



**2026-2027
School Year**

Chippewa Falls 4K Cardinals Parent Handbook



Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District

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Dear Families,

Welcome to our 4-year-old Kindergarten Program! We are excited to have you and your child participate in our program and join approximately 250 four-year-olds in our community to learn in age-appropriate classrooms with peers their own age. Your children will learn in an environment where play is encouraged, build his/her social and emotional skills (how to compromise, handle emotions, be respectful of others and problem solve), and learn in a way that supports individual curiosity, exploration, and experiences.

4-year old Kindergarten started in 2006 as one of four goals from the Chippewa Early Educare Partnership (ChEEP). ChEEP started in 2003 as a group of early childhood professionals, in-home daycare providers, childcare centers, private and public schools, the medical community, mental health professionals, and birth-3 personnel, to identify what our community envisioned as the hope and dreams for children ages birth-8. One goal from ChEEP was to provide quality integrated services for all children and families and thus the group explored the opportunity to provide a preschool available to any 4-year-old child in the Chippewa Falls community. In 2006, ChEEP presented their plan to the CFAUSD Board of Education and enrollment for the 2006-07 school year started in February.

As a district we are fortunate to partner with high-quality childcare centers, and CESA 11 Head Start to provide optimal programming. Their DPI certified teachers know and understand early childhood development and how to facilitate children's learning in a classroom setting. Parents play a vital role in their child's learning as well and therefore, parent engagement is an essential component of 4K and your child's learning. We highly encourage you to help out in the classroom, communicate regularly with your child's teacher, attend functions and opportunities through your child's 4K site, and participate in the family events offered throughout our community.

We look forward to your participation and this exciting year of educational growth for your child.

Welcome!

4K Partner Sites and the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District

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CFAUSD Mission and Educational Philosophy

The Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD) is the governing body of 4-year old Kindergarten. The vision, mission and values apply to 4K programming.

Mission Statement

Together with students, families, and our community; we INSPIRE, SUPPORT, & LEARN

Mega-Result/Vision

All students will graduate prepared with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to achieve their personal goals and make a positive impact in the world.

Chippewa Falls 4K Cardinals Overview

The Chippewa Falls 4K Cardinal program originally called Building Bridges 4 Children was the result of one of four goals developed by the Chippewa Early Educare Partnership (ChEEP) to provide quality, integrated services for all children and families in Chippewa Falls. In 2006 the Board of Education approved to offer this program free to all four-year-old children in the Chippewa Falls School District and house the services in community childcare and preschool sites.

4-Year Old Kindergarten Program Eligibility

Children must be 4 on or before September 1st to enroll in the 4K program. If a child turns 5 prior to that date, he/she is eligible for kindergarten. Parents should contact the elementary school the child would attend kindergarten, to obtain additional information on 5-year-old programming. You can access elementary school contact information on the district website at: <http://cfsd.chipfalls.k12.wi.us/>.

Program Locations and Contact Information

The Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD) contracts with childcare centers, and CESA 11 Head Start to offer 4K programming. While all 4K sessions teach the same curricula and follow the same guidelines put forth by the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD), center directors can provide you with specific information regarding their site. Table 1 lists contact information for the CFAUSD and contracting partner sites.

Table 1. 4K Contact Information

CFAUSD Personnel	4K Director	Melissa Olson	715-726-2414 ext. 3004
	4K Administrative Assistant	Emily Inman	715-726-2414 ext. 3000
4K Partner Sites	Kids USA Learning Center, Inc.	Garret Bresina	715-726-1507
	Milestones Childcare Center, LLC	Kerry Swoboda	715-723-7444
	CESA 11 Head Start	Katrina Bembnister	715-723-1211
	Circle of Friends Early Learning Center	Sarah Meddaugh	715-552-9696
	Rhymes-N-Rainbows	Karlie Anderson	715-723-8000
	YMCA Early Learning Community	Celeste Swoboda	715-723-5135
Other	Go Riteway	Casey Schewe	715-726-2454

4K School Calendar

4K follows the district calendar with in-service days, vacation days and holidays. [2026-2027 District Calendar](#). Normally, 4K sessions do not meet on Fridays; however, there

may be a few Fridays where class is in session. These dates are included on the 4K calendar available to you at orientation day or from the [4K website](#). Teachers will also communicate any schedule change in their weekly and/or monthly newsletters. 4K hours of instruction are from 7:55-11:05 for AM sessions and 11:55-3:05 for PM sessions.



Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District 4K Calendar 2026-2027

4K School Days In Session	No 4K
First Day of 4K: Tuesday, September 8 - Last Day of 4K: Thursday, May 27	

July 2026						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2026						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			
						15

October 2026						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
						17

November 2026						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
						13

December 2026						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
						14

January 2027						
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						16

February 2027						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						
						16

March 2027						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
						14

April 2027						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
						18

May 2027						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					16

June 2027						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

4K Attendance

While it's not legally mandatory, it is generally expected that when your child is enrolled in 4K (preschool), they will attend regularly. Regular attendance is important because it allows

them to learn to the best of their abilities. Attending regularly helps them develop a habit that will contribute to their success in life. This initial experience with formal education is an ideal opportunity to establish this important mindset and habit.

CFAUSD INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSING PROTOCOL

Winter weather can change quickly in Wisconsin. When winter weather strikes, we have three options for adjusting our days.

Cancellation -- If we cancel, we will make this decision by 6:00 am. This means all schools, Head Start, Early Childhood, 4K Cardinal programs, after-school programs, and public use of buildings are canceled for the day. The school district buildings are considered “closed.”

Two Hour Delay -- If we delay, we will make this decision by 6:00 am. The school day starts two hours later than normally scheduled.

- Buses run two hours behind their normal schedule.
- No breakfast is served.
- School lunch will be served at or near the normally scheduled time.
- **4K Cardinals is canceled for the full day.**
- Early Childhood is canceled for the full day.
- Head Start is canceled for the full day.
- After school programs and public use of buildings may still occur.

If a **Two Hour Delay** becomes a **Cancellation**, this decision will be made by 8:00 am.

Early Release -- If we release early, we will make this decision by 10:00 am. Elementary schools release at 12:00 pm; and secondary schools release at 1:00 pm.

- Lunch is at or near the normally scheduled time.
- The high school lunch will run from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. Open campus lunch allows students with their own transportation to leave at 12:00 pm.
- Afternoon 4K Cardinals is canceled.
- Head Start is canceled for the afternoon and will be released at 11:05 am.
- Afternoon Early Childhood is canceled.
- After school programming and public use of buildings is canceled.

We plan to communicate any weather-related decisions in the following ways:

- Local TV and radio
- District website, district social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Campus messenger notifications: email and text message

We monitor the weather closely in the winter, especially when school schedule changes are a possibility. Our number one priority in our decision-making is the safety of our students. Weather cancellations are tough decisions because we realize that last-minute changes in the school schedule create inconveniences for families. We take great care in each situation to use the information available to us to make the best decision we can.

Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District Policies

As a district program, partner sites are required to follow certain school district policies and notices required by law. The following subsections are policies that impact 4K students and families. Other district policies are available in the Policy Manual on the district website at the following URL: [BoardDocs® Pro](#). Any questions concerning these policies should be directed to:

Superintendent
Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District
1130 Miles Street
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
(715) 726-2417

Childcare licensing and partner sites may have other policies and guidelines that you need to follow for a child attending that site. Refer to the center's handbook for information specific to the 4K site your child attends.

Student Abuse and Neglect

Wisconsin state law requires licensed school employees to report to the local Department of Family and Social Services any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in prosecution of the school employee. Once a report is made, official representatives of the Department of Family and Social Services have the right to come to the school to interview the child. This department need not obtain parental permission to interview the child. To view this policy, go to <https://cfsd.chipfalls.k12.wi.us/>. Go to District. Under CFAUSD, go to Bylaws and Policies, then click on 8000 (Operations), then on 8462.

Non Discrimination and Access to Equal Education Opportunity

The Board of Education is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students in the District. The Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, sex, including transgender status, change of sex or gender identity, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability ("Protected Classes") in any of its student program and activities. To view this entire policy, go to <https://cfsd.chipfalls.k12.wi.us/>. Under the District tab click Bylaws and Policies, then click on 2000 (Program), then on 2260.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also requires the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District, with certain exceptions, to obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However,

the District may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District to include this information in certain school publications. Examples could include such items as: a playbill, showing your student’s role in a drama production; school yearbook; an honor roll or other recognition lists; graduation programs; and sports activity sheets, such as wrestling, showing weight and height of team members. Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks.

The Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District has designated the following information as directory information:

- * Student’s name
- * Address
- * Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- * Dates of Attendance
- * Electronic mail address
- * Photograph
- * Degrees, honors, and awards received
- * Grade level
- * The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- * Telephone listing
- * Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- * Date and place of birth

Information about FERPA is available through the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District “Annual Notices Required by Law” document.

Curricula: What Our 4K Students Learn

According to WI Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) provides a framework for families, educators, and policymakers to:

- Share a common language and the responsibility for the wellbeing of children from birth to first grade.
- Know and understand development expectations of young children.
- Address what children should know and be able to do based on a continuum of development from birth to first grade.

The Learning Standards are based on current research and are developmentally appropriate practices. There are standards in each of the five developmental domains:

- Health and Physical Development (e.g., fine-motor and gross-motor skills)
- Social and Emotional Development (e.g., social skills and self-esteem)
- Language Development and Communication (e.g., listening, speaking, and reading readiness)
- Approaches to Learning (e.g., curiosity, persistence, and creativity)
- Cognition and General Knowledge (e.g., mathematical and scientific thinking and problem solving)

Curricular Resource

Frog Street Pre-K is a comprehensive, research-based early childhood curriculum designed for children ages 4–5 to support all learning domains and ensure kindergarten readiness. It integrates social-emotional development, early literacy, and STEAM concepts through structured thematic units.

Core Curriculum Highlights

- **Social-Emotional Foundation:** Uses Conscious Discipline strategies to build self-regulation, safety, and connection through daily routines like greeting circles.
- **Thematic Structure:** Organized into nine distinct units covering areas from self-awareness and community to early mathematics and animal science.
- **Balanced Instruction:** Combines intentional skill-building with child-centered exploration, supporting cognitive, physical, and language growth in both English and Spanish.

Parent Engagement /Family Outreach

Partnerships between families and school districts are important. Families are valued core partners in the educational process. They have both the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about their child's education and development. 4K continues to remain an optimal time to develop partnerships with families and support their role as the primary educators of their children.

Student Enrollment and Records

When a child is enrolled in 4K, information from online registration is entered into the school district database. This ensures the CFAUSD, the 4K site, and emergency personnel have consistent and accurate information. If your contact information (phone number, cell phone, address) changes, please inform your child's teacher so information is updated and accurate. You may also download a

[Student Update Form](#) from the [4K website](#) and mail it to the 4K office.

When your child transitions to kindergarten, his/her enrollment information and records will be transferred to the school (public or private) that your child will attend.

Custody

If custody or guardianship changes after a student's enrollment, legal documents should be provided to the CFAUSD 4K office as soon as possible. Upon request, the CFAUSD will give to non-custodial parents all information required under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and laws of the State of Wisconsin, unless there is a valid court order directing the CFAUSD not to divulge such information. If such an order exists, a certified copy must be delivered to the CFAUSD 4K office. Request for attendance enrollment documentation for tax purposes should be submitted in writing to the office 5 business days before it is needed. Attendance and enrollment reports can be printed from Infinite Campus.

Riding a 4K Bus

Four-year-olds seem very young to be on their own, and yet with parent support and guidance, excellent bus drivers, caring partner sites and teachers, and a bus company and school district ensuring safe routes and transportation, rest assured the bus ride can be a fun and rewarding experience for your little one. The CFAUSD contracts with the Go Riteway to ensure safe transportation for students attending 4K sessions. Buses only transport children enrolled in the 4K program and use the following guidelines for transporting these students:

- Bus transportation must be to a consistent location, preferably to/from the child's primary address (i.e. home).
- **No bus deviations** are allowed. For example, if your child wants to invite a friend home after school, transportation is the responsibility of the parent. Children can only ride the bus in which they are assigned.
- Bussing is provided for 4K sessions only.

To use district bussing, a parent must sign up when they register their child or fill out a [Transportation Update Form](#) available on the [4K website](#) or from your child's 4K site. This data is entered into the CFAUSD database and available to the bus company to determine bus routes.

Student Behavior Expectations and Safety

The behavior of each student on the bus directly affects the safety of others. Bus drivers will prompt students to make safe choices. If a child is making choices that compromise the safety of themselves or others drivers will report those incidents to Chippewa Yellow Bus company and CFAUSD 4K Director. Depending on the seriousness of the incident, or repeated behavior events that are disruptive to the safety of self or others a student's bus privileges may be suspended. .

