



POLAR CUBS PRESCHOOL
PARENT PROGRAM GUIDE

2026 - 2027

MARGARETTA LOCAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Polar Cubs Preschool Program Parent Guide is used with the Margaretta Elementary School Student Handbook. The Program Parent Guide and Student Handbook together identify rules and regulations of the Margaretta Local School District Polar Cubs Preschool Program.

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Approved August 18, 2026 by the Margaretta Local School District Board of Education

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President	Mrs. Angie Tucker
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Margaretta Local School District
Polar Cubs Preschool Program
5906 West Bogart Road
Castalia, OH 44824

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Polar Cubs Preschool Program is to provide a comfortable and enriching environment that respects each child's qualities and nurtures development toward his or her full potential.

PHILOSOPHY

Childhood is a series of firsts – first experiences, first friendships, first challenges, first hopes, first dreams, first surprises, and first successes – to be celebrated by everyone. We believe parents and families are their child's first and primary teachers who work with other educators as partners. Children need time to be children to explore their environment with curiosity and discovery. Play is children's work. Without play, there is no childhood.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- The children are members of a community that celebrates the uniqueness of each child – color, culture, religion, gender, age, and ability. Differing levels of ability, learning styles, and development are expected, appreciated, and used to design appropriate learning activities which are motivated by the child's interests and individual growth.
- Play encourages children to learn by active exploration through hands-on discovery. Learning is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with people and with materials and ideas that are real and relevant to their lives. These experiences match the child's developing abilities while also challenging the child's developing interests and understanding.
- A blending of children, families, and staff to create a nurturing environment for those we serve is a major focus throughout the program. The contributions of all are valued as we work together to give children time to fully celebrate childhood.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Margaretta Local School District Board of Education's adopted preschool curriculum consists of Scholastic PreK On My Way. Our program also supplements with other literacy based materials including Wilson Foundations and the Heggerty phonics program.

Scholastic PreK On My Way is a proven effective comprehensive early learning program that embraces children's natural curiosity and encourages them to explore and connect to the world around them. *PreK On My Way* is organized into eight engaging and child-friendly themes. As the year progresses, the themes in this early-learning program broaden, and children begin to understand more about the world around them. The flexible content allows prekindergarten teachers to incorporate their own favorite themes into the classroom.

Margaretta Local School District's Polar Cubs Preschool program strives to provide all the right steps to prepare your child for the next step in his or her education. Scholastic PreK On My Way is a proven system that is proven to show results in the children's language, literacy, and mathematics development. The result of the children's growth is based off of five research-based founding principles:

- Social-Emotional Development

- Integrated Learning
- Partnership With Families
- Language Development
- Responsive Instruction

Scholastic PreK On My Way's proven innovative system of learning is based on the "5 BIG Elements of Success":

- Big Experiences
- Meaningful Conversations
- The Best Children's Literature and Notification
- Innovative Technology
- Comprehensive Program

The materials and resources support our belief in how children learn and the importance and responsibility of staff and parents in their children's development. They provide early childhood staff with the knowledge and resources to create opportunities and environments for children to be active participants in their own learning.

We firmly believe that the Pre-K years are critical in your child's successful transition to a formal school environment. Our teachers' implementation of the Scholastic PreK On My Way system helps your child reach these goals while fostering a sense of independence and self-worth in this world.

As your child's most important teacher and to assist us in establishing independence and developmental growth in your child, we ask that you encourage your child to follow all classroom routines, activities, and expectations. Examples of this might include, requiring your child to enter the classroom and hang up his/her coat, remove applicable items from the bookbag and give it to the teacher, etc. When your child arrives home, he/she should be expected to complete the same or similar routine. By expecting your child to be as independent as possible, we can all do our part to prepare him/her for kindergarten and beyond.

PROGRAM DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

The Polar Cubs Preschool Program offers a developmental curriculum for children ages 3 to 5 years. A child will attend 4 days per week, Monday through Thursday. A child on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) attends according to his/her IEP.

