



Parents' Guide to

Kindergarten

Greenbriar · Meadowbrook · Westmoor

Kindergarten Philosophy Statement

We believe that children learn best in an environment where:

- time is dedicated to explore, discover, create, socialize, and learn from one another through meaningful and engaging hands-on, curriculum-based experiences
- family members are active partners in children's learning
- experiential learning opportunities guided by students' ideas and interests are integrated into the kindergarten curriculum
- thoughtful and meaningful choice is valued and leads to inquiry, depth and breadth of learning
- purposeful learning opportunities are tailored to students' strengths and needs
- learning fosters independence, perseverance, and collaboration

DISTRICT 28

**EMPOWER
EVERY
LEARNER**

WELCOME

On behalf of our School Board and the entire staff of District 28, I'd like to welcome you and your child to kindergarten, an exciting year of learning and growing.

In our district, we value the partnership between home and school. Your support is key to our effectiveness with each child. We welcome your participation and involvement in all aspects of your child's education. District 28 began offering full-day kindergarten in 2016-17 school year. Today, 99 percent of students are enrolled in the full-day program. Parents by law have the option to enroll in a half-day program, and we always honor parents' wishes.

This Kindergarten Guide is designed to provide you with information about our practices and routines and to help answer many questions you might have about kindergarten and the school system as well as the full-day program. If you have any questions or would like additional information, the kindergarten teachers or your school principal are always available.

We are looking forward to the 2021-22 school year and we trust that your child will find his or her experience in kindergarten to be a rewarding one!

Sincerely,



Larry A. Hewitt, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



THE BASICS

Before and After School Care

KidCare is a before- and after-school program offered by District 28 for students in kindergarten through 5th grade. KidCare is operated and staffed by a District 28 director. The service is located in each of our elementary school buildings. Fees are determined by the number of days and time your child is enrolled in the program. The application is available online in May. Information about the program is available on our website under "Parents."

Buses

The kindergarten students ride the same bus as the first- through fifth-grade students. Families wishing to access the district's school bus service must sign up during spring online registration. Students will be provided with a bus pass, which should be carried at all times.

School Fees

Fees for kindergarten are the same as curriculum fees for grades 1-5. Parents will be required to enroll during online spring registration. In order to complete enrollment, fees must be paid.

FULL-DAY FAQ

Do all children have access to full-day kindergarten?

Yes, all children eligible for kindergarten have the option to enroll in the full-day program. Currently, 99 percent of kindergarten students participate in the full day.

What is the advantage of a full-day program over a half-day program?

The full-day program allows teachers the time to encompass whole child in exploration and discovery learning, as well as social-emotional development. This is accomplished by offering students choice time to explore topics that interest them through books, projects, and play-based learning. It allows the teacher time to extend learning, from concepts introduced as part of the core academics in the morning, into the afternoon. School hours are 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



Will students who are enrolled in half-day kindergarten be at a disadvantage when entering first grade?

The core curriculum is taught mainly during the morning when all students are present. The afternoon will be used to reinforce and expand upon those concepts. Also, physical education, music, art and library time will take place in the afternoon. These components were not part of the original half-day kindergarten program.

What is discovery learning?

Purposeful play provides opportunities for students to enrich their understanding of the world. Our full-day kindergarten program was developed to provide our youngest learners with time set aside each day for creative exploration. We have a classroom environment where children experience opportunities that evoke thinking (wondering), discovering (new learning), and feeling. This environment includes different areas where children explore with blocks, science table, sand table, painting easels, as well as puzzles, puppets and games to name a few. Each kindergarten classroom is supplied with one-to-one iPads that are used throughout the day to extend, engage, and enhance learning.

Are there certain kids who just aren't ready for a full-day program?

Typically, most 5- and 6-year-olds can handle a full day of school. At the beginning of the year, students may take some time to adjust, but it's amazing how fast they adapt. The program is designed to be developmentally appropriate, such that children at the end of the day are not emotionally and psychologically drained. Purposeful play is healthy and involves a great deal of student choice.



HEALTH INFORMATION

The school health program is under the supervision of the Student Services Department. A full-time school nurse is located at each building.

Required Exams for Kindergarten

According to state law, each child must have a physical examination and the required immunizations, a dental and a vision exam before entering school. Forms must be filled out by the medical professional and returned to the school nurse. The forms are included in the registration packet and posted on our website under "For Families/Student Health Forms"

When to Keep Your Child Home

Please notify the school nurse or administrative assistant if your child has a communicable disease such as strep throat or chicken pox. If your child has an undiagnosed rash, consult with your physician before sending your child to school. Call the school if you suspect pediculosis (head lice). Any health problem that might affect your child's work should be communicated to the teacher and the school nurse.

Please keep your child at home with a fever or at the onset of an upper respiratory infection. If your child has had a fever, keep them home until he/she is fever-free for 24 hours without the use of a fever reducing agent. Similar health and safety measures should be applied if your child has vomited.

To prevent the spread of infections, please teach your child to cough or sneeze into the inside of his or her elbow and then wash his/her hands after.

Medical Care at School

All medication administered at school requires written parent permission and a doctor's note. This includes over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol and Advil. The doctor's order may be faxed or e-mailed to the school nurse.

If an accident should occur at school, first aid is given as soon as possible. The phone number you provided at registration will be used to contact you in the case of serious accidents, starting with your home phone or cell phone number. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts you provided at registration who are authorized to pick up your child during the day in case of illness. The emergency contact will be responsible in your absence.

Please report to the school immediately any changes in your telephone numbers, your child's physician's telephone number and the contacts you provided online at registration.



