



Family Handbook

2025-2026

4K Office at Pitsch Early Learning Center
715-424-6779
www.wrps.org

Dear Families of 4K Students,

Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools is committed to providing a comprehensive 4-year-old kindergarten program designed to support children's holistic development. Our 4K program focuses on nurturing academic, social, and emotional skills that prepare children for future learning .

We believe in creating a strong partnership between home and school, and we encourage your active participation through various opportunities:

- Attend Open House events at your child's 4K site
- Communicate with teachers via Parent Square
- Participate in Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Stay informed through classroom and monthly school newsletters
- Join 4K-specific seasonal events

Our 4K program is dedicated to:

- Developing positive social skills
- Fostering early literacy and math skills
- Creating engaging learning environments
- Preparing children for a successful kindergarten transition

We value two-way communication and want to ensure you feel supported. Our teachers are committed to:

- Regular communication about your child's learning
- Sharing information about daily activities
- Addressing your concerns and questions

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact your child's teacher or school administration.

We look forward to partnering with you in your child's educational journey!



Teri Thomas
Pitsch Principal & WRPS 4K Administrator

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Our Mission

We foster a love for learning through **playful experiences** by connecting with all students and families as we help them prepare to be independent, lifelong learners.

Our Vision

Through playful experiences, WRPS Early Learning will strive to provide a safe and supportive environment for all students, staff, and families upon which to build foundations of learning and social-emotional development.





2025-26 4K Sites

FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN		MORNING	AFTERNOON
LOCATION		SESSION	SESSION
	Wood County Head Start Education Manager: Debra Steele 715.421.1813 550 Center Street Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494	Head Start will contact accepted students with scheduled times. 8:15-3:15	
	Building Blocks Learning Center Director: Jennifer Hanzlik 715.424.2252 2210 Baker St Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494	Monday: 9:30 - 11:40 Tues-Fri: 9:00 – 11:40	12:45 – 3:20
	Grant Elementary School Principal: Nikki Calteux 715.424.6766 8511 Cty Rd WW Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494	Monday: 9:30 - 11:30 Tues-Fri: 8:45 – 11:30	12:55 – 3:30
	Pitsch Early Learning Center Principal: Teri Thomas 715.424.6779 501 17 th St S Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494	Monday: 9:30 – 11:40 Tues-Fri: 9:00 - 11:40	12:50 – 3:25
	THINK Academy Principal: Christine Slattery 715.424.6784 6950 Knowledge Ave Rudolph, WI 54475	No Morning Session	1:10 – 3:45
	Woodside Elementary Principal: William Oswald 715.424.6793 611 Two Mile Ave Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494	Monday: 9:30 - 11:30 Tues-Fri: 8:45 – 11:30	12:55 – 3:30
	YMCA Early Learning Center Director: Tracy Vruwink 715.818.6019 601 West Grand Avenue Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495	Monday: 9:30 – 11:30 Tues-Fri: 8:45 – 11:30	1:00 – 3:35

Attendance & Transportation

Attendance

We're excited to help you ensure your child's academic success through clear and proactive absence reporting. Here's how you can easily keep your student's attendance record accurate and excused:

Simple Ways to Report an Absence

Parents have multiple convenient methods to communicate student absences:

- Call the school attendance line (715-424-6779, option 2) and leave a detailed voice message
- Send a message in Parent Square to your child's teacher
- Send a written note directly to the school office

Why Timely Communication Matters

By taking a moment to notify the school, you:

- ✓ Help maintain your child's positive attendance record
- ✓ Ensure the school understands the reason for the absence
- ✓ Support your student's educational continuity

Family Vacations are a part of growing up. However, please do your best to arrange vacations over our scheduled breaks.

Bus Transportation

Bus drivers have been instructed to ensure the safety of four-year-old students who use bus transportation. If a family member or designated adult is not present at the bus stop to receive the child, the driver will not allow the four-year-old off the bus. Instead, the driver will return the child to their 4K site. This policy is in place to protect young students and provide peace of mind for their families. If you have a change in plans regarding your child's pick up or drop off, please contact the bus companies

- Safeway: 715.423.1117
- Lamers: 715.421.0123

Picking Up after School

At the end of the school day, all students are picked up in the designated pick up line. If you choose to pick up your student, **for safety reasons**, the following guidelines will be in effect:

- Parents may line up in their cars and staff will supervise dismissal to parents' cars. Please pull forward to the yellow line when waiting for your child.
- In case of inclement weather, students will be dismissed as their parents appear in the front drive.
- PLEASE do not use your **cell phone** in your car while driving on school property.