The hours of the center-based program will vary during the school year as follows:

Tuesday September 1, 2026 – Thursday June 6, 2027 **7:40 am to 10:20 am or 11:40 pm to 2:20pm.** As we transition to the new building, preschool hours may have slight adjustments.. Home visits, playgroups, conferences, field trips, facilitating social service linkage for families, etc. are scheduled for Fridays, when allowable, per school district policy. The teacher will arrange periodic home visits at a convenient time. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled two times per year.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The program is guided by written policies of the Margareta Local School District Board of Education that are consistent with the Rules for the Education of Preschool Children with Disabilities (Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3301-31), Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools Serving Children with Disabilities (Chapter 3301-51), and Rules for Preschool Programs (Ohio Administrative Code 3301-37). Copies of the Rules and Standards are available in the building for your review. If you have any questions regarding these regulations, contact the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education at (614) 466-0224.

While group sizes vary during each half-day session, the preschool maintains a minimum ratio of two staff members per no more than twenty three year old children or twenty two four year old children. Any increase in this number is approved by ODE and affected families are notified in writing of the change. During any hybrid sessions, class size will be limited to no more than 12 students.

The most recent inspection reports are posted in the classroom beside the program license. A copy of the most recent or previous reports will be made available upon request.

OHIO EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND STATE TESTING

The preschool curriculum aligns with the Early Learning and Development Standards. The Early Learning and Development Standards identify essential concepts and skills for young children. These standards serve as a guide for expectations as children complete their preschool experiences.

The preschool program participates in Ohio mandated assessments of all enrolled preschoolers and assesses all enrolled children using formal and informal methods on an ongoing basis to inform instruction.

All children are assessed using the Early Learning Assessment twice per year to assess seven domains of growth and development. This assessment contains learning progressions to assess the skills, knowledge, and behaviors of children.

An additional assessment is administered to preschoolers to assess communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving and personal-social skills. This measure is called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Third Edition (ASQ:3). Results of the ASQ:3 will be shared with parents.

Children with disabilities are also provided a rating using the Childhood Outcomes Summary (COS). This assessment summary is used to give a rating for 3 federal student outcomes relating to positive social-emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. These ratings, when reviewed based upon child entry into and exit from preschool, provide a way to determine student outcomes after their preschool experience.

As required by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), the program ensures that all children receive a vision and hearing screening, as well as comprehensive developmental screening that is valid and reliable within 60 business days of entry into the program and annually thereafter. Necessary referral completed within 90 days of identification of need, and the results are

formally communicated with families. Referrals may include classroom monitoring and follow-up screening and/or referral to determine special education eligibility.

Results of these assessments are screenings are discussed with and shared with parents/guardians.

TRANSITION PLAN

Margaretta Local School District believes communication and knowledge are crucial components in successful transitions for children, parents, and staff. These transitions include, but are not limited to, preschool to kindergarten/school-age programs, home, and out-of-home care programs to community programs, within programs to new classrooms, and 0-2 programs to preschool.

Activities provided to support children and their parents will include, at a minimum opportunities for parents and children to visit potential preschool, kindergarten, or other school-age classrooms; open house visits prior to the start of school; spending time in another classroom in the same program prior to a formal transition; written information regarding registration and screening dates; choosing a cubby or name symbol to decorate and identify their space; classroom activities such as books and videos relating to starting preschool or school; and opportunities for receiving preschool or kindergarten teachers to visit toddler or preschool classrooms. Each child transitioning from one program to another shall have a written transition plan in place which will involve input from parents, teachers, and other members of a child's team as appropriate. Responsibilities for transition activities will be delineated on the written plan.

Information about registration and screening will also be shared with the community through the use of media such as press releases and flyers. Sending and receiving staff shall communicate to determine the student information that shall be shared after receipt of any required parental consent.

The program ensures that children who are age-eligible are enrolled in kindergarten upon leaving the early childhood program unless another placement has been determined based on parental choice. Due to an extensive waiting list for typically developing students entering the preschool program, typical students may attend the Margaretta preschool program for a maximum of two years. Exceptions to the two year maximum number of years must be approved by the Superintendent based upon extraordinary circumstances

The above activities will assist children, parents, and staff in achieving a seamless transition as young children move from one program to the next.

A child's team, including the parents, meets to complete a transition planning form when a planned transition is coming (to another classroom, site, program) to detail the activities that will be completed in order to assist and support the child and family in the next environment as well as the party responsible for completion. The completed form is signed, dated by all applicable team members present, and copies made for all team members.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Margareta Local School District that educational activities, employment practices, programs, and services are offered without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, handicap, age, place of residence, or social or economic background.

