

Prekindergarten Handbook



“The expert in anything was once a beginner!”

-anon.

Cohoes City School District

“Learning By All”

Mission

The Cohoes City School District's Universal Prekindergarten program (UPK) will provide children an opportunity to begin the process of becoming life-long learners. Students will leave UPK with a developmental framework of academic and social skills preparing them for their academic career as well as becoming responsible citizens in a global community.

Our Philosophy

The Cohoes City School District philosophy is "Learning By All." As cited in the *NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (2011)*, our framework will encompass the individual learning and development of the whole child, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

UPK provides an opportunity to learn about each child's family and their traditions. Embracing a student's culture enhances self-esteem and builds a classroom community. This partnership with our families sets a foundation for a positive school experience.

Goals of Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on a developmental continuum and is aligned with *NYS Prekindergarten Learning Standards (2011)* and the *NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (2011)*.

Listed below are the five domains and a brief description:

- **Approaches to Learning:** How children become involved in learning and acquiring knowledge.
- **Physical Development and Health:** Children's physical health and ability to engage in daily activities.

- **Social and Emotional Development:** The emotional competence and ability to form positive relationships that give meaning to children's experiences in the home, school, and larger community.
- **Communication, Language, and Literacy:** Children's understanding, creating, and communicating meaning.
- **Cognition and Knowledge of the World:** What children need to know and understand about their world.

A Typical Day

Teachers will greet you and your child for drop off and pick up. There is time for conversation with UPK friends. Children enter their individual classrooms, have breakfast and then prepare for morning circle. Teacher and students discuss their daily schedule, goals, classroom jobs, weather, and calendar.

Centers involve options for exploring the world through the following: Language and Literacy, Math, Science, Technology, Community and the Arts. Centers may occur before or after lunch.

There is time for physical activity which may include the playground and general fitness skill development.

At the end of the day there is the option for a parent provided snack.

Child drop-off and pick-up

Children must be dropped off between 8:30 AM – 8:50 AM and UPK dismissal is at 2:30 PM.

Snow days

Information on school closings or delays can be found through: television, radio, or the School News Notifier (SNN). You can sign up for the SNN service at www.cohoes.org. This service provides information via email and text message.

Transition

Transition is an important part of your child's day. Children need to feel confident when they enter and leave an environment. Here are some suggestions to ease transitions:

- Attend our "*OPEN HOUSE*": This is an opportunity to meet all UPK staff and classmates.
- Have your child bring pictures to personalize their "*CUBBY*" and know that this is their own space.
- Please reassure your child about each day's schedule for drop off and pick up.
- Please show excitement towards the UPK experience!

Parent/School Communication

Teachers will communicate to parents/ caregivers each day. This may include emails, written notes or conversation. Each classroom provides a monthly newsletter of UPK and school-wide events.

In September a universal screening process takes place for your child. This screening includes language concepts, fine and gross motor skills, and a parent questionnaire on social emotional development. All skills are progress monitored monthly and a trimester update is provided to parents on your child's development.

Attendance Policy

We have a full day UPK program from 8:30AM – 2:30PM. Attendance is taken promptly at 9:00 AM. After which time students will be marked tardy. Children should be in school each day and on time unless they have a legal absence, which includes: illness, death in the family, emergency (medical or dental), and religious holidays. Children who have been absent from school must, on the day of their

return, bring in a written note signed by a parent, guardian or doctor. The notes must include the date and reason for the absence.

Clothing

Please make sure your child has an extra set of comfortable clothes and socks that are labeled. UPK students will explore using paint, water and other materials in their environment.

Field Trips

Our UPK program has field trips throughout the school year. Some occur only with UPK, others are building wide with the Abram Lansing School. Permission slips will be sent home for your signature. They will include details pertaining to the trips.

Committee on Preschool Special Education

If you have questions or concerns about your child's learning, please discuss them with your teacher. Many questions about children are within the typical developmental milestones.

For preschool special education concerns, please contact the Office of Special Programs, 237-0990.

Health regulation

As required by the NYS Education Department, you will need to submit proof that your child has had a complete physical exam and up to date immunizations. The immunization record will be reviewed by to insure compliance with NYS Regulations. Please make sure you submit this information to the school nurse at Abram Lansing School.

If your child has a medical condition or receives medication, please contact the nurse at the Abram Lansing School: 237-5044.

Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS)



What is PBIS?

PBIS is a school wide approach to preventing and responding to school and classroom behavior. PBIS is used in Cohoes at the district's three elementary, middle, and high school, as well as at more than 3,000 schools across the country.

How does it work?

The core concepts are:

- **Be Safe**
- **Be Responsible**
- **Be Respectful**

In the program, positive behaviors are frequently rewarded by school staff, while negative behaviors are consistently addressed with predictable consequences.

PBIS aims to reduce the number of referrals or suspensions and enables educators to be more active and consistent in addressing behavior problems that do arise.

At the participating schools, the PBIS coaches teach students the appropriate behaviors every year so they know how to act responsibly and appropriately in places such as the hallways, bathrooms, cafeterias and during assemblies.

What are the outcomes?

The outcome is positive behavior and a school environment that is conducive to learning.

Dietary services

Monthly meal menus are distributed to all students in Grades Prekindergarten through Grade 5. They are available to all students upon request. These menus comply with federal nutrition regulations. Special dietary services are available, but must be accompanied with a note from the child's physician and be on file in the school lunch office.

Breakfast

Abram Lansing School 8:15 - 8:45 a.m.

Lunch

Abram Lansing School 11 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Free/reduced meals

Students who meet the financial eligibility guidelines are entitled to one complete breakfast and one lunch each day. Regulations require that eligible students purchasing ONLY MILK be charged 50 cents. Free/reduced meal applications are available at any time during the school year. They may be requested at the school lunch office, through the food service staff or can be downloaded [at www.cohoes.org](http://www.cohoes.org)

Send completed applications to:

Cohoes City Schools Food Service

Brian Nolan, Food Service Director

1 Tiger Circle

Cohoes, NY 12047

Student Accounts

All students in grades K-12 have an account. Cash, checks or money orders are accepted, as well as online payment through the Nutrikids system. Make checks payable to "Cohoes Lunch Fund" and include with payment the child's account number and child's full name. For information about Nutrikids, click the icon

below. Students may also use cash to purchase meals and/or snacks. Each time a student account is credited with \$18, the student will receive a bonus free lunch.



Reporting Child Abuse and Maltreatment

As early childhood educational professionals, we are mandated reporters of any suspicion of child abuse and/or maltreatment. If there are any concerns brought to our attention, we will carefully assess the situation before making a report to the NY Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

Diversity Statement

The Cohoes City School District is committed to reflecting the cultural diversity of our community. You are encouraged to share your family traditions with the UPK classroom.

Contact information

If you have any questions pertaining to the Cohoes City School District's Universal Prekindergarten Program, please contact:

Tammy DiCocco, UPK Coordinator, 237-7523, or tdicocco@cohoes.org.