



2026-2027 Family Handbook

Site: Apple Tree Connections

Address: 5020 N. Providence Ave.

4K Teacher: Renee Buresh

Phone: 920-560-5437 Email: BureshRenee@aasd.k12.wi.us

Site Director: Kristin Kasuboski

Phone: 920-560-5437 Email: info@appletreeconnections.com

*Building lifelong learners through collaborative
partnerships and play-based learning.*

Jennifer Morkin
Appleton Community 4K Principal

Stephani Strube
Dean of Students

(920) 852-5600
COMMUNITY-4K@aasd.k12.wi.us

School website: <http://4k.aasd.k12.wi.us/>

Site website: info@appletreeconnections.com

Dear Appleton Community 4K Parents,

Appleton Community 4K is dedicated to providing high-quality, developmentally appropriate learning experiences to all four-year-old children. In collaboration with our 10 community partners and 4 school host sites, Appleton Community 4K will strive to prepare all students with a strong foundation for lifelong learning and success.

All classrooms and staff will provide safe and nurturing environments, within which all children will learn and grow. Research shows that children with preschool experiences begin school more ready to learn; therefore, a research-based curriculum resource will be implemented. Creative Curriculum is a widely regarded preschool curriculum approach that honors creativity and acknowledges the important role that teachers play in making learning exciting!

Very crucial to your child's 4K experience is the partnership with families. We recognize and support parents as partners in their child's education and care. There will be many opportunities for families to participate in events throughout the year.

Please take your time reading this parent handbook. Most of your questions will be answered. We are looking forward to taking many great steps with you and your family this school year. If at any time you do have questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher, your 4K Site Director, the 4K Dean, or myself. We are all here to ensure that you and your child have a fantastic year of learning and growing!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Morkin
Appleton Community 4K Principal

A Message from Your Site Director

At Apple Tree Connections, we believe in partnering with our parents to provide the best for our children. We are looking forward to you joining our Apple Tree Family, and we are excited about sharing this 4K journey with you. Should something occur that you have a question about or are unhappy with, please do not hesitate to contact your teacher or give me a call so we can work together to address your need. Please do not think that your concern is too little or that you do not want to bother us. Some of the greatest ideas we have had have come from our parents and families.

If you have a concern that you have been unable to resolve with your teacher and/or the 4K Site Director, please contact:

Jennifer Morkin, Principal, Appleton Community 4K

(920) 852-5600 or COMMUNITY-4K@aasd.k12.wi.us. She will help to address your concern and/or direct you to the appropriate individual.

School Hours

Our morning class will begin at 8:30 am and end at 11:14 am. Our afternoon class will begin at 12:20 pm and end at 3:04 pm.

Drop-off / Pick-up Procedures

Students are not to be dropped off at school before 8:25 am for the morning class or 12:15 pm for the afternoon class. The children should be brought into the classroom as class begins. Children should be picked up promptly at 11:14 am (morning class) and 3:04 pm (afternoon class). Parents/guardians may incur a childcare charge if children are dropped off or not picked up within 15 minutes of school start and end times.

Attendance

If your child is ill or will be absent from 4K, please call your child's site at (920-560-5437) no later than 15 minutes after the class session is scheduled to begin. Alternatively, you can call the Appleton Community 4K attendance line at 920-852-5600, option 1, or you can use the Absence Request tool in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal to report your child's absence.

Find instructions here:

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1715706070/aasdk12wius/u4nt8nx7yogejfiw4dni/absencerequestcampusparent.pdf>

For safety reasons, if we do not receive a call from you, we will call you at home or work to verify your child's absence. If your child rides a Lamers bus, please also notify Lamers Bus Lines that your child will not be riding the bus by calling them at 920-832-8800 ext 2.

Appleton Community 4K is a public school grade level, and all 4K students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled school days unless excused. Excused and unexcused absences will be determined based on the procedures described in the AASD Student Attendance Policy 430. Regular, on-time attendance is essential to the child’s success in 4K and developing habits for later school attendance. However, children should not be in school if their presence is detrimental to their own health or that of others.

