

# PAWS Family Handbook 2020-2021



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### At a Glance

\* Before School Care Hours - 6:30 am to 8:00 am

After School Care Hours – 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm

\* Enrichment programming for Paynesville Area Students in Grade Kindergarten to Fifth Grade

\* Full day programming on most school vacation days and early dismissal days. (6:30 am – 6:00 pm)

\* Conveniently located in Paynesville Area Elementary School.

\* Flexible enrollment options including before and/or after school 1 to 5 days per week and occasional use.

PAWS will be Open regular hours if school is two-hours late.

PAWS will be OPEN if school is closed due to inclement weather if our staff can safely make it in to school.

PAWS will be Open until 6:00 pm if school is released early.

## What is PAWS?

PAWS is a place where each child is a cherished and unique member of the team. Each child in PAWS will be nurtured, kept safe and encouraged to pursue their own interests, develop friendships, independence and confidence. Our goal is to ensure the success of children in our communities by establishing positive relationships, providing educational and recreational activities and offering opportunities for children to share ideas and feel valued. Feel confident that PAWS offers the very best care, with lots of age appropriate activities that help your child grow. Activities range from: walking field trips, gym time, group games, art projects, reading, math, choice time, toys and more!



# Welcome to PAWS

Welcome to PAWS

Thank you for selecting PAWS School Age Childcare Program for your child. PAWS is a unique and exciting program that was developed to help you meet the needs of your family.

As a part of PAWS your child will have access to fun and worthwhile programs and activities in areas such as enrichment, free play, homework help, recess, computer science, arts & crafts, recreation & sports and much more.

All of us at PAWS take the care and safety of your child very seriously, so I encourage you to thoroughly read this entire handbook and call us if you have questions.

Thanks again for being a part of PAWS and we hope you have a Great Year!

Sincerely,

Matthew L. Dickhausen  
Director  
Paynesville Area Community  
Education



## Community Education Office

801 Business 23 West  
Paynesville, MN 56362  
Phone: (320) 243-7570  
Fax: (320) 243-4544  
Website: [www.PaynesvilleCE.com](http://www.PaynesvilleCE.com)

**Lisa Mead, PAWS Program Coordinator & CE Administrative Asst.**  
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**Matthew Dickhausen, Community Education Director**  
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## Program Location

Paynesville Area Elementary

Room #159 & #160

205 West Mill Street

Phone: (320) 243-5437 (243-KIDS)

Website: [www.PaynesvilleCE.com](http://www.PaynesvilleCE.com)

## Goals for Children

1. To create a relaxed, trusting, intimate atmosphere where children are encouraged to pursue their own interests, develop friendships, and grow in confidence, independence, and respect for themselves and others.
2. To provide a caring staff, who show genuine respect for the children and have confidence in each child's potential and promote each child's self-esteem.
3. To create a stable environment that is inviting, comfortable, attractive, orderly, manageable by the children, and a happy, exciting place to be.
4. To provide for the children a variety of developmentally appropriate activities, including expressive art, active play, sports, games, dramatic play, science, cooking, crafts, and reading.
5. To maintain a schedule that allows time for each child to observe, to reflect and to become absorbed in activities according to his/her own interests and talents.
6. To give individual guidance to children based on careful observation of each child's needs and in keeping with parental values and goals.
7. To provide regular opportunities for children and youth to learn and practice essential social skills that will help them get along with others in daily life.
8. To provide time for homework and education assistance on a 4 day a week basis.

# General Information

## Parent's Checklist

- ✓ Get to know program staff - Ask for feedback on your child's day
- ✓ Sign your child in and out daily
- ✓ Read the Parent Handbook and understand the program policies
- ✓ Label ALL personal belongings
- ✓ Check your family folder for staff communication
- ✓ Notify the site if your child will be absent for any reason
- ✓ Model respectful behavior when dealing with staff and students
- ✓ Provide written notice of change in contract, vacation, or withdrawal from the program by filling out appropriate forms
- ✓ Pay all costs incurred for your contracted days, whether your child attends or not, by the due date.