PARENT COMPLAINTS

Resolving parent questions and complaints in a timely manner is a priority for our preschool staff. Please let us know when you have an issue. To efficiently resolve complaints, parents should take the following steps:

- First, discuss the concern or complaint with the preschool staff.
- If you have not received a satisfactory response from the preschool staff, schedule a meeting with the Margareta Elementary Principal and/or Special Education Director.
- Continuing concerns can be brought to the Margareta Local Schools Superintendent for consideration.
- Ohio Department of Education offers a preschool Ombudsman service for all preschool issues. The Ombudsman can be reached at 614-466-0224.

SUPPLY FEE

A one-time supply fee of \$50.00 will be due by the first day of attendance. This fee is required of all students. For students enrolling later in the year, this fee will be prorated.

TUITION

Tuition charges will be as follows:

- 4 half days per week of Traditional Instruction = \$220.00 each month
- Hybrid/Remote Instruction = \$110 each month

Reduced tuition rates may be available for families who have financial difficulties. The adjusted tuition rate is based on those families that complete a Verification of Income form and meet the Federal Free/Reduced Lunch Program guidelines. Verification of current household employment and salary is needed in order to determine the preschool tuition for your child. Tuition adjustments for families that qualify will be as follows:

- 4 half days per week for those that qualify for free lunch = \$55.00 each month
- 4 half days per week for those that qualify for reduced lunch = \$110.00 each month
- Hybrid/Remote Instruction = \$30.00 each month for free lunch, \$55.00 for reduced lunch

Note: Children on an IEP do not pay tuition.

BILLING PROCEDURES

Payment must be received by the 20th of each month for the upcoming month. Payments may be mailed or delivered to the Margaretta Local School District Board of Education.

Please mail or deliver payments to:

Margaretta Local Schools Board of Education
Attn: Preschool Tuition
305 South Washington St.
Castalia, OH 44824

Please do NOT give tuition payments to your child's teacher.

Payments not received by the 20th of each month could result in your child's enrollment being terminated and the next child on the waiting list could be enrolled in his/her place.

Invoices are mailed at the beginning of each month to charge for the upcoming month. For example, billing will be sent in the first week of August for the months of August/September. Your child will not be permitted to attend until the supply fee and the August/September fee has been paid.

The second monthly payment must be received by September 20th, and so on. Please pay the exact amount on the invoice.

Tuition is charged monthly whether or not the student is present. There will be no credit given for sick, vacation or calamity days. Days missed may not be made up due to daily attendance limits imposed by licensing rules.

ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

Enrollment includes students from Margaretta Local Schools who meet the eligibility requirements for a preschooler with disabilities. Eligibility is determined based on the Rules for the Education of Preschool Children with Disabilities (Chapter 3301.31).

Enrollment for children not meeting the eligibility criteria is available to residents of the Margaretta Local School District. Parents must complete an application and submit the \$50 supply fee for enrollment. Applications are dated as they are received and children are accepted by age* and date of application. In the event that the program has reached its capacity, your child's name will be placed on a waiting list until such time there is an opening in the program.

**Tuition students need to be age 3 or 4 by August 20*

We will not enroll any tuition students after December 31. Any exceptions must be approved by the Director of Special Education or Preschool Supervisor.

The enrollment packet and Emergency Medical Authorization must be completed before your child may begin attending the preschool. The Child's Medical Statement must be completed within 30 days of enrollment and completed by a physician, physician's assistant, clinical nurse

specialist, or certified nurse. A new physical form is required for returning students every 13 months from the date of the most recent examination.

If you need to withdraw your tuition student, please call the Margareta Board of Education Office at 419-684-5322 to officially withdraw your child from the Polar Cubs Preschool Program. A records request should be send to Margareta Elementary School from any new program of enrollment and records can then be transferred. Records will not be transferred without parent permission. **If we do not receive a call, you will be charged for each month the office is not notified.**

If you need to withdraw your IEP student, please contact the Director of Special Education at 419-684-5351 to withdraw your child from the Polar Cubs Preschool Program. If transferring to another district, please provide the new district's contact information so that records can be transferred.

Tuition Students – In the event that the program has reached its capacity, your child's name will be placed on a waiting list or until such time there is an opening for your child in the program.

MISSING CHILDREN

The following information will be required for any new student enrolling in the Margareta Local Schools Polar Cubs Preschool program:

- Academic records/report card from the school most recently attended
- Immunization records
- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Number
- Certified copy of a court-ordered decree allocating parental rights and responsibility for the care of the child and identifying a residential parent and legal custodian of the child (if appropriate)
- Name, address, and telephone number of the school most recently attended
- The address and telephone number of the new residence within the service district

Any child determined to be missing as designated by the Missing Children's Act will be reported immediately to the Missing Children's Clearing House and the proper law enforcement agency.