Illness Policy

In order to promote a healthy environment at school for all children, we ask that you be particularly alert to the beginning signs of illness in your child. Keeping your child home during an illness until recovered will help prevent the spread of illness to others in the school. A child with a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting should remain home until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

The following symptoms may indicate the presence of a communicable disease:

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|---|------------------------------|-------------|
| Thick mucus from the nose | Persistent, productive cough | Red eyes |
| Persistent abdominal discomfort | Diarrhea | Sore throat |
| Nausea or vomiting | Skin infection | Earache |
| Discharge from eyes or ears | Excessive drowsiness | |
| Any rash that is not normal for your child | | |
| Elevated temperature associated with other symptoms | | |

If your child has any of these symptoms at school, you will be contacted, and if so will be expected to make arrangements to pick your child up from school as soon as possible.

To help us provide the best possible care for your child, please keep your child's teacher informed of any changes to their health, including medications, allergies, or other medical needs. If you have questions or concerns about your child's health, please contact your child's teacher or site director.

Health Information

Medications should be given at home whenever possible. Should a medication be required during school hours, parents/guardians and the child’s health care provider must fill out and sign an “Authorization for Medication Administration” form. Medications must be supplied in properly labeled containers from the pharmacy. The school must be notified whenever changes in medication or treatment are made. Children are not allowed to medicate themselves. For you and your child’s protection, an adult must deliver all medications to the classroom teachers or the 4K site office. Medications are never sent home with a child.

All students must be in compliance with Wisconsin's Immunization Law. If your child is due for immunizations, they can be received at no cost or for a minimal fee, through the Appleton Health Department at 920-832-6429. Your child's pediatrician or family doctor will also be able to assist you with ensuring your child's immunizations are up to date.

Please inform your child's teacher or site director of any changes in your child's health or any new health concerns that may develop.

In Case of Lice: The parent/guardian of any student found to have nits or live lice will be notified. The student may remain in school until dismissal; however, the parent/guardian may choose to pick up the student at the time of discovery or at the end of the school day.

Dressing for the Weather

Children may go outside when weather and playground conditions permit. Appleton Area School District follows district-wide outdoor weather guidelines to ensure safe and consistent decisions regarding outdoor activities. Children should come to school dressed appropriately for the weather, including winter coats, hats, mittens or gloves, snow pants, and boots when needed. If this is a concern, please contact your child's teacher.

In warm weather, please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. Make sure shoes fit well and are safe for steps and playground equipment.

School Closures

In the event of bad weather, dangerous road conditions, school emergencies, school closings, delayed starts, or early dismissals, Appleton Area School District will share important updates on the District website, social media, and local radio and TV stations as quickly as possible. Families may designate in their Infinite Campus Portal whether they would like to receive emergency closing notifications by phone call, email, text message, or a combination of these methods.

Please avoid calling the District or school offices during such emergency situations. This seriously disrupts our phone lines and makes it difficult to make vital outgoing calls.

School Closing: When the Appleton Area School District closes, Appleton Community 4K classes will also be cancelled. ATC will follow the Appleton Area School District protocol for weather related closures.

School Delay: If the school has a two-hour delay due to bad weather or any other emergency, the morning 4K class will be cancelled. The afternoon class will begin as normal on emergency two-hour delay days. ATC will follow the Appleton Area School District protocol for weather related closures and delays.

Communication

If you have a change in your child's schedule, pick-up procedures, or other important information to share, please send a note with your child in their take-home folder. These folders are checked daily. Written communication is encouraged because it helps ensure information is clear and reduces the possibility of misunderstandings.

Teachers are unable to make changes to your child's scheduled pick-up procedures without direct written communication from a parent or guardian. If an emergency or unexpected situation requires a temporary change, please contact your child's site directly at (920)-560-5437

Please share information that may help us better support your child, including changes in sleep, appetite, health, family circumstances, or other unique situations (such as a new baby, moving, or other significant changes). This information helps teachers better understand your child's needs and provide appropriate support.

Change of Address / Phone Information

It is critical that the school is able to contact a parent/guardian immediately in the event of an emergency involving your child. Therefore, it is essential that families promptly notify the school **in writing** if their home, work, cell, or emergency contact information changes. Families should also update their information in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal whenever there is a change to their address, phone numbers, emergency contacts, or email address.

Bussing / Expectations on Bus

The Appleton Area School District Pupil Transportation Handbook, which outlines student transportation services and policies, will be shared with families in an August Family Message. Lamers Bus Lines, the district's transportation provider, is committed to ensuring safe travel by supporting appropriate student behavior. Bus drivers are responsible for maintaining order on the bus and will report any misconduct to the appropriate school personnel. Please note that riding the school bus is a privilege and may be suspended or revoked by the district if necessary.