## Activities Include

- \* Science
- \* Technology
- \* Leadership Opportunities
- \* Reading
- \* Life Skills
- \* Art & Music
- \* Special Activities
- \* Gym/Outside Time
- \* Crafts & Design
- \* Homework Time
- \* Choice Time

## Program Standards

- \* Program standards for the Paynesville Area Public Schools PAWS program are adapted from the guidelines developed by the Minnesota Department of Education.
- \* PAWS is committed to an ongoing program of professional development for each staff member. First aid and CPR certification is required every 2 years as continued staff training.
- \* The staff/child ratio that each site strives to maintain is a 1:12 for 5 year olds and 1:15 for 6-12 year olds. These ratios and facility size standards are set by the State of Minnesota Department of Welfare and the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning along with the National School-Age Care Association.
- \* All children attending PAWS must be toilet trained and using the bathroom on their own.

## Child Abuse & Neglect

Under Minnesota State Law, all professional staff who work with children are required to report all suspected physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect of children to the authorities.

## Suggestions, Questions & Concerns

In order to address your needs at the most appropriate and effective level, we suggest the following steps:

1. First, speak with the staff member involved or the Site Supervisor.
2. If concerns persist, or discussions with the Site Supervisor are insufficient, contact the Program Coordinator, (320) 243-7570.
3. Families are welcome to request a conference when the attention of the Community Education Director is needed.

## Grievances

If you have a grievance regarding the PAWS program or Staff Member, report the problem to the site Supervisor and:

1. Immediately set up a time to discuss the problem with the staff person involved.
2. If it is not resolved, please contact the Community Education Director.

Please submit all grievances in writing, as well as verbally.

# Registration and Enrollment

## Registration Process

All children must be registered in order to participate in the PAWS program. **The registration fee is \$20 per child and \$40 max per family and must be paid every session.** Registration fees are non-refundable. To properly prepare for staff/ student ratios and in order for your child to start on the first day of school, your registration must be received by the deadline.

Information with specific dates will be on our website.

*A new registration form must be filled out for the school year and Summer Program sessions. Parents are responsible for updating their account information.*

Registration materials are available on the PAWS website at [www.PaynesvilleCE.com](http://www.PaynesvilleCE.com)

## School Year Registration

- \* Once the school year program has started, we require a 2 day processing period before new students can start at a site.

## Enrollment Information

- \* Children who are entering Kindergarten-5th grade in the Fall may enroll in our program. Enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis. Preschool students whom are a part of the Paynesville Area Comm Ed Preschool Program are also eligible to enroll.
- \* **PAWS is not designed to provide long term 1:1 assistance for students.** If a child receives 1:1 student support in the classroom or has a behavior plan developed, PAWS must have a meeting with the family prior to the start date in order to determine the appropriate level of support needed. *The child's start date may be delayed so that PAWS can ensure that a plan is in place to meet the child's needs.* Information regarding a student's needs will not be used to prohibit a child's enrollment in PAWS, unless it is determined they will need significant assistance beyond our regular program capabilities.



## Right of Refusal in Program

Paynesville Area Community Education and its staff reserve the right to reject registration or discontinue participation in the PAWS School Age Childcare Program due to matters such as:

- Ongoing discipline or behavior concerns, violations of school policies or state laws
- Delinquent payments, submissions of schedules or similar circumstances
- The staff and/or parent determines that the program cannot meet the needs of the child.
- If your child attends the PAWS program after their termination date you will be contacted for pick up.

## Absence from Program

If your child is absent due to illness, you must call PAWS to report the absence **by 2:30pm on their scheduled arrival day at PAWS.** The school office WILL NOT report the absence to PAWS, YOU MUST DO THIS YOURSELF. There are no refunds or credits for an absence. If your child does not attend school, they should not attend PAWS.

