Cliffside Park Public Schools



School No. 5

Pre-Kindergarten Handbook

2025-2026

Cliffside Park Public Schools

CLIFFSIDE PARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM
2025-2026

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Mr. Mark Rindfuss

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
Donna Calabrese

PRINCIPAL
Dana M. Martinotti

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES
Sharlene Pinto

SUPERVISORS OF INSTRUCTION
Jennifer Nieto
Nicole Rowe

PRE-K FACULTY
Ms. Erica Berlingeri
Ms. Kerry Gaul
Ms. Danielle Hompesch
Ms. Melissa Mangano
Ms. Griselis Melo
Mrs. Ana Munoz
Mr. Michael Parlier
Mrs. Samantha Reyes
Ms. Esther Lee, PK Coach

SCHOOL SECRETARIES
Ms. Carmen McKeown & Ms. Lisa Majano
201-313-2350

SCHOOL NURSE
Mrs. Asil Jarrar

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201-313-2352

INTRODUCTION

Parents are their child's first teacher and the lessons learned every day under their care are the most influential and enduring lessons of their lives. Since birth, parents give their children the attention, motivation, encouragement, and emotional support needed to learn. Today, you and your child have reached a milestone as your preschooler is ready to begin his/her formal academic career! While the transition from home to school can be emotional, it can be eased by your positive attitude toward education and through your support of the school and its mission. We look forward to working together throughout your child's first year of school!

Cliffside Park Early Childhood Philosophy

The Preschool Program for Cliffside Park reflects the ideologies of sound early childhood education.

The young child is unique.
The young child is an emotional, spiritual, and social being.
The young child has the desire and potential to learn.
The young child grows and develops in a sequential manner.
The young child learns through multiple intelligences:
logical-mathematical, spatial, intrapersonal, linguistic, interpersonal, bodily-kinesthetic, musical and naturalist.
The young child is a concrete learner.
The young child learns through
observation, exploration, and investigation.
The young child learns through
interaction with peers and adults.
The young child can solve problems and
make age-appropriate decisions.
The young child has the potential to
express himself/herself through the creative arts.
The young child LEARNS THROUGH PLAY!

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BASIC PRE-KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION

Attendance:
Good attendance is important for your child's academic growth and development of a sense of responsibility. If your child is absent, please contact the school and also send a note to the teacher when he or she returns explaining the reason for the absence.

Procedures for Arrival:
Parents/guardians may drop their children off at their designated locations no earlier than 8:50 a.m. and no later than 9:00 a.m If you arrive earlier than the designated time, kindly wait with your child in your car or near the yard where students will line up. Please note that there will be no supervision earlier than 8:50 a.m.

Parents' Responsibility at Dismissal:
It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians of all students to pick up their children promptly at the 3:00 p.m. dismissal time. Forms indicating individuals approved by parents to pick up their child must be completed asap and returned to the office. Students will **not** be released to individuals who are not on the list.

Snacks: *We are a Nut-Free District*

STUDENTS should bring nutritious snacks and lunch daily. Some snacks are:

Fresh fruits	Raw vegetables	Raisins
Cheese	Dried Fruit	Crackers
Plain yogurt	Breadsticks	Pretzels

Money:
Any money that your child brings to school should be placed in a sealed envelope plainly marked with your child's name and the teacher's name. Also indicate what the money is for (ex. Trip, book fair, fundraiser, etc.). Do not include other notes to the teacher in this envelope.

Clothing:
Clothing should be comfortable and easy to manage. All outer clothing must be labeled with your child's full name. This includes sweaters, boots, hats, scarves, etc. Boots should be large enough to put on easily. Plastic bags worn over shoes make boots easier to put on. Please send an extra set of clothing in a ziplock bag.

Notices:
Kindly read school notices sent home in the folder carefully and promptly return those requiring a signature. We cannot stress this enough! The school folder your child is being provided with should be returned daily.

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Birthday Parties:

The Cliffside Park School District has implemented a **"Non-Food Birthday"** policy**.** This practice is to ensure the safety of all students, especially those with food allergies. Your child's teacher will share with you various non-food activities/ideas if you are planning on celebrating your child's birthday at school.

Back To School Night:

Back-to-School Night is on **September 17, 2025.** Please make every effort to join your child's teacher and other members of our School Five community! It is important you keep your email and phone number current so we can notify you.