Additionally, please make sure your child's colored transportation ID band is securely attached to their backpack for the entire school year. If you haven't received one or need a replacement, reach out to your child's teacher. We also ask that your child wear their wrist ID band during the first two weeks of school. It's an important tool in helping us ensure each 4K student gets to their correct site, especially when some of our little friends feel shy and can't tell us where they're headed. The wristband helps us keep everyone safe and on track as we get to know each child.

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Birthday / Holiday Celebrations

The Appleton Area School District promotes a whole child approach, which ensures that each student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged as part of the total learning environment. For important medical, diversity, and cultural reasons, and to strive toward inclusive environments wherever possible, the Appleton Area School District School Wellness Policy was revised in Spring 2018. Recognitions for special occasions (birthdays, holidays, etc.) during the school day will not include students bringing in snacks/treats from outside of the District for other students and will instead take place through non-food practices. This policy includes our school host and community partner classrooms of Appleton Community 4K.

Home / School Folders

A take-home folder will be provided to your child on the first day of school. This folder will contain important 4K information, as well as class projects or activities that your child will want to share with you. At times, your child's folder will include forms that require your attention and need to be returned to school. Please place communications from your family to the teacher in this folder as well. Please keep this Home/School Folder inside of your child's backpack and check it daily for information regarding school.

Our Philosophy on the Use of Play as a Learning Tool

In Appleton Community 4K, we know that children learn best when they are able to think about, organize, and investigate the world around them. Play Workshop is a purposeful part of the 4K day where teachers intentionally integrate pre-academic and school readiness learning into play. Children engage in a wide range of activities within a safe, nurturing environment that supports both development and discovery.

Throughout the 4K day, children are learning as they play—pre-academic skills, developing social language, emotional regulation, and making meaningful learning connections. When children engage in various types of play, they build on what they know, form new brain networks, and strengthen pre-academic and social-emotional skills. To support this, we provide developmentally appropriate, hands-on activities that reflect children's interests and invite active participation. A positive, supportive environment encourages each child to grow as an independent, creative, and confident learner.

Our Appleton Community 4K Curriculum

The AASD 4K Curriculum was developed by a committee of school district and community early childhood, 4K, and 5K teachers and was approved by the Board of Education on March 25, 2013, and revised in June 2020. The Appleton Area School District 4-Year-Old Standards and Curriculum were developed utilizing the resources of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, Wisconsin Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, AASD Kindergarten Curriculum, and the Wisconsin Pyramid Model for Social and Emotional Competencies. Your child will experience many opportunities for large group, small group, and center activities designed to support development across early learning domains. Through these experiences, children develop independence, confidence, curiosity, and the ability to work well with others. We are teaching children how to learn, not just in school but throughout their lives. We do this by creating purposeful and productive play experiences that help children grow in all areas of their development.

Appleton Community 4K supports the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation for no more than one hour of screen time/digital media use each day for this age group. As such, the use of computers, tablets, and other electronic devices is limited in the 4K classroom. The following AASD guidelines for parties, celebrations, movies, and television programs will be followed:

- Classrooms can have 3-5 parties/celebrations per school year.
- The purpose and rationale for parties/celebrations will be communicated clearly and in a timely manner to families.
- Parties/celebrations will not advance one set of religious beliefs over another.
- Only G-rated films and Y/G-rated television programs may be used without parent/guardian permission. PG-rated films and Y7/PG-rated television programs require principal approval and parent/guardian permission.
- Teachers must preview content prior to showing any movie or TV program in school.
- Reasonable use of movies and TV programs is expected. Movies and TV programs must have educational value and connect to AASD curriculum.
- The teacher will provide an appropriate alternative activity if the child is not permitted to view the film or television program.

Assessment

Children develop and learn at different rates. Teachers use ongoing assessments to understand each child's growth, progress, and learning needs. Appleton Community 4K uses Teaching Strategies GOLD as an assessment tool aligned with the 4K curriculum.

Students also participate in the Wisconsin Act 20 Early Literacy Screener twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. This screener helps identify students who may benefit from additional early literacy support.

Progress Reports and Parent Teacher Conferences

Parents of 4K students will receive Progress Reports highlighting their child's growth and development in February and May.

Parent-teacher conferences will be held twice a year for all children attending Appleton Community 4K. These will be scheduled in October and February.

Behavior Guidance Approach

It is the goal of Appleton Community 4K to work with children and families to promote positive child behaviors. Positive behaviors are encouraged and supported in the classroom, in the home, and in the community. Appleton Community 4K has implemented the Pyramid Model for Social and Emotional Competence to achieve this goal.