Release Of Students During The School Day

A custodial parent or authorized person requesting release of a student during the school day must check into the office and sign the student out. Office staff will then contact the classroom and have the child sent to the office. Release will be made only to those individuals designated on the student's emergency card, unless authorization has been previously given to the office by the parent.

Communication & Office Information

School/site newsletters are shared monthly through ParentSquare. We encourage parents to read these newsletters with their child, as they contain important updates, upcoming events, and opportunities to stay connected with our school community.

Change of Address

Please inform the 4K Office if you change your address or telephone number. A written notice or email is preferred. Change of address can be emailed to tracy.weiss@wrps.net.

Office Hours

The 4K Office is located in Pltisch Early Learning Center at 501 17th St. S. It is open from 7:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m. every school day. The office phone number is 715-424-6779.

School Closures & Weather

School Cancellations

Before School: If severe weather or dangerously cold temperatures make it impossible for buses to operate in the morning, families will be notified through Skylert (using the contact information provided in Skyward Family Access) no later than 6:30 a.m. Cancellation notices will also be posted on the District's main webpage (www.wrps.org) and ParentSquare.

During the School Day: If bad weather develops after school has started, an announcement regarding early dismissal will be posted on the District webpage and ParentSquare by 10:00 a.m. Families will be notified that students will be sent home early.

Early Dismissal Schedule:

- Morning 4-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) Session – 10:45 a.m.
- Afternoon 4K– Cancelled

Inclement Weather Days (Snow Day Policy)

- Students are allowed **three (3) traditional snow days** each school year, during which no instruction will take place.
- After these three days, any additional weather-related closures will become **structured virtual learning days**.

On Virtual Learning Days, students will:

- Participate in pre-planned learning activities
- Complete assignments prepared and distributed in advance by their teachers
- Continue their learning to help maintain academic progress, even when buildings are closed

Cold Weather Recess/Playground Procedures

- Short sleeve recess: 50+ on the wind-chill thermometer
- Long sleeve recess: 40 - 49 on the wind-chill thermometer
- Winter clothes: 0 to 39 on the wind-chill thermometer

Health and Wellness: Student Health

Nursing Services

Each elementary school provides scheduled nursing services on a weekly basis. A school nurse is always available for consultation even if the nurse is not at the school site.

The school nurse organizes appropriate screening programs such as vision and hearing screenings. In addition, the nurse may perform physical assessments and identify students with health problems that impact educational performance. If you do not want your child to participate in these activities, you must notify the school principal in writing.

Immunizations

Please check with your doctor, the Wood County Courthouse or a school nurse for Student Immunization Law Age/Grade Requirements.

Medication

When possible, parents are encouraged to administer medication at home. The following procedures are used by the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools when administering medication at school:

Prescription Medication

The physician/dentist orders for **Administering Prescription Medication in School form** must be completed by the prescribing physician and parent, and returned to school before any medication will be administered. This form must be signed annually.

Any medication identified as a controlled substance, such as medication for treatment of ADD/ADHD, anxiety, or pain must be delivered to the school office by a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult.

Medication should be supplied in ready-to-administer dosage form, (i.e., pills cut in half if needed). Medication arriving in improperly labeled or unlabeled containers such as envelopes, baggies, or wrapped in aluminum foil *will not* be administered by school personnel.

Changes in dosages, medication, and/or time of administration require a new **Physician Order Form** be completed.

Over the counter medication will be administered only with proper written parental consent. Medication must be provided in the original labeled container.

Visit School Board Policy 5330 for specific details regarding administration of medication on the WRPS webpage under *School Board Policies*.

Sickness At School

If your child becomes ill during the school day, a call will be placed to the parent(s) of the child to arrange for the child to be picked up. If the parents cannot be reached, we will attempt to contact the emergency contacts listed in Skyward. We consider the child sick if they are running a fever, have diarrhea, or have vomited. If the child is not running a fever, does not have diarrhea and has not vomited, we will have the child rest in our health office and will eventually send them back to class when they are ready. If the child does not feel that they can return to class, we will attempt to contact the parent for pick up. It is very important that contact information is always current; please inform the office of any changes immediately.

NOTE: If your child has had a fever, he or she cannot return to school until the child has been fever free, 24 hours, without the aid of fever reducing medication. This is important for the health of not only your child, but the health of others as well.

Safety and Security

School Safety

Each year we conduct periodic safety drills during the school year for a variety of potential emergencies which could occur. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys orders promptly and clears the building by the prescribed route as quickly as possible. In cooperation with our School Safety Officer, we practice and prepare for the event of a school emergency that would require a lockdown or evacuation. We practice these drills to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and visitors in our school buildings. We also lock all exterior doors in the building during the school day.