PROGRAM CALENDAR AND WEATHER CLOSINGS

Polar Cubs Preschool follows the same academic calendar as Margareta Elementary School.

When inclement weather forces the DELAY or CLOSING of our program, an announcement will identify **Margareta Local School District**. The following radio and television stations broadcast the delay or closing:

WLEC/WCPZ	Sandusky	1450 AM	102.7 FM
WTOL CHANNEL 11		Toledo	
WTVG CHANNEL 13		Toledo	

In the event that Margareta Schools close, dismiss early, or experience a delay in opening time due to weather or other emergencies, you will receive a "One Call". This is an automated

notification system and a primary phone number will be used as obtained from the annual Emergency Medical Authorization Form. On our school website you also have the ability to add additional phone numbers for notification. If you miss a phone call, you can retrieve the message by calling 1-877-698-3261 and pressing option #1.

During calamity days, teachers may continue to provide work for your child through the use of Google Classroom activities. Please check your child's email account for further information on calamity days.

If Margarettta Local School District announces a two-hour delay, the AM session of preschool will be CLOSED. The PM session of preschool will remain open unless Margarettta Local Schools announces a closure.

At times, it may become necessary to close the school during the day due to weather conditions, such as snow, fog, flooding, etc. We will attempt to contact all parents/guardians in this situation. It is not always possible to get in touch with everyone, so we are asking that you please listen to the above stations for information regarding times of closing.

ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Parents who transport their children to the Polar Cubs Preschool for the morning session are asked to drop off the children at the Maple Avenue Entrance of Margarettta Elementary School between 7:40am and 8:00 a.m. At the end of the morning session, parents may pick up their child at the Bogart Road Entrance no later than 10:40 am. For the afternoon session, parents are asked to drop off the children at the Bogart Road Entrance of Margarettta Elementary School between 12:00pm and 12:10pm. At the end of the afternoon session, parents may pick up their child at the Maple Avenue Entrance no later than 3:00 pm.

Please avoid late arrivals and pick ups so that staff may attend to their additional responsibilities.

If your child arrives or departs at other than the regularly scheduled time, the adult accompanying the child must report and sign in/out at the school office at the Maple Avenue entrance.

If your child will not be attending on a regularly scheduled day, please notify Margarettta Elementary School by calling 419-684-5357. When your child is absent, please send a note on the day of his/her return.

A CHILD WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON! A note written and signed by the parent/guardian must be sent to the Preschool Teacher if someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up the child.

Parents/Guardians are asked annually to provide written approval of having their name, phone number, and child's name on any group/program roster. This roster is not furnished to any person other than parents/guardians.

DAILY PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The Polar Cubs Preschool Program is based on the open learning center concept. The daily schedule is set up to allow ample time for the children to participate in the various learning centers, be a part of a group of children working together, explore the outdoors and prepare and consume a daily snack.

Learning Center Time

Children are free to choose a learning center activity such as role-playing in the dramatic play center, experimenting in the science and nature center, working on puzzles in the manipulative center, painting in the creative art center, building in the block center, or experimenting with movement in the gross motor center.

The teacher/assistant use this time to work with individual children on skill development or with small groups of children on a particular activity. Children are offered new challenges, asked thought-provoking questions, and encouraged to try new things.

Small Group Time

Children join their teacher for a story time that includes movement and/or musical activities that promote social skill development, enjoyment, and fine and large motor development. The teacher also uses this time to present activities that are developmentally appropriate for the children in the group. These activities evolve around themes for the week and might include math concepts, language activities, learning about ourselves, etc.

Outdoor Play Time

Outdoor activity is planned daily so children can develop large muscle skills, learn about outdoor environments, and express themselves freely and loudly. Preschool staff monitors weather conditions at the outdoor playground. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather conditions. Outdoor play is restricted if wind chill is too low or if the play area is wet. If you feel your child is too ill to participate in the outdoor playtime then possibly he/she should not be in attendance. A student restricted from outdoor play will require a physician's note.

Snack Time

An important part of the children's day is snack time, not only for their eating enjoyment, but also because nutrition affects their mental functioning and physical well-being.

The daily snack will be provided by the school district daily. Snacks are selected in consideration of the children's nutritional needs and dental health.

