

# **Panther Cubs Panther Pals**

# **POLICY HANDBOOK**

**Summer 2023**

**School Year 2022-2023**

Panther Cubs – 507-696-4995

Panther Pals – 507-577-8599

**Email Contact**

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## **Program Offerings**

- Panther Pals Before School Childcare (located at Pine Island Elementary School)
  - The center opens at 6:00am. Students will be released for breakfast prior to school starting.
- Panther Pals After School Childcare (located at Pine Island Elementary School)
  - After the school day ends children K-4<sup>th</sup> grade will report to the cafeteria for check in. After school the children are looking to unwind, socialize, and participate in activities that will keep them engaged and excited. Our after school program is just the place for kids during their out of school time to feel safe and have fun. Panther Pals closes at 6:00pm.
- Panther Cubs Childcare (located at Saint Paul Lutheran Church)
  - Childcare is available for children who are 33 months – PreK. This program offers varied experiences in socialization and play in a warm, colorful environment, allowing your child to grow and develop at a pace that is just right for them. This program wraps around your child’s preschool schedule.
- Panther Pals Non-School Day Childcare (located at Pine Island Elementary School)
  - Childcare is available from 6:00am – 6:00pm on certain non-school days during the school year. A complete list of non-school days when childcare is available is listed on the next page.
- Panther Cubs Non-School Day Childcare (located at Saint Paul Lutheran Church)
  - Childcare is available from 6:00am – 6:00pm on certain non-school days during the school year. A complete list of non-school days when childcare is available is listed on the next page.
- Panther Cubs and Panther Pals Summer Childcare
  - The summer program starts on Monday, June 5, 2023. The center is open from 6:00am – 6:00pm.
  - All programs will be located at the Early Learning Center.
  - The summer childcare program offers fun and engaging theme activities, weekly trips to the Pine Island Pool, and many exciting field trips! Children also have the opportunity to participate in Community Ed Summer Recreation activities, swimming lessons and the summer reading program offered at the Pine Island Public Library.
- Panther Cubs and Panther Pals Weather Related School Closure Childcare
  - Please see page 6 with all weather related information

Please be assured the decision to close or delay opening is made thoughtfully and with the best interest of both children and staff. It is important that parents/guardians develop a backup childcare plan in case childcare is canceled or delayed. The safety of children and staff remains the number one priority.

## **Non-School Days that Panther Cubs and Panther Pals is Open 2022-2023**

<b>August 29 – August 31</b> (All day care is available)	<b>December 27-29</b> (All day care is available)	<b>May 30-31, 2023</b> (All day care is available)
<b>October 21</b> (All day care is available)	<b>January 16</b> (All day care is available)	<b>June 5, 2022</b> (Summer Childcare Starts)
<b>October 31</b> (All day care is available)	<b>March 17</b> (All day care is available)	
<b>November 23</b> (All day care is available)	<b>March 20-24</b> (All day care is available)	

## **Half Days that Panther Cubs and Panther Pals is Open 2022-2023**

<b>October 20</b> (Open after school releases)	<b>December 7</b> (Open after school releases)	<b>February 15</b> (Open after school releases)	<b>April 26</b> (Open after school releases)
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## **Non-School Days that Panther Cubs and Panther Pals is Closed 2022-2023**

<b>August 23-26</b>	<b>December 23 &amp; 26</b>	<b>May 29, 2023</b>
<b>September 5</b>	<b>December 30 &amp; Jan 2</b>	<b>June 1-2, 2023</b>
<b>November 24 &amp; 25</b>	<b>April 7, 2023</b>	<b>July 3-5, 2023</b>

## **Enrollment Requirements**

Registration forms must be completed and on file prior to the first day a child is scheduled to attend for both summer care and school year care. It is imperative that children's files include current data at all times.

The following items must be submitted before a child is considered enrolled. If the desired rooms are at full capacity, families who have fulfilled all enrollment requirements will be given preference over those who have not.

