for school!

When Children Do This.....They Are Learning To:

Put blocks in a truck and dump them out	Understand size, weight, and number concepts (Math and science)
Put pegs in a pegboard	Develop eye-hand coordination (Reading and writing readiness)
Finish a puzzle	Complete a task from start to finish (Study habits and self-esteem)
Play beside other children	Get along with others (Social skills)
Follow directions in a recipe by adding ingredients	Understand measurements (Math)
Turn pages of a book	Read from left to right
Scribble on paper	Use writing as a means to communicate, fine motor coordination
Listen to a story and talk about what happened	Love books, remember details, express ideas (Language)
Put on dress-up clothes	Develop small muscles (Writing and self-help)
Make play-dough	See how materials change (Science) Follow directions (Listening comprehension)
Separate cups and plates	Group objects into categories (Math)

PROGRAM LOCATIONS

McFarland School District – Coordinating Public School District

Address: 6009 Johnson St, McFarland, WI 53558
Phone: 608-838-3146
Program Administrator: Dr. Kelley Novak
novakk@mcfds.org
Program Assistant: Emily Broome
broomee@mcfds.org

Child Life Ministries*

Address: 5529 Marsh Road, McFarland, WI 53558
Phone: 608-838-4425
Email: kidsofclm@mcfarlandlutheran.org
Contact: Sara Phelan

Ginger Bread House Preschool*

Address: 4896 Larson Beach Road, McFarland, WI 53558
Phone: 608-838-5105
Email: gingerbreadpreschool@hotmail.com
Contact: Denise Kuehl

Little Spartans Child Development Center*

Address: 4721 Ivywood Trail, McFarland, WI 53558
Phone: 608-838-0171
Email: littlespartansmcfarland@gmail.com
Contact: Lindsey Charlesworth

***These locations offer child care for children outside the 4K school day. Parents are responsible to make arrangements for child care and expenses associated with child care.**

ELIGIBILITY

Students participating in the 4K program must be four years of age by **September 1**. There will be no early admissions. Participants must be residents of the McFarland School District or apply through open enrollment, if eligible.

Toileting Skills Policy

4K does not refuse entrance into the program to a child who is not toilet trained.

The district may work in several ways to address this issue:

- Check with the family regarding medical issues
- A nurse or family liaison may work with the family to develop a plan for toilet training at school or home
- Develop an in-school plan for toilet training
- Require the parent to supply clean clothes and changing supplies
- Request the parent to pick up or assist as appropriate

ATTENDANCE

It is an expectation that each child will attend school when school is in session. The importance of regular attendance cannot be overstated; regular attendance at the four-year-old preschool level establishes healthy patterns of attendance that can last throughout the school years and into adult employment. Attendance is taken daily and recorded in the district's student management system, Infinite Campus. A child's absence is designated as "excused" or "unexcused".

Excused absences include illness, medical and dental appointments, and certain family situations. Generally, as long as a parent/guardian calls in to inform the staff of the absence, it will be considered excused.

If students are going to be absent from school for any reason, parents are required to phone in the absence to the teacher/director prior to or on the day of the absence. Please inform the person answering the phone of your child's name, the reason for the absence, and that the child attends the 4K program. Attendance is taken every day and sent to the school district. Prompt notification of absences helps keep the record keeping accurate!

Child Life Ministries	608-838-4425
Ginger Bread House Preschool	608-838-5105
Little Spartans Child Development Center	608-838-0171

An unexcused absence is generally the result of the child simply not attending class and the parent/guardian has not notified the staff of the absence.

When in doubt of your child's health condition, play it safe for your child as well as for the other children in the class. Please consider keeping your child home:

- The first 48 hours of a cold or upper respiratory infection,
- If the child has an infectious disease, or
- If your child has a rash or spots....until you know what it is.

General criteria for parents to use in deciding if their child should attend school:

- The child has a temperature of 99.6 degrees or higher.
- The child has vomited within a 12 hour time period prior to leaving for school.
- The child has had diarrhea within a 24 hour time period prior to coming to school.
- If the child has a common cold where there is much nasal discharge or green nasal discharge.
- If the child has a cough that is hacking or continuous.
- If the child has skin sores which are open and draining material. This includes such illnesses as pink eye. The child can return to school when the drainage ceases and the sores begin to heal.
- If the child has chicken pox or mumps.
- If the child has a Streptococcal throat infection (strep throat). The child should remain home for two days after antibiotics have started.
- If the child is complaining of an ear ache.
- If the child has any skin diseases (such as impetigo, scabies, etc.). A doctor's note will be required for the child to return to school.