Visitors

All visitors must report to the office and sign in upon arrival at school. The District uses a visitor management system to build on the District's program of campus safety for students and faculty. The system will enhance our ability to track visitors, contractors, and volunteers in our schools. Upon entering our building ALL visitors will be asked to report directly to the school office and present a valid state-issued ID which will be scanned into the system and a sticker will be printed. A sticker will be **REQUIRED for all visitors who will be moving beyond the school office.** The safety of our students and staff is our highest priority.

If you wish to be a [school volunteer](#), contact your child's teacher or the office. We will work with you to find a setting to utilize your talents. Background checks are required by March 31 for volunteering in the school including on field trips and can be completed at www.wrps.net. Once the process is complete and you are approved as a volunteer, the process will not need to be repeated for another 3 years.

Student Safety

Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards, and Rollerblades

Bicycles, scooters, skateboards, shoes with wheels and roller blades may be ridden to school and should be locked and/or parked in the areas provided. When students arrive at school and leave, they must push their bicycles or scooter and carry skateboards or rollerblades. Students and/or parents will not be allowed to ride on the playgrounds or sidewalks during school hours.

Bringing Pets to School

Children who wish to bring pets to school for “show and tell” should have the permission of the teacher and must follow school policy regarding animals in school. A parent must take pets home shortly after the “show and tell” activity. Leaving the pet(s) at school all day is not only disruptive to the entire class, but is not the best experience for the animal. Students will meet the pet outside or in the front entry to protect others with allergies. District policies for animals at school must be followed.

Involvement with Law Enforcement or CPS Agents

If the safety of a child is at risk a Child Protective Services’ agent and/or Police Officer has the right to interview and take a student into protective custody. Parental notification by school authorities is not required.

Student Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment

The School District of Wisconsin Rapids is committed to equal educational opportunity for all District students. The District will not deny any person admission to, participation in, or the benefits of any curricular, extra-curricular, pupil services, recreational or other program or activity because of a person’s gender, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, transgender status, gender identity, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, or any other characteristic protected under State or Federal civil rights laws.

The District strives to provide a safe, secure and respectful learning environment for all students in school buildings, on school grounds, and school buses and at school-sponsored activities. The District prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment.

The District encourages all students, as well as third parties, to promptly report incidents of discrimination or harassment to a teacher, administrator, supervisor, or other District employee or official so that the District may address the conduct before it becomes severe, pervasive, or persistent. Any teacher, administrator, supervisor, or other District employee or official who receives such a complaint shall forward the complaint to the District’s designated Compliance Officer without undue delay, but not later than two (2) business days. The District’s designated Compliance Officer is the Director of Human Resources. Complaints should be submitted to: Director of Human Resources School District of Wisconsin Rapids 510 Peach Street, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

To review Board Policy 5517 concerning Student Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment, go to www.wrps.org and click on *School Board Policies*.

Parents’ Right to Restrict School Release Of Public Information

Student Directory Data is defined as: student name, address, photographs, degrees and awards received, major field of study, participation in activities/sports, weight/height on athletic team, and name of school student most recently attended. The ability to release directory data helps WRPS to include a student in certain publications like social media. Parents or adult pupils must complete the “Release of Student Directory Data” during the online verification process if they wish to restrict the release of student data. If it is not completed, the District will fulfill its legal obligation to release directory data when requested.

Universal Understandings

Bullying happens. It affects children and adults alike, and it's never okay. However, the term "bullying" has become so broadly applied that it's often used to describe every instance where someone's feelings are hurt. This overuse diminishes the real and harmful effects of actual bullying and undermines the experiences of those who truly suffer from it. When we label every negative interaction as bullying, it weakens the significance of what bullying really is.

At WRPS, it's crucial for everyone involved in a child's life to understand the differences between "conflict," "rude," "mean," and "bullying." It is equally important that we help students learn how to identify and work through conflict. *(Conflict arises from disagreements, differing opinions, or opposing goals, which can create tension and negativity. Conflict itself isn't inherently a problem, but it can become one if not managed effectively.)*

To help clarify these distinctions, we will use the following definitions:

CONFLICT is when two or more **people disagree** or have different ideas, feelings, or needs. It can happen when people don't see eye to eye or want different things.