Safety:

For your child's safety and security, the teachers will not release the child to anyone except the parent or someone duly designated (in writing) by the parent. If a parent is delayed at dismissal time, the teacher or teacher aide will escort the child to the office. We require a note to the teacher regarding a change in dismissal plans for the day or in case you have to pick up your child early. Early dismissal children must be picked up at the office.

School Closings:

If school is closed due to inclement weather or other reasons, all students and staff will be notified.
Any adjustments to the school day will be communicated through:

1. **Cliffside Park Website www.cliffsidepark.edu.**
2. Students AND Staff will be notified by our **SWIFTREACH** phone system as soon as there is a decision regarding a change in the daily schedule.
3. To ensure that you will be called please make sure our records have your MOST RECENT HOME OR CELL NUMBER ON FILE.
4. **DO NOT CALL THE POLICE STATION!** This will tie up their lines which must be kept open in case of emergencies.

One Session Days:

Hours for One-Session Days in Pre-K are:

- 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Delayed Opening:

If a delayed opening is called during the school year, students and parents will be notified via Swiftreach messages and announcements on the district website and social media platforms.

Parent/Teacher Organization:

Parent and teacher communication and cooperation is enhanced through the School #5 PTO. All parents and teachers are encouraged to be active participants in meetings and activities. Persons wishing to be a class mother/father and assist teachers in activities are encouraged to send a note to your teacher. Be on the lookout for a flier regarding our first meeting!

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HEALTH INFORMATION

Sleep:
Please make sure your child gets enough sleep each night (10-12 hours). A suggested bedtime of 7:30 will help your child get sufficient rest to satisfy the developmental needs for his/her age. It is advisable to develop a consistent bedtime schedule prior to the beginning of school. Full-time Pre-K Special Education classes will nap for 30 minutes as per state guidelines. After 30 minutes the lights will go on to encourage children to wake up.

Hygiene:
Coming to school well-groomed with face and hands clean, nails clipped, hair combed, teeth brushed, and fresh clothes is the beginning of a good routine.

Meals:
Parents should provide enough time for the child to have a nutritious breakfast without rushing prior to the school day.

Illness:
Exercise care in sending your child to school if he/she had a temperature or was ill the night before. **Do not send your child to school if he/she has a sore throat, temperature, or does not feel well.** Infections spread easily and to protect your own child and others, we feel it is wiser to be absent one or two days than to risk a more serious illness. **If your child has a temperature, he/she should be fever free 24 hours before returning to school**. If he or she does not feel well before school in the morning, do not send him/her to school to be diagnosed by the school nurse. If your child is going to be absent from school, please report his/her absence to Nurse Asil at 201.313.2352.

Head Lice:
This problem has become nationwide in recent years. Please check your child's hair at least once a week. In particular look for smaller than dandruff-like substances (eggs) behind the ears and the nape of the neck. These eggs stick to the hair shaft. Special head lice preparations can be obtained from your pharmacist or ordered through your doctor. **Please notify the school nurse if your child has been infected so that the rest of the class can be checked and the situation controlled.**

Medication:
Because of the dangerous results from the improper use of medicine or drugs, medication such as nasal sprays, pills, etc. should not be brought to school unless directed by the family doctor. Doctor's instructions must be in writing, and the medication brought to the school nurse. If your child is on any medicine at home, please let the teacher know. ***It is against the state laws for nurses to prescribe treatment or administer medication internally without a doctor's written order. Therefore, no student will be given medication such as aspirin, Tylenol, etc. in school.***

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Notification:

If your child should become ill in school or have an accident on the school grounds, you will be called to take the child home or go to the medical facility of your choice for first aid care. If your child is absent due to infectious illness, please notify the school office as to the reason for the absence so the classroom teacher may plan accordingly. When the child does return to school, send a note, even if a call has been made.

Contagious Diseases:

Contagious diseases, such as Covid, Impetigo, Mononucleosis, Staph Infection, Strep Throat, Chicken Pox, etc. should be reported to the school nurse. A doctor's note is needed if your child has a contagious illness or a contagious illness is suspected. When not seen by a doctor a note from the parent **might** be acceptable. All notes should contain a diagnosis or a description of the problem.