No child is forced to prepare or consume any snack. Families will be asked to send in snacks on a scheduled basis during the school year. If your child has special dietary needs or food allergies, please notify us in writing.

SNACK GUIDELINES

According to our licensing rules issued by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Revised Code, preschool snacks must have items representing at least two of the main food groups: meat/meat equivalent, bread/bread alternative, milk, and fruit/vegetable.

Some suggestions for a nutritious snack are:

- cream cheese or cheese cubes with crackers
- apples, celery, or bananas
- popcorn and orange slices or pineapple chunks or grapes (must be halved)
- carrot sticks, celery, cauliflower, broccoli with dip
- other fruits
- fruit juices – 100% real fruit juice
- milk

Suggestions for foods with Vitamin C and A follow:

Vitamin C

Vitamin C has several important functions in the body, such as helping to form bones and teeth and healthy skin and tissue. Vitamin C also plays a significant role in wound healing and maintaining strong blood vessels.

Since our bodies do not make Vitamin C, we must eat foods, which provide us with it. It is a good idea to eat foods with Vitamin C every day. (*indicates a very good source)

Important food sources of Vitamin C:

asparagus	*greens (collards, kale, *raspberries	
avocado	beet, mustard, turnip)	*spinach
*broccoli	lemon or lemon juice	squash
*brussel sprouts	lima beans	*strawberries
*cabbage, raw	mangos	*tomato or tomato juice
*cantaloupe	*orange or orange juice	turnips
*cauliflower	*papaya	*Vitamin C fortified cereal
*grapefruit	peas	*pineapple
*green pepper	*potatoes	*grapefruit juice

Vitamin A

Vitamin A is important for normal growth, healthy skin and tissues, and proper bone development. Vitamin A is also important for good vision, especially in dim light or darkness. Since our bodies store Vitamin A, including a good source of this vitamin at least every other day will insure an adequate intake. (*indicates a very good source)

Important food sources of Vitamin A:

*kidney beans	*apricots	*mangos
*liver	asparagus	nectarines
cheese	*broccoli	papayas
*enriched corn grits	*cantaloupe	prunes
egg	*carrots	*pumpkin
fortified butter/margarine	*greens (beet, chard,	*spinach

fortified milk
*Vitamin A fortified cereal
ice cream

collard, dandelion,
kale, mustard, turnip)
tomatoes or tomato juice

cabbage (bok choy)
*sweet potato
*winter squash

CLOTHING

When selecting your child's clothing, please keep in mind that many of the daily classroom activities involve work with paints, clay, sand, water, food, etc. Staff is not responsible for clothing that becomes stained or extremely soiled.

Staff members encourage children to help themselves whenever they can. This gives them a sense of accomplishment and control over their environment. It would be helpful if parents would select coats, pants, sweaters, Velcro closure shoes, boots, etc. that the children can manipulate themselves. For children who are working on toilet training, easy clothing is a must. Clothes that can easily be pulled off/on such as sweatpants are ideal for toilet training purposes. Clothes with tight fasteners such as jeans and overalls or other clothing items that are hard to manipulate such as belts are not suitable for children learning to use the toilet. Please buy mittens for your children as they are easier for little hands than gloves.

ALL CLOTHING MUST BE LABELED! Many times children do not recognize their own belongings.

By the first day of school, it will be necessary for parents to send an extra pair of underpants, socks, pants, shirt, slippers, or shoes for your child. If your child's clothing becomes extremely soiled or wet, we will change the child into the extra set of clothing and the wet or soiled clothes will be sent home in a bag. Please wash and return the extra set of clothes to the class as soon as possible.

Diapers – If your child is not yet toilet trained, please send diapers and wet wipes with his/her name marked on the bag and container. **(Only pull-ups with tabs will be accepted.)**

Shoes – Please do not send your child with backless shoes.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Every child's birthday is a big event at the preschool. Even birthdays that fall in the summer or during breaks will be celebrated. Parents are welcome to come and celebrate the child's birthday with us. You are welcome to send a nutritious snack for a birthday treat. Instead of food, feel free to send in birthday stickers, pencils, or non-edible items for children if you choose. Please notify the teacher in advance if you plan to do this.