- Panther Cubs or Panther Pals Registration Form
- Copy of current immunizations
- Last page of the Parent Handbook
- Monthly Calendar
- Be in good standing with billing and payment policy
- Be in good standing with late pick up policy
- Be in good standing with behavior and discipline policy

Parents must inform center staff immediately of any changes to address, work or home telephone numbers, employer, emergency contact information, or other important data.

## **Scheduling Policy**

We strive to maintain low staff/child ratios in order to provide children with more individualized care and attention; therefore, it is necessary that families submit an attendance schedule by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month for the next month, including approximate times of arrival and departure. You will be charged based on the schedule you submit regardless of reason for absence.

## **Notification of Absence**

Communication is key! The center must be notified in the event that your child will not be attending on a scheduled day. In the event that your child will not be attending as scheduled it is expected that you will call or stop by to let us know. When a child does not show up after school, the staff must spend time on the phone, tracking the child down. This takes away from the rest of the children; therefore, you will be charged a \$5 fee for all unnecessary searches. To report your child's absence please call the center's direct line at 507-272-7140 or email Jennie Barker.

## **Registration Fees**

These fees are due at registration for the fall and summer.

- New Enrollees
  - \$25 – First Child
  - \$15 – Second Child
- Re-Enrollees
  - \$15 – First Child
  - \$15 – Second Child

## **Panther Cubs Rates for School Year 2022-2023**

- Scheduled (monthly calendars submitted by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the prior month)
  - Preschool Days = \$25/child/day
  - Non Pre-School Days = \$30/child/day
  - Hourly = \$5.50/child
- Drop-in Prices (any days or hours added after your calendar has been submitted)
  - Preschool Days = \$27/child/day
  - Non-Preschool Days = \$32/child/day
  - Hourly = \$6.00/child
- Non School Days
  - Scheduled
    - \$33/child/day (4 hours or more)
    - \$19/child/day (Up to 4 hours)

## **Panther Cubs Rates for Summer 2023**

- \$33/day (4 hours or more)
- \$19/day (Up to 4 hours)

\*\*Please note: Advance payments are required during the summer. No hourly rate is available.

## **Panther Pals Rates for School Year 2022-2023**

- Hourly
  - Morning Scheduled = \$5/child/hour
  - Morning Drop In = \$6/child/hour
  - After School Scheduled = \$5/child/hour
  - After School Drop In = \$6/child/hour
- Non School Days
  - Scheduled
    - \$31/child/day (4 hours or more)

- \$17/child/day (Up to 4 hours)
- Tracking Fee
  - \$5 tracking fee if your child doesn't show up and we need to make calls to find them.

### **Panther Pals Rates for Summer 2023**

- \$31/day (4 hours or more)
- \$17/day (Up to 4 hours)

\*\*Please note: Advance payments are required during the summer. No hourly rate is available.

### **Inclement Weather Policy and Rates**

**If Pine Island Public Schools announces a 2-hour late start prior to 6:00 am:** Childcare programs will operate during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the elementary school and Saint Paul Lutheran Church.

**If Pine Island Public Schools announces a 2-hour late start after 6:00 am:** Childcare programs will operate during the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the elementary school and Saint Paul Lutheran Church.

**If Pine Island Public Schools announces an early dismissal due to weather:** Childcare programs will operate during the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the elementary school and Saint Paul Lutheran Church.

**If Pine Island Public Schools is CLOSED due to weather:** All childcare programs will operate during the hours of 7:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. at the Saint Paul Lutheran Church.

#### **Rates:**

- 2 Hour Late Start
  - Scheduled Before School = \$5/child/hour
  - Drop-in Before School = \$6/child/hour
- Early Dismissal
  - Scheduled After School = \$5/child/hour
  - Drop-in After School = \$6/child/hour

Please be assured the decision to close or delay opening is made thoughtfully and with the best interest of both children and staff. It is important that parents/guardians develop a backup childcare plan in case Cool Panthers is canceled or delayed. The safety of children and staff remains the number one priority.