The Pyramid Model provides a framework for teaching, practicing and using positive behavior supports such as solution cards, visual supports including individual schedules, clear classroom expectations, and Tucker Turtle's problem-solving steps to regulate strong emotions. In 4K we recognize that our students are just beginning their social and emotional learning journey. Teaching our 4K children social and emotional competencies is our priority. Sometimes our students demonstrate behaviors that are not consistent with our expectations. We view these situations as opportunities to teach or reteach and support our students' learning.

Occasionally, some of our students experience strong emotions and/or challenging behaviors that need additional behavioral support and instruction. For these students, our school staff work with the child's family, the child's teacher, and the site director to develop a support plan. This plan includes strategies to reduce the challenging behaviors while teaching and supporting more effective ways for the student to manage emotions and use problem-solving strategies.

Retention

Children enrolled in Appleton Community 4K attend for one year. Grade-level retention may be considered if a child demonstrates a lack of progress toward meeting the expectations of the board-adopted 4K curriculum, based on observation and progress monitoring data. After spring Parent/Teacher conferences, if a parent/guardian of an Appleton Community 4K student would like their child to be considered for retention, they should submit a letter to the Appleton Community 4K principal stating their request for consideration and the concerns leading to their request. Requests must be received by April 15th.

Upon receipt of a request for consideration of retention, the principal will convene a Student Services team, which will include the child's 4K teacher and site director. This team will review progress and assessment data for the student and complete classroom observations. In order

to fully assess the child's progress throughout the 4K year, a meeting will be held during the final two weeks of school with the Student Services team and the child's parents/guardians to discuss the request and the information collected, to determine whether retention is recommended.

Parents/guardians who are concerned with their child's progress should contact their child's teacher for more information regarding the Consideration for Retention process. In addition, your child's teacher will be able to provide you with informational resources for you to review as you consider your child's growth during 4K.

Newsletters

A classroom newsletter will be sent home each week. This communication tool will not only keep you informed about what is happening in your child's classroom, but will also serve as a way to start conversations with your child about their day. Newsletters will also be available online at: www.appletreeconnections.com. In addition, a monthly newsletter will be available from the Appleton Community 4K office that will provide families with school information, including information about upcoming family involvement events. The monthly newsletter will be sent home to families at the email address listed in Infinite Campus, as well as be available online at: <https://4k.aasd.k12.wi.us/news-00/4k-newsletter>.

Toys and Electronic Devices from Home

Parents/guardians are asked to discourage children from bringing toys from home to school. When these items are misplaced or broken, it causes much unnecessary grief. Electronic devices such as cellular phones, electronic devices, two-way communication, or gaming devices must be stored in the student's backpack during the school day. Because of the young age of our 4K students and the lack of secure personal storage areas, parents/guardians are encouraged not to send such devices with children to school.

Family Involvement

An important part of our program is family involvement. Families will have an opportunity to become involved with their child in the school setting and in learning activities throughout the community. These opportunities allow your child to share what they are learning and allow families to learn and experience new things together.

Parents/guardians and families are a child's first and most important teachers. We are excited to join you in this important work. Please take advantage of the many opportunities that will be available throughout this school year here at our site and throughout the district. Information about family involvement activities will be included in your child's weekly and monthly newsletters.



AASD Complaint Procedure

Appleton Community 4K

Appleton Area School District staff are committed to working closely with parents and guardians to resolve issues and concerns in a way that is mutually agreeable.

What are the steps to follow when you have a concern, question, or problem that needs attention?

1 First, contact the **classroom teacher or staff member**. If there is a serious issue, you may wish to schedule a face-to-face meeting rather than phone.



2 If no resolution has been reached, or if your concern is 4K site wide, please contact the **4K Site Director**.



3 If no resolution has been reached, or if your concern is school wide, please contact the school principal, **Jennifer Morkin** at 852-5600.



4 If resolution is still not reached, please contact the **Assistant Superintendent** assigned to your school at 852-5300 x60113.



5 Unresolved issues may be appealed to the **Superintendent** at 852-5300 x60111.



6 The final step in the District appeal process is the Board of Education. Appeal requests should be submitted in writing to the **President of the Board of Education**, AASD Scullen Leadership Center, P.O. Box 2019, Appleton, Wisconsin 54912-2019, or email AASDBoard@aad.k12.wi.us.