## Vacations

Full time students are given **Two Weeks** of vacation during the school year and part time students are given **One Week.** Vacation weeks cannot be used when your child is absent from school due to illness. To receive credit for a vacation week that your child will not attend PAWS you must notify the billing office in writing, per the Vacation Request form, *5 business days in advance.*

## Finder's Fee

If you fail to notify PAWS staff following the rules as stated above and a PAWS staff member has to go find your child, you will be charged \$5 per incident.

### Financial Policies and Procedures

Families will be charged fees based on your admissions and agreement form. Parents are responsible for all charges that are incurred. Additional fees may apply for special field trips and activities.

#### Automatic Payments

- **All payments must be submitted to the Community Ed office. No payments will be received at the PAWS room.**

**Automated Payments** will be automatically deducted weekly for the (upcoming week) on Monday mornings. PAWS is a non-profit/self-supporting organization which relies on your prompt payment. Therefore, there will be a \$10 service charge assessed for late payment. *(All Non-automated payments received after 4:00 p.m. on the Wednesday prior to care are considered late)* No account will be allowed to be more than one (1) week past due. If the weekly rate and the late fee are not received by the end of the following Friday, your child will be withdrawn from the program. A \$10 fee will be added on a weekly basis, until all fees have been paid. **Paynesville Area Community Education reserves the right to discontinue or limit the program due to an individual's nonpayment. If the automatic payment system does not work for you, please contact the Community Education Office at 243-7570 to make other arrangements.**

#### Year End Financial Information

The Federal tax ID number and total tuition paid to date for the calendar year will be e-mailed out by January 31st.

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#### Uncollected Checks/Outstanding Balances

PAWS charges a \$30 processing fee for all payments returned from the bank. If a check is returned, you must make a cash, money order, or credit card payment within three days of notice. Failure to make payment on uncollected balance could result in termination of child care services.

Any outstanding balance over 60 days may be forwarded to a collection agency for recovery. If forwarded, collection fees may be added to the current outstanding balance.

#### Dependent Care/Flex Reimbursement Forms

Forms must be brought to PAWS billing office for verification and signature. PAWS site staff will not sign.

### Withdrawing from the Program

A ten (10) working day written notice is required to withdraw from the program. You are responsible for paying for those 2 weeks even if you're child(ren) will not be attending.

# Contracts & Absences

## Written Notice is Required

To change contract schedule- *Contract Change Form*

To request vacation- *Vacation Request Form*

To withdraw from the program- *Contract Change Form*

### **Contracts are filled out every session**

(School Year, Non School Days & Summer). The contracted days

**You are responsible for all costs incurred for your contracted days whether your child attends or not, unless we have received a contract change, vacation request or withdrawal with sufficient notice.**

will remain in effect for the duration of the session unless a Contract Change Form is submitted. Verbal notification is NOT sufficient. Contract Change Forms may be found on our website: [www.PaynesvilleCE.com](http://www.PaynesvilleCE.com) or at the PAWS billing office.

## Contract Change

A completed Contract Change Form must be submitted to the billing office. Contract changes take effect *two (2) weeks* from the day the billing office receives the form. Verbal notification is NOT sufficient. The first contract change is free and any change after that is a \$15 fee charged to your account. Changes involving additional care or different times of day can be accepted only as space is available. You are responsible for tuition based on the old contract until the change goes into effect. If invoicing has taken place for the upcoming month, online changes will have a start date effective the following month.

## Withdrawal from the Program

Parents planning to withdraw their child from the PAWS program may do so at any time, however, notice must be given in writing to the PAWS billing office two weeks prior to the last day of attendance. Tuition will be charged for two weeks from the date of notification. Verbal notification is NOT sufficient.