*Pine Island superintendent will inform you by phone message and email. Information may also be obtained from the radio and television station's websites.*

### **Billing and Payment Policy**

School Year: Childcare charges will be posted on ProCare each Monday after the week has been completed. Payments are due by that Friday. Payments received later than one week past the statement date will be subject to a late payment fee of \$10. Please contact the program director to make special payment arrangements, if need be. Prompt payment is expected and required for our program to function successfully. Please keep accounts in good standing, as a delinquent account is grounds for termination from the program and will be sent to a collections agency.

Summer: Childcare charges will be posted on ProCare each Friday for the next week. Billing periods begin on Monday and end, on Friday for each week. Advance payments are due on the first day of the week that your child attends for the total number of days your child is scheduled for that week. All late payments will be assessed a \$10 late fee.

### **Past Due Payments**

Payments are due upon receipt. Payments received late will be subject to the late payment fee of \$10. Panther Cubs and Panther Pals follow the Pine Island Public School's process for collecting delinquent fees. After two past due notices have been sent to parents/guardians, all delinquent fees will be turned over to a collection agency. Once an account has been turned over to a collection agency, the parent/guardian will be notified to find alternate care immediately.

### **Payment Options**

You have the option to make childcare payments

- Checks – Make payable to Panther Pals
- Cash – Make sure you put it in an envelope with your child's name on it.
- If you want to make online payments yourself this is how you do it:
  - Go to [www.myprocare.com](http://www.myprocare.com) website
  - Sign In
  - You will put the amount that you want to pay in

### **Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) Check**

If a check is returned one time due to non-sufficient funds, the parent/guardian will be required to submit all future payments by cash, money order, or cashier's check. The district expects payments of NSF checks within two weeks of the check being returned by the bank. If the NSF check has not been reconciled within that time, the unpaid check will be turned over to a collection agency, and the parent/guardian will be notified to find alternate care immediately.

### **Dependent Care Reimbursement Forms**

Families using employer Dependent Care Reimbursement/Flexible Spending Accounts may submit forms to the childcare coordinator for verification. The forms must be completed except for the authorization signature and should accompany payment. Only the actual amount of childcare paid by the parents/guardians will be verified. Please allow a few days for the forms to be signed and returned. The form will be returned to the child's file folder.

### **Annual Statement of Childcare Fees**

Childcare fees paid may be tax deductible. An annual statement of childcare fees paid for 2022 will be issued by request only. Parents/guardians need to consult a tax advisor to determine qualification for an education tax credit or deduction.

## **Late Pick Up Policy**

Childcare closes promptly at 6:00pm according to the clock at the center. Staff will attempt to be understanding when emergencies arise that may cause parents to be late picking up a child, but it is expected that parents/guardians will call the center's direct number (507-272-7140) as soon as it is known that they will arriving later than 6:00pm. The family's childcare account will be billed **\$1 for every minute past 6:00pm.** If no phone call has been received at the center, staff will attempt to contact the parents. If unsuccessful, persons listed as authorized emergency contacts will be phoned to come for the child. If no one has arrived to pick up the child by 6:45pm, County Child Protection Services will be called to come and pick up the child. With each late pick up occurrence a Late Pick-Up Fee Assessment form will be filled out by the staff and parents will be asked to sign the late fee form. Three late pick-ups in a year may result in termination of childcare services.

## **Releasing a Child**

Children will only be released from the center to parents or appointed guardians. Other individuals or emergency contacts authorized to pick up will only be allowed to sign the child out if prior notification has been made to childcare staff by the child's parent or guardian. Children will not be allowed to leave school grounds on their own to attend lessons or other activities. In an emergency situation, a parent/guardian must call to inform the staff that an adult other than an authorized person(s) will pick up the child. The parent/guardian may be asked to describe the person, and the individual picking up the child will need to show picture identification (License). If staff are not comfortable with the situation, they may call the parent/guardian for further clarification. Failure to sign out could result in additional charges being applied to your account.