SCHOOL DAYS

A Kindergarten Day

- Literacy-based activities
- Science/social studies
- Snack time & recess
- Math
- Lunch and recess
- Discovery learning
- Physical education
- PM snack time
- Specials AM or PM: art twice a week; music twice a week, library once a week.

Kindergarten Schedule

The school hours for full-day kindergarten are 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

The full-day program allows teachers time to encompass the whole child in exploration and discovery learning, as well as social-emotional development.

This is accomplished by offering students choice time to explore topics that interest them through books, projects and play-based learning. It allows the teacher time to extend learning from concepts introduced as part of the core academics in the morning into the afternoon.

We strive to keep class sizes the lowest possible in kindergarten, with typical classes no larger than 20 students. Each kindergarten teacher is supported with a full-time instructional assistant.





GENERAL GUIDELINES

Student Services

Our schools make an effort to meet each child's individual and unique needs. Instructional growth is frequently monitored through targeted assessments and staff collaboration to determine if any children are in need of support or challenge to enhance their educational experience. District 28 affords its students a variety of services including, but not limited to: reading intervention, math intervention, speech-language services, social work support, and English Learner support. If you have any questions about your child's development or progress in school, first talk to his or her teacher and the school principal. You can review the student services offered in District 28 on our website, northbrook28.net/programs. Click on the Student Services page.

Clothing

Your child should wear casual clothing, so that he or she is ready to work with art materials such as clay, paints, and paste, as well as to participate in creative activities on the floor. Our goal is to promote each child's independence in dressing.

1. Buttons and buttonholes should be large enough to be fastened easily.
2. Boots should be purchased large enough so that your child can put them on without help.
3. Label clothing plainly. *
4. Please send an extra set of clothing, which will be kept in your child's cubby in case of necessity.
5. Dress your child for outdoor recess. She/he will be going outside for recess throughout the winter and in the snow. Snow pants and boots must be worn in order for students to play in the snow. Students go out for recess in winter when temperatures are 10° or above.

* Label anything your child brings to school to share with others, such as books or toys

Hot Lunch

The elementary schools do not provide hot lunch, but PTO organizes weekly special hot lunches. Watch for information from the school PTO on how to sign up.



Safety

For your child's safety, it is desirable that he or she knows the following when entering school:

- Full name, address, and telephone number.
- The correct way to cross the street: Cross only at corners, cross with the crossing guard, look both ways before crossing & know the meaning of the traffic lights. Crossing Guards are managed by the Northbrook Police Department. They are located on the following corners:

Meadowbrook: Waukegan/Walters & Church/Walters

Westmoor: Cherry/Crestwood & Walters/Wescott

Greenbriar: Cherry/Meadow, Cherry/Greenbriar, Walters/Greenbriar & Cedar/Center

If your child is not following the customary dismissal procedure on any particular day, please send a note to the teacher explaining the change.

Stay connected

If your contact information, including cell phone numbers or email address, changes during the school year, please contact the school administrative assistant to update your information. The same is true for your emergency contacts. Your contact information is used to send weekly e-news from the school principal, periodic emails from the district office, registration and parent/teacher conference information, and any emergency closing alerts. Your cell phone number is automatically connected with our text notification system. You can opt-out of texting by replying STOP to a text message you receive. Emergencies, such as school closures, will still be sent via text and email.

You can also see day-to-day events and activities at your school by following your school and District 28 on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. The PTO also offers a mobile app that includes the school student directory, calendar and link to PTO events and fundraisers.

Kindergarten Answers

Online Registration and Fees

Parents will receive an email in April with instructions on how to access online registration. Online registration is required to enroll each student in class. Registration fees for 2021-22 are due by May 14. Late fees will apply to registrations received after May 14.

Important Back-to-School Events

Classroom teacher assignments are emailed to families in early August. Everyone receives the email on the same day. Please watch for communications from your school for dates and details on back-to-school events.

- **Meet the Teacher:** Varies by school, watch for details from your school
- **First Day of School:** Aug. 19, 2021

Who do i call?

- **Teacher:** If at any time you have concerns about your child, the first and best contact is your child's teacher. The best way to reach your child's teacher is through email. You can also leave a voice mail message. The district website has the staff directory for each school by grade.
- **School Administrative Assistant:** If you have a message that needs to get to your student, or you need to drop something off at school, the school administrative assistant will assist you.
- **School Principal:** Contact the school principal for any issues the teacher cannot address. Dr. Ginny Hiltz, Greenbriar; Pat Thome, Meadowbrook; and Mary Sturgill, Westmoor.
- **School PTO:** District 28 enjoys strong support for the school Parent Teacher Organizations. Each school has an executive board to head up events and projects. All parents are invited to attend PTO meetings, which are held once a month. Find out more on your school website, under northbrook28.net.
- **PTO Council:** The PTO Council consists of PTO school presidents and other board members who lead projects and events. The PTO Council also meets once a month and the public is invited to attend.

District Administration

Dr. Larry Hewitt, Superintendent

Dr. Kristin Raitzer, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Kelly Sculles, Director of Student Services

Michelle Jackson, Director of Learning

Jessica Donato, Chief School Business Official

Terry Ryan, Communications Director

Dr. Jenna Duffy, Assistant Director of Student Services & Director of Young Explorers (Westmoor)

Nora Geraghty, Assistant Director of Student Services (Greenbriar/Meadowbrook)

Judi Epcke, Instructional Technology Coordinator

School Principals

Greenbriar: Dr. Ginny Hiltz | ghiltz@northbrook28.net

Meadowbrook: Pat Thome | pthome@northbrook28.net

Westmoor: Mary Sturgill | msturgill@northbrook28.net