



## **Mission:**

### **PALS**

**Playing and Learning Side by Side**

**Blended Preschool Program  
Cullman City Schools  
2021 - 2022**

## **Cullman City Preschool Program**

The Cullman City PALS program, based at Cullman City Primary School, is an inclusive preschool program for 3 and 4 year olds with and without disabilities. The mission of this innovative program is to provide a developmentally appropriate early intervention program for preschoolers with disabilities who reside in the city of Cullman. The program emphasizes learning through a play-based, child-initiated approach. Age and individually-appropriate instruction is provided for each child, focusing on appropriate learning opportunities to facilitate development and transition to kindergarten.

A fundamental component of the PALS program is the inclusion of children with and without disabilities. Children with disabilities benefit from appropriate interactions and observations of same-age peers; children without disabilities (typical peers) benefit by learning about disabilities at a young age. Each site is staffed with one certified teacher and one paraprofessional. All staff are employees of the Cullman City School System.

Daily activities are based on preschool standards established by the Alabama State Department of Education. Classroom activities are adapted and/or modified based on each child's individual needs. Parents may request a conference at any time during the year to discuss their child's progress.

### **Enrollment**

Preschoolers with special needs who reside within Cullman City limits may be eligible to attend on their third birthday. Families must provide the documents required to satisfy residency requirements which include a mortgage or rental agreement and an updated utility bill. An Individual Education Program (IEP) team will meet to determine the appropriate placement and needs of each child. The IEP team will determine if placement in this program is needed to meet the special needs of the child. The IEP team may determine another environment is a more appropriate setting for the child to receive special education services. Children may continue to receive services in the PALS classroom until they are eligible for kindergarten.

A typical peer must be a resident of Cullman City or be a child of a current employee of Cullman City Schools. Peers must turn 3 on or before September 1st to be eligible to start at the beginning of the school year. These peers who turn 3 later in the school year may be considered for enrollment after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday if there is an opening. The staff will evaluate the appropriateness of the late enrollment on an individual basis. First priority is given to returning students and siblings of currently enrolled children who are residents of the City of Cullman, children of Cullman City School's employees, then all other qualified applicants. Selection of typical peers will be based on the needs of the classroom. Children who are receiving services through an IEP are not considered a typical peer.

## **Application Process**

Children with special needs are referred to the program through the IEP process. Proof of residency is required before a Special Education referral meeting can be scheduled.

Parents of typical peers may begin the application process utilizing on-line registration through the Cullman City School website [www.cullmancats.net](http://www.cullmancats.net) on Monday, February 15, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. through Friday, February 26, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. Applications will be emailed to those registered parents at the close of the registration window. Completed applications must be returned to the Student Services Department within one week of the date they are emailed to the parents in order to be considered. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Waiting lists are not maintained from year to year. A new application must be submitted annually. Parents will be notified whether or not their child/children have been accepted to the program after their child's completed application is reviewed.

## **School year calendar**

PALS follows the Cullman City School calendar. Preschool instruction begins at 8:00 a.m. and dismissal begins at 2:40 p.m. Children should be picked up by 2:40 p.m. each day. There is no extended day for any students in the PALS program.

## **Tuition for Typical Peers**

The tuition for typical peers for the 2021-2022 school year is:

\$250.00 per month – (\$125.00 per month for the children of full-time Cullman City Schools employees)

Tuition is paid to the Central Office. Payment is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and delinquent on the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month (September through May). If tuition is paid after the 5<sup>th</sup>, a \$25 fee is charged. If tuition is not paid by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month, the student cannot return until it is paid. No tuition is paid for the month of August, but full tuition is paid for all other months (including December). Typical peers pay the full amount of tuition whether they attend 5 days or fewer days per week.

## **Tuition for children with special needs**

The IEP team determines the number of days and hours that are necessary for a child with special needs to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). There is no PALS tuition charge for the hours that the child attends the program that are determined necessary for FAPE.

## **Meals**

Lunch may be purchased at the school or may be brought from home. Free and reduced meals are available by application for those who meet the financial requirements. Meals are not included in the monthly tuition.

## **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

Children who qualify for special education services have IEPs. The PALS teacher has a transition meeting during the spring of each year to explain the transition process to parents of children who will enter Kindergarten. The transitioning children will visit kindergarten classrooms.

## **Transportation**

Parents will provide transportation for children enrolled in the PALS program.

## **Curriculum**

The Cullman City PALS program will address developmental standards as developed by the Alabama State Department of Education. The following areas will be addressed:

- Daily Living
- Social/Emotional
- Language and Literacy
- Math
- Science
- Creative Arts
- Physical Development

## **Guidance/Behavior Management**

The faculty and staff incorporate behavior development techniques to promote self-control, appropriate behavior, and positive self-concept. The faculty and staff use approaches based on the assumption that behavior is meaningful and displays a communicative intent. The faculty and staff attempt to identify the communicative intentions underlying the behavior, which helps children learn more acceptable ways of communication.

## **Health**

The PALS program staff makes every effort to protect the health and safety of all children. Cooperation of parents is essential in this effort. Parents should keep their child at home when any of the following symptoms have occurred within the past 24 hours:

- Fever of 100 degrees or greater
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Severe cold
- Rash with fever or behavioral change
- Eye discharge
- Mouth sores with drooling

## **Medical Emergencies**

In the event that a child becomes ill or suffers an accident while he/she is at school, the child's parent will be notified. If the accident or illness requires medical attention, the child's parent will be called immediately. If the parent cannot be reached, the child's physician will be contacted. In an extreme emergency, paramedics will be called and the child will be transported to the hospital, when appropriate. A staff member will stay with the child until his/her parent is located.

**DOCUMENTS NEEDED FOR ENROLLMENT**

\_\_\_\_ ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATE – A COPY WILL BE MADE AND THE ORIGINAL RETURNED TO YOU.

\_\_\_\_ ORIGINAL SOCIAL SECURITY CARD – A COPY WILL BE MADE AND THE ORIGINAL RETURNED TO YOU.  
(Optional)

\_\_\_\_ ALABAMA IMMUNIZATION RECORD (BLUE CARD) – THE ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION REQUIRES SCHOOLS TO HAVE THE ORIGINAL ON FILE.

**2 PROOFS OF RESIDENCY**

\_\_\_\_ HOME MORTGAGE STATEMENT

~OR~

\_\_\_\_ RENT/LEASE AGREEMENT

~AND~

\_\_\_\_ UTILITY BILL

**PARENT'S RELATIONSHIP**

\_\_\_\_ MOTHER

\_\_\_\_ FATHER

\_\_\_\_ LEGAL GUARDIAN (Court Documents Required)