## **Snacks and Meals**

- Breakfast
  - School day –
    - Panther Cubs will have the option of a school breakfast at parent cost.
    - Panther Pals will be released prior to school starting to have breakfast through the school food program.
  - Non-School day – You must bring a breakfast from home for your child to eat at childcare.
- Lunch
  - School day – Panther Cub kids will have the choice to have hot lunch provided by school food program or to bring a cold lunch.
  - Non-School day – Children are required to bring their own lunch and drink from home. We are not able to store their lunches in the refrigerator, so make sure they have a cold pack to keep their food cold. We are also not able to warm up any lunches.
- Snacks
  - Each child will need to bring 2 snacks per day.
  - Parents may bring in snacks for all the children on special occasions. Such snacks must be store bought and cleared with the lead teacher to make sure there are no kids with certain allergies.



## **Clothing and Other Belongings**

Children should wear clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for floor activities, outdoor play and messy experiences. Shoes must be worn at all times. Please expect that children will play outside during scheduled times except during extreme weather conditions. During the winter months, please be sure to send them with appropriate cold weather clothing and inside shoes. If child is susceptible to toileting accidents, please be sure that a change of clothes is packed each day.

Outdoor Clothing Guidelines for Panther Cubs and Panther Pals:

60 Degrees = Short Sleeves

50 – 60 Degrees = Sweatshirt

40 – 50 Degrees = Jacket

30 – 40 Degrees = Jacket, Hat, and Gloves

Below 30 Degrees = Full Snow Gear

Children are NOT allowed to bring toys, electronics, and money from home. Program staff will NOT be responsible for lost, broken or stolen items. Weapons, toys, or replicas that promote violence in any way (guns, knives, swords, weapon look-a-likes, fireworks, magazines, books, etc.) are NOT allowed to be brought to childcare. If it is discovered that a child has something of this nature in his/her possession a staff person will confiscate the item. A parent/guardian will be notified of the situation and the appropriate action will be taken, which may include suspension of childcare services.

## **Toilet Training**

Children enrolled are not required to be toilet trained. If your child has an excessive amount of accidents, the staff will communicate with the parents to see if they can come up with a plan for the child to succeed in toileting issues. An extra change of clothing should always be packed in child's backpack in case of an accident.

## **Safety**

Safety procedures will be reviewed on an on-going basis. Evacuation and shelter drills will be conducted on a regular basis. All emergency telephone numbers are posted in the center. An emergency radio and flashlight will be available at all times for extreme emergency weather or other emergencies.

The Panther Pals door will be locked at all times. To enter the room please enter your code or press the doorbell.

## **Medication and Illness**

The administration of medications should be given at home whenever possible, and doctors should be encouraged to schedule medications around the time a child would spend at the center. In order for staff to administer medication, a medication permission form which may be obtained from a staff member, needs to be completed by the parent or guardian. All medication must be in its original container with a label prepared by a pharmacist or physician. A log of when the medication is given and who administered it will be recorded by center staff. If an over the counter pain reliever is to be given during childcare hours, medication must be in the original container and the container must be sealed.

We ask that if your child is ill, please keep them home. If a child has diarrhea, throws up while at childcare, or has a fever of 100 degrees or higher staff will have the child rest in a quiet area until a parent is available to pick up their child. If a parent cannot be reached, staff will call the alternate phone numbers listed on the enrollment form. The child should not return to school until symptom free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication). If your child has tested positive for an illness, he/she should stay home until 24 hours after the antibiotic treatment has started.

Please notify childcare staff if your child has the following diseases or conditions. This includes, but is not limited to: Chicken Pox, Head Lice, COVID-19, Fifth's Disease, Influenza, Pinkeye, Whooping Cough, Strep, etc.