To help keep our buses safe please discuss and support the following expectations for bus behavior with your child. Students need to:

- Sit down on the bus
- Face forward
- Talk quietly

- Stay seated, never stand or move from seat to seat when the bus is moving
- Do not throw objects on the bus
- Keep hands and feet to themselves

Bus Drivers

Go Riteway has specifically selected bus drivers to drive the 4K buses. Please appreciate all they do to safely transport your child to/from school. Your child's bus driver will call you prior to the first day of class to introduce him/herself and answer questions you may have regarding bussing.



The Bus Tag

Each site has a defined symbol or logo for its bus tag (refer to figure 2). At orientation, each child will receive his/her Bus Tag. **BE SURE TO ADHERE THIS TAG TO YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK SO IT IS VISIBLE.** This tag is used to ensure a safe transfer and communicate necessary information to the bus driver. Each tag includes the student's first initial, last name and the name and phone number for the 4K site your child attends. Each student's tag is specific to the child and his/her address for bus pick up/drop off and hub transfer. A colored sticker with an "H" identifies the bus that will pick up and deliver your child to/from his/her home or pick-up/drop off location (i.e. daycare, babysitters, other). The "T" identifies the bus color your child transfers on at the Hub exchange.

4K SITE Phone Number Student Name: J. Doe	
T	H
Transfer Bus Color	Home/Drop Off Color

The “Hub” Exchange

The “Hub” is located at St. Charles Elementary school. This is the central location where all buses meet to transfer children to get them to the site where they attend 4K. The Bus drivers and a “Hub Aide” will assist children that transfer onto a different bus. Bus transfers are indicated with a “T” on the color-coded sticker on the child’s bus tag.

Parent Responsibility

- BE SURE the child wears his/her bus tag every day to ensure a safe bus transfer and transportation to his/her enrolled site.
- **Be visible (wave to the driver) when the child is picked up and dropped off.**
 - **Bus drivers will not drop off a child unless a parent/provider is present, nor is it the driver’s responsibility to make a second trip.**
- Call the bus company **by 6:30 a.m.** (715-726-2454) if a child will not attend school due to illness or other reason.
- Contact your child’s site director with any permanent changes in bus transportation. (You will be asked to fill out a [Transportation Update Form](#).)
- Policy does not allow any approved adults to pick-up students from the bus hub (St. Charles).
- Have your child ride the bus the first two weeks to help establish bus route times and acquaint him/her with the routine.
- Help your child learn proper bus etiquette and reinforce the following **five bus rules**:
 - 1) Stay seated, “Bottom to Bottom, Back to Back”.
 - 2) Use an “Inside” voice.
 - 3) Keep EVERYTHING inside the bus when windows are down.
 - 4) Keep backpacks closed on the bus. (Carry on the one toy or stuffed animal you need for the bus ride.)
 - 5) No eating or drinking on the bus.

Note on Drive Backs: If a child does not get dropped off at home because an approved adult (person must be 18 or older) is not present, it IS parent responsibility to pick the child up at the 4K site. You may add people to your emergency contact information for bus pickup/dropoff by filling out an [Emergency Contact Information form](#). The 4K site will follow its late pick-up policy which may include contact with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and/or fines.

Who Can Help?

If you have any questions or concerns about 4K busing, contact Casey Schewe, Go Riteway, at 726-2454 or Chad Trowbridge, CFAUSD Business Manager, at 726-2417.

Emergency Procedures

Sick Children

In the event a child becomes ill during transit, the bus company will do his/her best to get your child

to the site (in-bound route) or home (outbound route) and communicate the illness to the site director and/or bus attendee.

When Parents are not Visible at Drop-off

4K bus drivers WILL NOT drop a child off if an approved adult (age 18 or older) is not present or visible from a door/window at the location indicated by the *Bus Transportation Form* and/or district database. If this does occur, the following process will take place:

1. The bus driver and site director will make every effort to contact you.
2. Your child will be taken back to the 4K site if contact is not made with a parent, or an approved adult.
3. The site director will follow any late pick-up policies implemented for the site, which may include contact with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and/or fines.
4. The bus driver will fill out and turn in a bus misconduct form. Repeated “drive backs” may result in your child losing the privilege to ride the bus.