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## Absence

Notify the PAWS billing office and/or the site supervisor if your child will be absent at any time for any reason. *School offices do not automatically provide us with absence information.* If your child does not arrive after school as expected, program staff will investigate immediately by attempting to contact you or your emergency contacts. Due to the amount of time involved in trying to find children when staff have not been notified of their absence, a **\$5 Finder's Fee** will be assessed. Tuition is not refunded for sick days or other absences. If an illness extends beyond one week, contact the PAWS billing office. Credit will be given if a medical certificate from a physician indicating the absence was due to an illness is provided. **All parents are responsible for paying for time RESERVED, not time used.**

## Vacation Week Credits

To receive credit for a vacation week that your child will not attend PAWS you must notify the billing office in writing, per the Vacation Request form, *5 business days in advance.* The forms are available online and at the PAWS billing office. Credits will only be given to accounts that are current. Vacation Credits from the school year expire on the last day of school. They cannot be carried over to the summer session. *If you request a vacation week and your child attends PAWS, you will be charged at the drop-in rate.*

## Family Emergencies

In case of family emergency, tuition credit may be given. This is determined on a case by case basis. Please contact the PAWS billing office as soon as possible.

## Termination of Care

Dismissal from the program could result from any of the following:

- \* The staff and/or parent determines that the program cannot meet the needs of the child.
- \* The child and/or parent refuses to follow the program procedures.
- \* Invoices/fees are not paid.

If your child attends the PAWS program after their termination date, the child will be sent to the school office immediately and they will contact you for pick up.



# Program Components

## School Year Program:

- \* The first day of PAWS will be September 8<sup>th</sup> (subject to change) and the last day will be June 4<sup>th</sup> (subject to change).
- \* PAWS will be open on all school days and full day care will be available on most non-school days.
- \* The before school program operates from 6:30 am until the start of the school day (*Availability depends on enrollment*)
- \* The after school program operates from the time school is dismissed until 6:00 pm.
- \* **PAWS will be closed, November 26, 27, December 24, 25, 31, January 1, April 2 and May 31.** (*Note: Some dates and times may be subject to change.*)
- \* The before school students will be walked to the cafeteria at 7:50am for breakfast (optional-purchase on your own) or send breakfast with your child. After school students are offered a snack (included in fee).

## Late Pick Up Fine

PAWS closes at 6:00 pm. Children must be picked up by closing time or there will be a late charge. The fee for late pickup is \$1 per minute beginning at 6:01 p.m. Fees are based per family. We will verify the pick up time with the clock in the classroom. If a family is continuously late, they will be withdrawn from the program.

# Tuition Structure

## SCHOOL YEAR CONTRACT TUITION STRUCTURE

### Option 1: Contract

*Full Time (4-5 days/week)*

Four to five days, schedule repeats consistently every week all school year.

Before School - \$14/Week

After School - \$40/Week

Before & After - \$47/Week

Non School Days - \$25

Early Dismissal/Late Starts are an additional \$4/day

### Option 2: Contract

*Part Time (1-3 days/week)*

One to three days, schedule repeats consistently every week all school year.

Before School - \$11/Week

After School - \$29/Week

Before & After - \$35

Non School Days - \$25

Early Dismissal/Late Starts are an additional \$4/day

### Option 3:

*Occasional Care Rate*

This option is for families who need an occasional/emergency day here and there. You must call the Community Ed office to register 24 hours before the care is needed.

\* Before School Fee: \$11/day

\* After School Fee: \$14/day

A credit card MUST be on file to use any form of Occasional care.

Fees will be automatically charged to the credit card on file.

### Calendar Changes

You are allowed 1 change to your calendar schedule BEFORE the 15th of the prior month deadline.

### Vacation

**School Year:** Option 1 (Full time) receive two weeks, and Option 2 (Part Time) receive one weeks. Vacation weeks expire after each season and cannot be carried over.



### Activities Include

Sports & Recreation  
Computer Lab  
Homework Help  
Arts & Crafts  
Free Choice Time  
Recess  
Movie Days  
Enrichment Activities  
Science Projects  
Games  
Field Trips/Special Events  
Fun! Fun! Fun!