The staff will call a parent/guardian to pick up their child in the event of one of the following conditions:

- The child has a temperature.
- The child has vomited.
- The child has diarrhea.
- The child is continually coughing.
- The child is constantly fussy and crying for an unusual amount of time for an unexplained reason.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The 4K calendar can be found on the district's website at www.mcfarland.k12.wi.us. Generally, classes meet Monday through Thursday with the exception of the last two months of school. A Monday through Friday schedule is implemented at that time as to prepare students for a full week of school, similar to kindergarten. Classes follow the McFarland School District calendar for vacation days and other school closings.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every family has the right to their privacy being respected and enforced. Each agency will help maintain privacy in the following manner:

- Student records will not be left out for others to view.
- Parents and staff are not allowed to discuss children and families with other parents.
- Staff will not discuss children and families with other staff unless there is a direct benefit to the family or child involved.
- Parents are asked not to talk about incidents observed in the classroom or at any other activities that involve children other than their own.

FAMILY OUTREACH PROGRAM

An important component of the 4K program is the Family Outreach Program. The focus on the program is to provide parents and children with opportunities to grow as a family. Throughout the school year, 4K families will be offered 87.5 hours of educational workshops, activities and presentations free of charge. Childcare is provided at some events. Families are highly encouraged to participate in the Family Outreach program.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

No person shall, on the basis of disability or handicap, race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or gender, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity in the McFarland School District. If you have questions about procedures, or if you wish to file a grievance, please contact Andrew Briddell, Superintendent, McFarland School District, 5101 Farwell Street, McFarland, WI 53558 (608-838-3169).

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Communication between the parents and preschools is of utmost importance and should take place as often as possible. At a minimum, each community partner will schedule two parent-teacher conferences for each child so the teacher can share academic and/or social progress with the parent/guardian(s). Conferences will take place once in the fall and once in early spring.

SPECIAL OCCASION TREATS

The McFarland School District recognizes the benefits of healthful foods in our schools and classrooms to assure that our children can grow, learn, and thrive.

If parents desire to send a food item for a child’s birthday or special event, the food should be low in sugar and fat. Due an increase in food allergies in the general population, *foods containing nut products or nut byproducts will not be allowed* in the classroom.

Parents are encouraged to send items that are more nutritious in value. Such items could include the following:

Raw Vegetable Sticks	Raisins	Water
Fresh Fruit	Pretzels	Party Mix
Fruit Kabobs	Popcorn	Low-Sodium Crackers
Frozen 100% juice pops	String Cheese	BAKED Corn Chips
Bagels/Cream Cheese	Dried Fruits	Fat Free Potato Chips
Rice Cakes	Trail Mix	Low Fat Muffins
Granola Bars	Flavored Yogurt	Jello Snacks
Angel Food Cake	Fruit Parfaits	Veggie Pizza
Low-Fat Pudding Cups	Low-Fat and Skim Milk	100% Fruit Juices
Low-Fat Ice Cream/Yogurt/Sherbet	Low-Fat Meat and Cheese Sandwiches	Low-Fat Dressings, Yogurt Dips, Salsa

NOTE: Due to the increase in nut allergies and the severity of the reactions they may cause, substances known to cause allergic reactions in sensitive children, including (but not limited to) peanuts, tree nuts, soy nuts, eggs, dairy, soy, wheat, and sulfites used in dried fruits, should be avoided. Please be aware that some children may have allergies to these foods.

STUDENT RECORDS

Student records shall be maintained in the interest of the student to assist school personnel in providing appropriate educational experiences for each student in the District. The Board of Education recognizes the need for confidentiality of student records. Therefore, the District shall maintain the confidentiality of student records at collection, storage, disclosure and destruction. Student records shall be available for inspection or release only with prior approval of the parent/guardian or adult student, except in situations where legal requirements specify release of records without such prior approval. Building principals shall have primary responsibility for the collection, maintenance and dissemination of student records in accordance with state and federal laws and established District guidelines.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Parents have the longest contact with children and are recognized as their child's first and most effective teacher. Parents are encouraged to participate as much as possible in the 4K experience. In addition to participating in the Family Outreach program, parents are encouraged to attend scheduled parent-teacher conferences, be a parent volunteer in the classroom or a chaperone on field trips, occasionally read a story to the class, or help prepare classroom materials.

Any adult volunteering in the classroom will be required to complete the volunteer background check prior to assisting in the classroom. The volunteer forms are available at the McFarland School 4K Office and on the district website.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUGS STATEMENT

Alcohol and other drug use is prohibited at all Ready for Learning functions including, but not limited to:

- Classroom activities & field trips
- Home visits with home visitors or other staff
- Family Outreach programs and activities

Alcohol and other drug use prior to 4K functions are strongly discouraged. Any behavior exhibited at programs or activities that suggest abuse of alcohol or other drugs will result in that person being asked to leave.

The 4K program locations are smoke free environments per state statutes that disallow smoking in public school buildings or on grounds or facilities housing public school programs. A smoke free environment is also required at functions which include, but are not limited to, Family Outreach programs, field trips, or on the playgrounds.

Parents are not required to abide by the Smoke Free Policy during home visits in their own homes. However, parents are encouraged not to smoke during these home visits.