TOYS, BOOKS, GAMES, BLANKETS, OR OTHER POSSESSIONS BROUGHT FROM HOME

If your child is having difficulty making the transition from home to the class, it may be helpful to bring a favorite toy from home. It is very easy to lose a child's toy in a group setting. So once your child has adjusted, he/she will be encouraged to leave the item in his/her locker/bookbag.

On special occasions, toys from home will be encouraged in order to promote a certain theme. At these times, a note will be sent home beforehand. Please do not send weapon toys to the preschool.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips that enrich the preschool curriculum may be organized occasionally. Children will be transported in approved child-restraint systems as required by law. **PARENTAL PERMISSION IS REQUIRED FOR INDIVIDUAL FIELD TRIP PARTICIPATION.** Parents are welcome to join in the outing.

SAFETY OF CHILDREN

We are very concerned about the safety of the children attending the Polar Cubs Preschool program. The following safety procedures are in effect at all times:

- No child is left alone or unsupervised at any time.
- A telephone is located in the classroom and is available for use in the event of an emergency.
- Fire drills are held in conjunction with the elementary schedule and the school staff and children practice threatening weather drills. A record of these drills is kept in the school's office.
- Fire emergency and weather alert plans, including diagrams showing evacuation routes, are posted in the classrooms.
- The use of spray aerosols is prohibited when children are in attendance.
- If a child has a serious accident or becomes injured while at the preschool, a staff member will administer first aid while another school staff member contacts the local rescue squad and the child's parents. Remaining staff members will care for the other children. If the parents cannot be reached, only the people listed as emergency contacts on the child's Emergency Medical Authorization form will be notified. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, if necessary.
- In the event of a non-serious accident (superficial cuts, scrapes, bruises), staff will administer first aid if necessary.
- When an accident or injury occurs, staff will complete the injury report form provided by the Margareta Local School District. A copy of this form will be given to the parent and a copy will remain on file at the school for at least one year. The program shall maintain a log of injury reports.
- In accordance with Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, all Margareta Local School District staff are required to report any suspicions of child Abuse or Neglect to the Erie County Department of Human Services. At least one preschool staff member has completed an approved course in recognizing signs of child abuse and neglect.
- All staff members are aware of the safety rules for both indoor and outdoor activities and the class and playground areas are surveyed continuously for possible safety hazards.
- At least one (1) preschool staff member is trained in first aid, infant and child CPR, and recognition of communicable diseases. A first aid kit is always on site.
- Preschool staff members shall have a medical statement as required upon employment/assignment to preschool and every three (3) years thereafter.
- Preschool staff members, non-teaching staff, and volunteers will follow all applicable licensure and rule requirements.

- Preschool staff members shall have three (3) references that have been checked prior to employment and on file. References may be written or received through documented phone discussion.
- Preschool teachers and other preschool staff, as appropriate, shall be aware of pertinent child background information to assure safety and awareness of special needs.

PARENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

According to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Preschool Licensing Rules, parents/guardians of children enrolled in the class have unlimited access to the class during class hours for the purposes of evaluating the care provided by staff, observing the program in operation, or evaluating the premises. Please report to the school office, sign in and receive a visitor's badge before going to your child's classroom/play area.

While parents can observe at any time, they are not permitted to hinder the learning process.

Parents are also welcome to participate in the daily program if scheduled in advance. Please notify your child's teacher prior to the day you want to volunteer. Volunteers are often asked to read stories, assist in the art center, or play games with the children. Any parent wishing to volunteer must have a BCI/FBI check on file. BCI/FBI checks should be filed with the school office. Payment of BCI and FBI background checks will be paid at the volunteer's expense.

If you need assistance with a problem or have a complaint related to the class or its program, you are welcome to take your concerns to your child's teacher, Margaretta Elementary School Principal or the Director of Special Education. Staff members are always open to suggestions for improving the program.

A calendar is sent home every month. The calendar highlights themes, snacks, special events, and important dates. Information helpful to parents will be sent home periodically. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please let us know!

Parent meetings, information regarding local/regional workshops, book fairs, parties, and other special events may also be provided for parents. Parents are encouraged to make suggestions for meetings/workshops, daily schedule, curricular topics and activities. Parents are also encouraged to share any special appropriate talents with the students (play an instrument, art skills, etc.).

A formal progress report on each child is sent home at least twice per school year. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring. Informal and formal parent-teacher conferences are held as needed. Parents may request a conference with any staff member at any time.