- o Disagreement or difference of opinion
- o May make someone feel bad
- o Can occur in many ways (different feelings, needs, or ideas)

RUDE is when someone does something **hurtful without meaning to**. It might be not saying "thank you," interrupting, or cutting in line. They aren't trying to be mean; they just forget their manners.

- o Unintentionally unkind
- o May make someone feel bad
- o Can occur in many ways (interrupting, ignoring, inconsiderate actions etc.)

MEAN is when someone **hurts someone's feelings on purpose**, but it only happens once or twice. They might say something unkind or leave someone out, but they aren't doing it over and over.

- o Intentionally unkind
- o Makes someone feel bad
- o Can occur in many ways (excluding others, saying hurtful things, etc.)

BULLYING is when someone **keeps being mean on purpose** and doesn't stop, even when they know it's hurting the other person. It happens again and again, and it's not okay. Bullying also involves one person having more power over the other, making it harder for the person being hurt to stop it.

- o Intentionally unkind
- o Makes someone feel bad
- o Repetitive
- o Power Imbalance
- o Can occur in many ways (physical, verbal, social, cyber)

Hazing

The Board believes that hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and may in some circumstances be a violation of State law. It prohibits all such activities at any time in school facilities, on school property, and at any District-sponsored activity or event.

Hazing shall be defined for purposes of this policy as performing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to perform any act of initiation into any class, group, or organization that causes or creates a risk of causing mental, emotional, or physical harm. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing shall not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

Administrators, faculty members, and other employees of the District shall be alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include hazing. If hazing or planned hazing is discovered, the students involved shall be informed by the discoverer of the prohibitions contained in this policy and shall be ordered to end all hazing activities or planned activities immediately. All hazing incidents shall be reported immediately to the Principal or to the Superintendent. The individual informed of the situation shall immediately do the following:

Write all information concerning the reported activity or planned activity received from the person reporting the incident to create a complete record of the initial contact with the administration.

Determine if any potential criminal activity has occurred and if so contact law enforcement immediately.

Determine whether the information received illustrates hazing behavior that is based on the student's or any group of students sex (including transgender status, change of sex, or gender identity), race, color, national origin, religion, creed, ancestry, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, or any other characteristic protected by Federal or State civil rights laws ("Protected Classes"). If the conduct reported appears to be based on one (1) or more Protected Class, or information surfaces in that regard, the administrator shall inform the District Compliance Officer and refer to Policy 5517 – Student Anti-Harassment and proceed accordingly.

If the hazing or planned hazing does not appear to be based on any Protected Classes, then the administrator shall proceed to conduct an investigation consistent with the procedures found in Policy 5517.01 - Bullying.

Students, administrators, faculty members, and other employees who fail to abide by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and may be held personally liable for civil or criminal penalties. Disciplinary action for students may include, but is not limited to, suspension and/or expulsion. Disciplinary action for staff members may be issued up to and including termination from employment.

WRPS Board Policy 5516

General School Policies & Procedures

Dress Code

Students are asked to comply with the school dress code. Students are not to wear clothing, which may cause a disruption to the educational process or the orderly operation of the school. This includes clothing that contains inappropriate comments or messaging, pictures, slogans, or designs that are obscene, profane, lewd, or vulgar. This includes any clothing that promotes alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, illegal drugs, or illegal activities. Clothing which harasses or threatens an individual or group of individuals because of sex, race, color, religion, handicap, national origin, sexual orientation, transgender status, gender identity, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, or any other characteristic protected under State or Federal civil rights laws. If such clothing is worn to school, students will be required to change or cover said clothing or will be sent home to do so. Refusal to change or cover said clothing will result in the students not being allowed to attend class until they have complied.

Policy 5517.01 concerning bullying on the District webpage under *School Board Policies*.

Money

When sending money to school, place it in a sealed envelope clearly labeled with the child's name, grade, enclosed amount, and specific purpose to ensure proper tracking and minimize confusion.

Birthday Parties/Invitations

Birthday party invitations can only be given out in the classroom if they will be given to all children in the classroom.

Registration Procedure

Registration for 4K begins in February. All student enrollment must be completed on our district website or at the WRPS Enrollment Center, located at 311 Lincoln Street. Families enrolling students in 4K are required to provide a birth certificate or other acceptable documentation to verify the child's date of birth. Additionally, proof of immunizations and residency must be submitted.

Each year following initial registration, families are required to complete online verification of student information.

Publication/Sales

All posters and publications must be submitted to and approved by the administrator before they are posted and/or distributed. No student may sell any product (candy bars, etc.) during school hours. Please only ask your own teacher, as there are many fundraisers in our community and we have many students. Thank you for respecting our teachers in this matter.