## **Accidents**

The childcare program will operate in a manner that minimizes accidents and injuries to children and staff. Should an accident or injury occur, staff will act immediately to administer the following emergency procedures:

- The staff will call for secondary assistance.
- The staff will carry out immediate first aid.
- A staff member will call the parents if necessary and/or fill out an injury report.
- If parents or alternate emergency numbers cannot be reached, the program will have the authority to call 911 for treatment and/or transportation to a medical facility. A staff member will accompany the injured child to the hospital and stay until the parent or guardian arrives.
- In life threatening emergency situations, the staff may need to contact the local emergency unit before calling the parent.

Pine Island School District #255 and Panther Cubs/Panther Pals is not liable for any accidents, injuries, ambulance rides, hospital stays, and any expenses resulting from the medical treatment. Parents need to rely on their own health insurance.

## **Guidance Policy**

The program is committed to a discipline policy which will enhance the health and safety of all children and adults in the program. Childcare will strive to provide a rich environment for your child, an environment that is safe and supports your child's development. Program staff will strive to implement a positive approach to discipline through learning and positive re-direction.

- Staff is expected to act as positive role models.
- Both the group as a whole and the needs of the students will be taken into consideration.
- Rules will be appropriate for each child's age and stage of development.
- Rules will be consistently implemented.
- The reason for each rule will always be explained and related to the child's wellbeing, and to the rights and safety of others.

Physical fighting will not be tolerated. Children will be encouraged to work out their disagreements on their own. "Take a Break" and redirection will be used when necessary, as well as loss of privileges. Corporal punishment and emotional abuse of a child are strictly prohibited.

Persistent behavior problems will be documented. Parents, supervisor, and the director will work together in solving the problem. If the behavior problem continues, and disrupts the management/operation of the program, the child may be dismissed from the program.

## **Right to Refuse Service**

Panther Cubs and Panther Pals reserves the right to refuse service to a child if it is determined that the program cannot meet the needs of the child. In the event that the program determines a child should be dismissed, the parents will be given adequate notice so other childcare arrangements can be made.

Reasons for termination from the program may include, but is not limited to:

- Abusive language and/or threatening behavior toward staff or other children by child or parent.
- Parent(s) arrive for pick-up after 6:00pm more than three times during the year.
- Failure to pay for services, or to contact program coordinator to develop a workable plan for payment within 14 days of receiving a billing statement. Notice of discontinuation of childcare services due to non-payment may be put into effect immediately and without warning. Billing statements and/or past due letters sent would serve as adequate notice.
- It is decided that the program can no longer meet the needs of the child.
- Blatant disregard of childcare policies and procedures.

## **Behavior Expectations**

1. Respect Authority
2. Respect Rights of Others
3. Respect Property
4. Display Appropriate Social Skills
5. Display Positive and Productive Character

### **Behavior Consequences (\*\*Severe behavior may move to Step 3 or higher\*\*)**

#### **Step 1: *Warning***

Student is warned to stop inappropriate behavior.

#### **Step 2: *Take a Break***

Length of time may vary according to each situation.

#### **Step 3: *First Behavior Plan (for serious problems/repeat offenses)***

Staff member will write an incident report of what happened. Staff will determine what type of behavior modification needs to take place. Ex: Take a break, social stories, behavior chart. Parent will be notified and receive a copy of the incident report.

#### **Step 4: *Second Behavior Plan***

Staff member will write an incident report of what happened. A meeting will be arranged with the parent, guardian, and coordinator to create a behavior plan. Parent will be notified and receive a copy of the incident report and behavior plan.

#### **Step 5: *Third Behavior Plan***

Panther Cubs and Panther Pals reports the incident to the parents. The student will be suspended from childcare for three days. (Parent will have one day notice where the child may attend Panther Cubs or Panther Pals while the parent finds childcare for the following three days). The student may return after the three day suspension.