At school, your child will be associated with many youngsters. Watch for colds and other disease symptoms. For your child's own protection and for the protection of schoolmates, you are reminded that your child should remain at home if any one of the following occurs:

- Nausea or Vomiting within the last 24 hours.
- Diarrhea within the last 24 hours.
- Temperature of 100 or higher within the last 24 hours.
- Contagious or unexplained rash.
- Any symptoms of acute illness such as a persistent cough or runny nose with body ache.
- Strep is suspected, but results of the overnight throat culture have not been received.
  If your child has a positive throat culture they may return to school 24 hours after antibiotic treatment.
- Inflamed and/or Eye drainage that is not clear.
- Impetigo until no longer symptomatic and 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Restlessness at Night
- Head Lice or Nits – if you suspect or if you have treated your child for lice please contact the school nurse for clearance to return to school.

The child will never be sent home without first consulting a parent or designated representative. If you are unable to pick up your child, then you are responsible for making other arrangements.
It is of utmost importance that your emergency information be kept up to date.

Health Services:

Physical Examinations - Proof that a physical examination has been done within the year prior to entering Pre-Kindergarten is required of all students. Please be sure to send in a note whenever your child receives immunization boosters, with the date the booster was given, so his/her medical record will remain current.
Eye/Ear Examinations - Visual acuity testing and auditory screening for all children enrolled will be done by the nurse each year.
Dental Screenings will be done each year.

School Nurse:
Nurse Asil is on duty during the school hours. If you wish to contact her, please call 201-313-2352.

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"FROG STREET" PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The New Jersey Department of Education requires school districts that receive state funding to select a curriculum that has been researched and approved by the department. This year, "Frog Street" was added to the list of approved curricula. During the 2024-2025 school year, the district researched "Frog Street" and ultimately decided to replace our previous High Scope curriculum with this newly-approved program. Teachers have attended professional development on the program and will continue to receive support in the 2025-2026 school year.

As an early childhood curriculum, the Frog Street philosophy focuses on "intentional, developmentally appropriate learning experiences." At the core of Frog Street is a holistic approach to learning as it integrates social-emotional learning, literacy, and numeracy within thematic units. The objective of this curriculum is to "build a strong foundation for future academic success by fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and a love of learning."

The key aspects of Frog Street's philosophy and curriculum are:

- ★ Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- ★ Holistic Learning
- ★ Intentional Learning
- ★ Play-based Learning
- ★ Thematic Units
- ★ Social-Emotional Learning
- ★ Dual Language Support
- ★ Teacher Support
- ★ Kindergarten Readiness
- ★ Research-Based
- ★ Family Engagement

If you would like more information, visit their website at: https://www.frogstreet.com.

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PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

A young child going to school for the first time is faced with two frightening elements: one is separation from his or her parents and the other is unfamiliarity. In order to ease the transition from home to school it is important for you, as a parent, to encourage your child to become more independent. You can do this by building his or her own self-esteem. When he or she is confident in his or her own abilities, he or she will be less fearful of new situations.

I. PARENTS AS THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT TEACHERS

1. *Developing a healthy school "attitude"*: School is a happy place – to learn, grow, make new friends.

2. *Separation anxiety – sometimes it's worse for parents!*
   a. Keep a positive attitude
   b. Four and five year olds are keenly observant
   c. Do not linger
   d. Keep your child's trust – tell the truth
   e. Reassure him/her of your return at dismissal time
   f. Remember: Fear of separation does not last long!

II. BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM: SOME TIPS

1. ***Give your child attention***
   a. Read to him or her
   b. Talk with him or her
   c. Listen to him or her

2. ***Praise your child***
   a. For things well done
   b. For things done not so well
   c. We learn by our mistakes, too

3. ***Promote good health and safety habits***
   a. Young children take pride in their appearance and their ability to care for themselves
   b. Teach your child how to tie his or her shoes

4. ***Provide materials for cutting, coloring, and building***
   a. Familiarity encourages creativity
   b. Praise his/her creations
   c. Limit passive toys
   d. Monitor T.V. time/Video games/iPad/Computer

5. ***Plan family activities or "trips"***
   a. Take a "discovery" walk

b. Be observant of surroundings and landmarks
c. Point out shapes, sizes, colors
d. Notice changes in scenery or environment
e. Name animals and plants
f. Listen and identify familiar and unfamiliar sounds
g. Recall things you did or saw in sequence
h. Encourage questions and exploration

6. ***Teach your child about himself or herself***
a. His/Her full name, address, phone number