### Non School Days

#### **Non School Days: Open hours of 6:30 AM – 6:00 PM**

Oct 14, 15, 16	November 9	December 23, 28, 29, 30
January 25	February 12, 15	March 4, 5
April 5, 6		

#### **Closed Dates**

November 26, 27	December 24, 25, 31	January 1
April 2	May 31	

## Dress/Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a very important part of our day. We will spend time outside daily, weather permitting. Children must have the appropriate clothing to go outside every day. Children must have snow pants, boots, hats, and gloves in order to play outside during the winter months. We strongly encourage all children to participate in outdoor activities. In the summer, children are required to wear sunscreen. In extreme heat, appropriate precautions will be taken to limit the activities of the children.



# Illness & Medication Policy

## Emergency Contact Information

Please keep your child's emergency information current. Registration and emergency contact information is kept at the sites for each child. We are not linked to the school office, so we need families to contact us separately with information changes, absences, etc.

## Illness Policy

If your child appears to be ill, you will be contacted and asked to pick them up within *one hour*. We will try to provide your child with a quiet area to rest until you arrive. School district policy requires that children have no fever for 24 hours before returning. Please contact us if your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease so we can alert all families that their child may have been exposed.

If your child was absent from school, they cannot attend PAWS unless arrangements have been made with your site supervisor.

## Emergency Care

In the event you child requires emergency care, the following steps will be taken:

1. Administer first aid and complete an accident/incident report for the parents to review when they come for their child.
2. If a non life threatening injury occurs, parents will be contacted. If unavailable, emergency contacts on your authorized pick up list will be contacted.
3. If a serious accident occurs, which may need medical attention, staff will attempt to contact the parent immediately. If immediate attention is needed, the staff will call 911 and then the parent. After 911 has been called, it is up to the paramedics to decide appropriate action. If the child needs emergency treatment, paramedics will transport the child to the nearest medical facility. The parent will be responsible for all medical charges.
4. Staff members are not allowed to transport children in their vehicles for any reason.

## Insurance

PAWS does not carry accident or health insurance for the children. Parents are responsible for the insurance and health coverage on their children.

## Medication

District policy regarding the dispensing of medication must be followed. Written parent permission and written physician orders with instructions as to when and how it is given are required. Medication Authorization forms are available at each site and on our PAWS website [www.PaynesvilleCE.com](http://www.PaynesvilleCE.com). Medication is to be in the original prescription bottle. This authorization must be returned to the PAWS billing office or site prior to dispensing of any medication. Over-the-counter medication also requires a Medication Authorization form.



# Safety & Inclement Weather

## Signing In and Out

In order for us to accept legal responsibility for your child, you or an adult from your authorized pick up list must walk your child to the PAWS room and sign them in for morning care and out from afternoon care every day. This policy is designed to protect your child. Children will not be allowed to leave the site on their own, whether to walk to a parent in a waiting car or walk home on their own.



## Authorized Pick-Up List

Your child will be released only to people listed on the Authorized Pick-Up list unless staff have been notified otherwise by the billing office. In an emergency you may call to inform the staff if someone other than an authorized person will pick up your child. PAWS staff are required to ask for identification from anyone attempting to pick up a child. If an unauthorized person attempts to pick up, you will be contacted. If you cannot be reached, your child will be held until you or an emergency contact person arrives. You may add or remove any person from your authorized pick up list by contacting the PAWS billing office. If a sibling is sent to pick up a child, they must be at least 15 years of age AND listed on the pick-up list.

## Procedure for Late Parent Pick Up

The PAWS program closes at 6:00pm. Should a child remain at PAWS after the closing time, the staff will notify persons listed on your authorized pick-up list. Should none of these people be available or able to come for the child, and if the parent has not arrived within 45 minutes of closing, the local authorities will be called. The child will then be turned over into their custody. If a child is picked up after the 6:00pm closing time, parents will be subject to a fee (see page 7 for more details) and continued late pickups may result in removal from the program.

## Severe Weather/Site Closings

The security and safety of the children comes first so if the district cancels, starts late or releases early because they feel there is a threat to the safety of the children, parents and staff, PAWS will follow the same procedures.