WEATHER RELATED INFORMATION

School cancellations, delays, and early closings are made based on the best information available to the school district and bus operators. The decisions are made as soon as possible in order to allow parents to make special arrangements for their children. Parents can access weather information from the following media sources:

Television:

Channel 3	WISC
Channel 15	WMTV
Channel 27	WKOW

Radio:

WIBA	1310 AM
WTDY	1670 AM
WMAD	92.1 FM
WJJO	94.1 FM
WOLX	94.9 FM
WMLI	96.3 FM
WMGN	98.0 FM
WIBA	101.5 FM
WNWC	102.5 FM
WZEE	104.1 FM
WSLD	104.5 FM
WCHY	105.1 FM
WMMM	105.5 FM
WWQM	106 FM

If the McFarland School District cancels school for the day, all 4K programs will also be canceled. If the public school system delays school in the morning, AM 4K classes will be canceled. If the public school system closes school early for the day, afternoon sessions will be canceled.

NOTE: Weather related closures for preschool/daycare services are decided upon by the individual preschool/daycare provider!

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation will be provided to any resident child attending the 4K Afternoon program only. Bussing will be provided on direct 4K buses for mid-day and direct and regular district buses for the afternoon routes. The goal is to always provide the safest transportation to the children.

FAMILY TRANSPORTATION

Please drop off and pick up your 4K student on time. If families are not enrolled in wrap care, it is their responsibility to be at the 4K site on time and to pick on time as well. There is a short turn around for the next class to start, so please be considerate of all staff. It is also important for the safety of all involved to drop off and pick up on time.

BUS EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS

1. **PARENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ACCOMPANY THEIR CHILD TO AND FROM THE HOUSE, TO AND FROM THE BUS.**
2. Children enrolled in McFarland 4K program will be picked up and dropped off per established time schedule at specified locations. There may be some deviations to pick up and drop off times depending on weather or road conditions.
3. Children should be dressed and ready to board when the bus arrives. Students should be at the bus stop 3-5 minutes before the scheduled time. If the child misses the bus, it is the parent's responsibility to take the child to school.
4. Only students, staff, and volunteers are allowed to ride on buses. Parents are not allowed to ride on the bus.
5. If the child becomes ill on the bus, the child will be returned to the 4K site or to parent(s) if possible. If it is not possible to return the child to the home, the parent will be notified and asked to pick up the child at their 4K site location.
6. If, after five minutes, no parent or adult comes out to the bus to accept the child, the child will remain on the bus.
 - a. If Nelson's is unable to contact either the parent or the emergency contact, the child will be delivered back to Conrad Elvehjem (Kindergarten School) at the end of the bus route. The CE office or principal will continue attempts to contact the parent and/or emergency contact. The CE office or principal will stay with the child until the parent or emergency contact arrives to pick up the child.
 - b. If the parent does not arrive within one hour of the drop-off time, social services will be contacted and requested to pick up the child and place him/her in protective custody.

BUS RIDER GUIDELINES

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide the safest, most enjoyable school bus ride for all bus occupants, including the driver. A safe bus ride is free of all driver distractions. Driver tolerance will vary and student behavior will vary. Regardless of who's driving the bus, it is the student's responsibility to follow the guidelines so the driver can do his/her job, which is to drive the bus. Watching students in the rear view mirror is not driving the bus. Inappropriate behavior on the bus that is unseen by the driver is still unacceptable. RESPECT is the word.

Parents, please talk with your child(ren) about following the four major school bus guidelines.

1. **OBEY THE BUS DRIVER.** First, follow the bus drivers' instructions. If you don't agree with an action taken by the bus driver, when you get to school or home you can inform your teacher or parent.
2. **TALK QUIETLY** to the other students around you. Remember to use nice words and a Voice Level 0-3. Any noise other than talking may distract the driver.
3. **RESPECT ALL OTHER PEOPLE** on the bus. Keep hands, feet and objects to self. Teasing, name calling or profanity will not be tolerated. Nothing should go out the windows, even voices. Keep the aisles clear.
4. **REMAIN SEATED AT ALL TIMES.** Keep your back against the seat back and your bottom against the seat bottom. Face forward. Food and beverages are not allowed. Please keep all food/drink in backpacks. Cellular devices and electronics should be kept in backpacks as well. They are not to be used on the bus.

BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS ON THE BUS

The safety of children on buses is a primary concern of our school district as well as our bus contractors. If a child continuously disregards the established bus rules, thus jeopardizing the safety of all the children on the bus, the child's parents will be notified.

Bus drivers will write an incident report of dangerous behavior on the bus. This report will be forwarded to the 4K teacher and administrator and the parents will be contacted. Second or third reports will require a conference with the parent. An Action Plan will be developed to outline the steps the parents and staff can take to assist the child with his/her behavior.

If the child continues to exhibit inappropriate bus behavior, the child may be suspended from using the bus for a period of time. During this time the parent would be responsible for getting the child to and from school.

If you have any bus related questions, please call Nelson's Bus Service at 608-205-9040.