Play dates may also be scheduled by your child's teacher. The students, their parents (or responsible adults if parents are not available), and staff meet at a community site (example – farm, bowling, pizza, etc.) for learning and social activities.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The goal of discipline is to help each child build his/her own self-control, and ultimately, direct his/her own behavior. Staff members recognize the important role self-esteem plays in the

process and strive to enhance each child's feelings of self-worth. A well-planned and supervised classroom will prevent many behavior problems. Clear and responsible rules are established for each child's safety and rights. These rules are discussed and reviewed periodically with all children and shared with parents.

Problem-solving techniques are encouraged in the classroom during which time the staff often acts as facilitators, helping young children express feelings and generate solutions as well as redirecting a child's interest/frustrations to another activity. These problem-solving techniques are also used if a preschool child exhibits any act of bullying. Additional guidance will be provided through separating the child from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation and praising the child for appropriate behavior.

Physical punishment and verbal abuse will not be used. Discipline will not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, sleep or for toileting accidents.

As needed, a behavior plan will be developed with parental input if traditional classroom management and early childhood discipline techniques are not adequate to meet a child's needs.

Based on ODE Preschool Licensing Rules and Margaretta Local School District policies, staff members follow these discipline guidelines:

- Preschool staff member(s) in charge of child(ren) are responsible for discipline. Policies are in effect for all staff in all preschool areas, including playground, field trips, or other school-sponsored activities.
- All preschool staff members shall be informed of and receive a copy of the Margaretta Local School District's discipline policies upon employment and annually in the handbook.
- The preschool staff's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:
 - There shall be no cruel, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments or any punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
 - No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
 - No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
 - No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a small cubicle.
 - No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself/herself or his/her family, or other verbal abuse.

- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, sleep or for toileting accidents.
- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well ventilated space.
- Staff shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

Margaretta Local School District's preschool staff members receive on-going training in Crisis Prevention Institute's Non-Violent Crisis Intervention© & Positive Behavior Intervention Supports to ensure the care, welfare, safety, and security of all individuals on the premises.

RELEASE OF NAMES, PICTURES, AND ACHIEVEMENTS

On occasion, student names, pictures, and achievements may be published in newspapers, programs, school websites, and other forms of publications. Permission forms permitting the release of this information must be returned to the appropriate staff member.

When you are taking pictures or video of your child at school, be aware that not all parents/guardians have granted permission for the release of their child's image. Please be sensitive to the rights and expectation of privacy of your child's classmates when displaying the images on social networking sites and other public venues.

RECORDING – VIDEO/AUDIO

In order to protect the privacy rights of students and staff, electronic video and/or audio recordings of Margaretta Local School District activities is not permitted unless permission has been granted by the parent. Said permission will be in the form of a signed authorized statement as included in your child's enrollment packet. Upon signed permission from a parent, Margaretta Local Schools has permission to publish in print, electronic, or video format the likeness or image of your child. This may be published in formats such as activity programs, yearbooks, newspapers, or other school-related publications, websites, and video announcements.

FERPA – CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the Margaretta Local School District receives a request for access.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
 - Margaretta Local School District may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without consent, unless the parent has submitted a written refusal by the end of the second full week of school.
 - Directory information is defined by Margaretta Local School District as the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, and dates of attendance.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Margaretta Local School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

POTTY CHAIR POLICY

Potty-chairs in the program will not be located in areas used for food preparation or serving or in areas not normally used for diaper changing or toileting. Potty-chairs will be emptied, cleaned, disinfected, and rinsed with water after each use. The rinsing solution will be disposed of into a toilet, not a sink. Disposable cloths used for cleaning potty-chairs will be used once and disposed of in a plastic-lined covered receptacle. Reusable cloths will be stored in an appropriate germicidal solution and held for laundering for no longer than one day.

Toilet Training – We will work cooperatively with the parent to accomplish this, as consistency between home and school is critical for a child's success. Staff members prefer that you keep your "trainee" in diapers or old-fashioned training pants to assist in accomplishing this task.

MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

The preschool staff is trained and certified in First Aid and in recognizing the signs and symptoms of communicable diseases. The "Child Day Care Center Communicable Disease Chart" is posted to help staff in recognizing illnesses. Parents are welcome to view this chart at any time.

Staff is very conscientious about the importance of hand washing and disinfecting procedures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. The children are also reminded to wash their hands on a regular basis.

As children arrive, a staff member greets and observes each child for possible signs and symptoms of illness. If your child is exhibiting any of the symptoms listed below, you will be asked to take the child home.