### *School Closings, Delays or Early Release Notification*

District Website:

[www.PaynesvilleSchools.com](http://www.PaynesvilleSchools.com)

Community Education Website:

[www.PaynesvilleCE.com](http://www.PaynesvilleCE.com)

### **During Non School Days & Summer Session —**

As a result of the absence of district authority regarding the cancellation of programs due to inclement weather and/or natural disasters, the Community Education Director will be the defining authority during that time.

During offsite field trips, travel decisions will be made at the discretion of the bus company/drivers.

### **During the School Year Session**

#### **Two Hours Late...**

If Paynesville Area Public Schools has a delayed start time due to inclement weather morning PAWS will be **Open**.

#### **Closing Early...**

If Paynesville Area Public Schools is dismissed early to due inclement weather afternoon PAWS will be **Open**.

#### **Schools Closed – PAWS is **\*\*OPEN\*\***...**

If Paynesville Area Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, PAWS will be **OPEN if we have enough staff that can safely get to the school**.

# Student Expectations

**In order for your child to have a positive experience with us, please look at the readiness indicators to determine if your child is ready for a group child care program.**

## **Readiness Indicators:**

- \* Child demonstrates independence in personal care (washing hands, dressing, eating, bathroom use).
- \* Child has the ability to clearly communicate their own needs & understands another's needs.
- \* Child can work with others as part of a group.
- \* Child has some ability to stop & think before deciding how to act.

## *Positive Behavior Interventions*

The staff of PAWS respects the dignity of children. The children are expected to respect each other, just as the staff respects them.

Physical contact in disciplining a child is avoided unless it is necessary to restrain a child from harming himself or another. In correcting a child's behavior, the staff says and shows the child what he or she should be doing rather than focusing on the unwanted behavior. The staff also explains the reasons for the rules the children are asked to follow.

If the staff is unable to resolve a serious problem with a child's behavior (such as aggressive, abusive, disturbing, or destructive acts), the Program Manager or Coordinator will request a conference to discuss the problem with the parents and try to establish a joint plan for dealing with the problem. If there is still no change in the child's behavior, the Coordinator will inform the parents in writing that the behavior is still a serious problem and will invite them to another conference. If the problem still cannot be resolved, the Coordinator will give the parents a notice of dismissal in writing, allowing them two weeks to make other child care arrangements.

## *Behavior Considered Harmful or Inappropriate*

### **Behaviors which directly or indirectly threaten a person's right to be safe.**

- \* Fighting which is verbally abusive or physically aggressive
- \* Verbal aggression such as swearing, hurtful teasing, or disrespectful language of any kind
- \* Inappropriate touching of a person's body or belongings
- \* Threatening talk of weapons

### **Behavior which keeps staff from fulfilling their ability to be available for all children.**

- \* Removing self from group without permission
- \* Outbursts which endanger others
- \* Behaviors that disrupt activities and/or program participants
- \* Destruction of property
- \* Blatant disrespect or absolute refusal of staff person in charge
- \* **WE DO INFORCE A 3-STRIKE POLICY**

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## *Consequences for Harmful or Inappropriate Behavior-3 Strike Policy*

*Participation in PAWS is a privilege.* A child must follow the rules of the program. Harmful or inappropriate behavior towards other students or PAWS staff is a reason for suspension or dismissal from the program.

Children are assisted in finding solutions to current situations, understanding consequences and developing self-control. If the child is having difficulty: PAWS uses a 3 strikes discipline policy.

1. When a child breaks a PAWS or School-wide rule after a warning has been given, they will be given strike one. This consists of a note home.
2. The second strike is also a note home and a phone conference.
3. After three strikes within 30 days, the child will be suspended from PAWS for two-five days. In this case, a note will be sent home, and a conference or phone call between the PAWS Coordinator and the child's parent will take place before the student can return to PAWS. Parents are responsible to pay during this timeframe.
4. Any verbal threat using words such as kill, gun, and cut are automatic suspension for three days. Call the parent immediately. Parents have two hours to pick their child up.



Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_