**Step 6:** *Suspension from Panther Cubs and Panther Pals for School Year or Summer*

Parent is called and requested to pick up the student immediately. Student, parent, and childcare coordinator work out a plan for return at the beginnings of new program (summer or school year).

**Step 7:** *Permanent Suspension from Panther Cubs and Panther Pals*

No warning will be given for inappropriate behavior that causes physical or extreme emotional harm to another child/children or for leaving the designated area without a supervisor or permission to do so.

## **Parent Involvement and Responsibilities**

Panther Cubs and Panther Pals programs are enriched by partnership between parents and school staff. Active participation in the following necessary and appreciated:

- Inform center staff immediately of changes to phone numbers, addresses, emergency contact information, health issues, medications, etc.
- Submit schedules promptly.
- Check the parent area for new information and reminders.
- Read newsletters, announcements, permission slips and respond promptly to meet deadlines.
- Call to inform staff if your child will not be attending for the day.
- Be prompt in picking up child. Please call if you anticipate arriving after 6:00pm.
- Communicate concerns, suggestions, questions, or compliments to program staff.
- Listen to concerns of staff members regarding your child and cooperatively work towards an agreeable solution to any problems.
- Dress children appropriately for indoor and outdoor activities; boots, mittens, coats, snowpants are a must during cold months.
- Do not allow child to bring toys of any kind.
- Inform staff if a child has been exposed to a communicable disease.
- Encourage child to return materials, equipment and supplies to appropriate areas before leaving the center for the day.
- Pay bills promptly.

## **Children's Responsibilities and Expectations**

Panther Cubs and Panther Pals expect that children will maintain age-appropriate behavior.

All children the expectations are as follows:

- Be responsible for their actions.
- Respect the rules and follow directions.
- Respect the rights of others – keep hands and feet to self.
- Respect program and school property and the property of others. Return toys and materials appropriately before taking out something else.
- Use acceptable language at all times.
- Remain with a staff person at all times.
- Assist in cleanup throughout the day.

If it is found that a child's behavior is detrimental to themselves, other children, or staff, the parent or guardian will be expected to take an active role in solving the problem. In some cases, a child may be suspended from the program until a behavior modification plan is developed between staff and parent/guardian. Unsuccessful attempts to modify a child's detrimental behavior could result in termination of childcare services.

Since children are supervised in a group setting, their behavior is not expected to routinely require one-on-one supervision. If it is found that a child would benefit from one-on-one staffing to insure the safety and well-being of their self and others, this option will be evaluated and could possibly be implemented through the involvement of the child's parent or guardian.

## **Staff Responsibilities and Expectations**

The program expects that staff will:

- Treat all children and families with respect.
- Celebrate the individuality and diversity of all children within the program.
- Instill social values through direct teaching and role modeling.
- Apply program rules consistently and fairly to insure the safety and wellbeing of all children.
- Always be expected to practice professionalism.

**Panther Cubs and Panther Pals staff are here to provide your child a safe, welcoming environment by offering opportunities for building valuable life-long skills and meaningful relationships. We look forward to working with you and helping your child grow!**

## **Contact Information**

Panther Pals

Address: 8749 Cty Rd 5 Pine Island, MN 55963

Cell Phone: 507-577-8599

Panther Cubs

Address: 214 3<sup>rd</sup> St SW Pine Island, MN 55963

Cell Phone: 507-696-4995

Jennie Barker

Childcare Director

Phone: 507-272-7140

Email: [Jennie.barker@pineisland.k12.mn.us](mailto:Jennie.barker@pineisland.k12.mn.us)

## **Parent/Guardian Handbook**

I have read and understand the contents of the Panther Cubs and Panther Pals Parent Handbook. I agree to abide by the policies contained within.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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This handbook was approved by Community Education. This handbook may be changed or amended during the school year. Changes will be posted in the classrooms and monthly newsletters. If you have any questions about a provision, contact the program coordinator.