The Margareta Local School District will be compliant with rules set forth by the County Health Department, Ohio Department of Health and Center for Disease Control with regards to COVID guidelines. Individuals with a COVID diagnosis will be reported to the local health department as required.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Any one of the following symptoms is cause for immediate dismissal:

- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period)
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Conjunctivitis ("pink eye")
- Temperature of 100° F (or more) taken under the arm, or temperature of 101° F (or more) taken with an ear thermometer, especially in combination with any other signs of illness
- Untreated infected skin patch(es)
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Stiff neck
- Unusual spots or rash
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing
- Vomiting
- Evidence of lice, lice nits (eggs), scabies, or other parasitic infestation. *Upon occasion, students may be found to have head lice. Because of this condition, students must be excluded from school until corrective action is taken by the home. Your child will be readmitted to school after having head lice if she/he is nit-free as determined after an examination by the school nurse. There will be no exceptions to this procedure.
- Evidence of COVID symptoms

REMOVAL OF SICK CHILD

If your child becomes ill while at school and exhibits any of the symptoms listed in the previous section, he/she will be cared for by a staff member in an area not being used by other children. You will be contacted immediately to come and pick up your child. If you cannot be reached, only the people listed as emergency contacts on your child's Emergency Medical Authorization form will be notified and asked to come to pick up your child. Your child will not be readmitted until symptoms are no longer present. In some cases of illness, a written note from your child's physician may be required.

Children must be free from diarrhea and fever for 72 hours before they will be readmitted to school. After any COVID diagnosis, the district will follow health department recommendations for return to school.

A child with minor cold symptoms or a child in the final stages of recovery from an illness may attend if the child has seen a physician and has been diagnosed as non-contagious and/or is on

medication. The child shall be carefully observed for signs and symptoms of a worsening condition. Should any of the symptoms listed occur, you will be notified immediately and be asked to pick up your child.

In the event that your child is exposed to another with a communicable disease, you will be notified in writing that he/she has been exposed to a contagious disease and informed so that you are aware of the symptoms.

The preschool staff will not administer any medication to children enrolled without the required Physician's Request for the Administration of Medication in School form completed by your physician and on file at Margaretta Elementary School.

When a staff member is ill, the staff member will not be in attendance and a qualified substitute will be called to assume the responsibilities of that person.

MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL

The administration of prescribed medication and/or medically prescribed treatments to a student during school hours will be permitted only when failure to do so would jeopardize the health of the student, or the student would not be able to attend school if the medication or treatment were not made available during school hours. Administration of over-the-counter medications will follow the same requirements and policies as prescription medication.

Before any medication or treatment may be administered to any student during school hours, a written authorization from the child's physician and parent is required on the Margaretta Local School District adopted form. This form shall be kept on file in the student's cumulative records.

Only medication in its original prescription bottle, labeled with the date of prescription, student's name, and exact dosage will be administered. Medication must be transported to the school by the parents or by giving it to the bus driver and delivered to the school's main office or nurse's office, where it will be stored in a locked area. **Medication cannot be transported in the child's bookbag.**

A parent/guardian wishing to discontinue the administration of medication at school must send a signed note to the office/nurse requesting the medication be stopped.

MEDICAID SCHOOL PROGRAM BILLING STATEMENT

The Margaretta Local School District participates in the Medicaid School Program (MSP) or a similar program. MSP is a federally funded reimbursement program. The Margaretta Local School District uses a third party billing agency to submit MSP claims. This agency is in compliance with all federal privacy laws including the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA) established in 1996.

The following is a list of personally identifiable information shared with the billing agency: student's name, date of birth, social security number, district of residence, school of attendance, and professional services documentation. Professional services include screenings and assessments to determine eligibility for and the provision of services such as speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, nursing, counseling, case management and psychological evaluations.

It is the parents'/guardians' right to deny access to personally identifiable information or to revoke the use of it for purposes of MSP billing. Services will be provided regardless of disclosure of personally identifiable information. Copies of the billing agency's privacy policy are available upon request. Please contact the Margareta Local School District Treasurer's office for more information.

This handbook is not intended to be all encompassing. It is not a contractual relationship and may be revised and/or updated as necessary. School officials are responsible for interpreting the handbook. If a specific situation is not addressed, the school will make decisions based upon professional discretion, applicable board policies, state and federal law and regulations in a manner consistent with the best interests of the school