7. ***Provide all types of music and sing to/with your child***
a. Develop an appreciation for music and rhythm
b. Music is inspirational
c. Dance together to encourage self-confidence, not self consciousness

8. ***Be consistent in discipline and in love***

III. PRACTICE AT HOME

1. ***Listen when others are speaking***

2. ***Express ideas in sentences rather than in single words***
a. Read stories to your child, look at pictures in magazines of books together and encourage discussion
b. Visit the Cliffside Park Library – www.cliffsidepark.bccls.org

3. ***Practice courtesy by saying, "Thank you and Please"***

4. ***Overcome "baby talk"***

5. ***Develop independence***
a. Take responsibility for caring for his/her own things
b. Make simple decisions
c. Learn the proper directions to and from school in case the need arises.

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NOTES FROM THE TEACHERS

We hope that your child will find our school a warm and friendly place. Our pre-kindergarten program attempts to smooth the way from home to school by providing your child with a positive start so that future learning activities will be successful. To help your child have a happy productive beginning year, we offer a few suggestions:

1. It is natural for children to have fears about school. Discuss these fears in a positive, loving way to reassure your child.
2. Please discuss with us any concerns or questions you have regarding your child.
3. Teach your child to go to the lavatory independently and to remember to flush and wash hands when finished.
4. Teach your child how to use tissues and supply him/her with them when necessary. Be sure your child knows to turn and cover his/her mouth with their arm when he sneezes or coughs.
5. We encourage the children to do things on their own according to their abilities. Please take time to practice with your child getting clothes, coats, and shoes on and off and zippering, buttoning, and snapping clothing.
6. Clothing should be easy to manage. We have found the following difficult for pre-kindergarten children:
    a. Coats with small buttons or loops
    b. Denim jackets with metal buttons
    c. Suspenders and belts
    d. Metal buttons on overalls
    e. One piece outfits
    f. Very tight pants, shoes or boots
    g. Girl's shoes with two strap buckles
    h. Small carry bags (it is hard to get everything in the bag)
7. If your child continually brings home part of his/her snack, consider sending less.
8. Kindly peel, cut and wash snack items before sending them to school. If your child needs a spoon make sure to send one in.
9. Ask about your child's day and display his/her papers to help develop a positive self-image
10. Please send a complete change of clothes, including underpants and socks in a plastic bag clearly marked with your child's name. To allow for growth, these clothes will be returned in January and you will be asked to send in a new set for the rest of the year.

We welcome all parents to be partners with us in an exciting and rewarding year!

~School 5 Pre-K Teachers

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Some Thoughts to Consider as the New Year begins:

A PARENT'S PLEDGE

I know that children learn best when families and schools work together.

As a parent, I pledge to:

- ***Spend some time talking and listening to my child every day.***
- ***Praise my child for good work in school and good behavior at home.***
- ***Help my child develop self-confidence and self-discipline.***
- ***Talk with my child's teacher about how my child is doing in school.***
- ***Check their school folder daily.***
- ***Talk with my child about schoolwork.***
- ***Set a regular time and place to read to my child or reinforce skills from school. During this time, there will be NO Television, NO music, and NO Phone Calls.***
- ***Encourage reading! I will read to my child, and I will listen as my child reads or retells the story to me.***
- ***Make sure my child gets healthy meals, enough sleep and good exercise every day.***
- ***Love my child enough to say NO when necessary.***
- ***Help my child discover the joy that learning and thinking can bring at any age.***

Additional Resources for parents

http://njparentlink.nj.gov/

http://www.parents.com/

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Whose Child is This?

"Whose child is this?" I asked one day,
seeing a little one out at play.
"Mine," said the parent with a tender smile.
"Mine to keep a little while.
To bathe him and to comb his hair,
to tell him what he is to wear.
To prepare him that he may always be good
and each day do the things that he should."

"Whose child is this?" I asked again,
as the door opened and someone came in.
"Mine," said the teacher with the same tender smile.
"Mine, to keep just for a little while.
To teach him how to be gentle and kind;
To train and direct his dear little mind;
To help him live by every rule
And get the best he can from school."

"Whose child is this?" I asked once more,
Just as the little one entered the door.
"Ours," said the parent and teacher as they smiled.
And each took a hand of the little child.
"Ours to love and train together,
Ours this blessed task forever."