



Family Handbook 2019-2020

Berlin Community School
215 South Franklin Avenue
Berlin, NJ 08009

856-767-0129 x201



Overview

The PALS program has been servicing the Berlin Community School with its before and after school latchkey program for many years. We pride ourselves on providing a safe, warm, and friendly atmosphere for your children. In addition to the school year program, PALS runs a terrific summer program at BCS as well.

Activities

Students can play games with their friends, do their homework, participate in arts and craft activities, supervised computer time, and have fun playing outdoors. We also offer special classes, available only to PALS students, throughout the year.

In the summer, we take field trips, participate in STEAM challenges, and plan other exciting activities for our students.

Our goal is to provide your child with a safe and structured environment in which to unwind from a long school day or continue their social and learning experiences throughout the summer.

Staff

PALS Manager, Christina Weber, and Administrative Assistant, Michelle Soj dak will be the primary point people in regards to the management of the PALS program and monies.

Jan Martin the PALS Shift Supervisor, will serve as a point person for you, the parents and guardians, and will be in direct communication with administration at all times.

Growth

It is important that you know the PALS program will continue to undergo renovations in order to provide the most efficient and safe latchkey program for your children. We understand you all work very hard, and we want the PALS program to be as convenient and streamlined as possible. We are highly dedicated to ensuring your children are safe and secure while they are under our care. If you have suggestions to improve our services, please feel free to contact us.

Hours of Operation - School Year

School year PALS is available from 7:00 AM until the school day begins, and from dismissal until 6:00 PM every day that school is open. We always follow the school calendar.

On most early dismissal and late arrival days, we begin our program at 7:00 AM until the school day begins and remain open from dismissal until 6:00 PM for your convenience. Days designated as early dismissal and late arrival days are listed on the school calendar.

PALS is available on school delayed openings (inclement weather) based on the time delay schedule and only for registered students. For example, if there is a 2 hour snow delay, PALS will open at 9:00 AM as opposed to the normal 7:00 AM start time.

Hours of Operation - Summer

PALS is available from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday in the summer. **Summer PALS program is closed on:**

June 17, 2020 -June 26, 2020

July 3, 2020

August TBD

Registration

All children MUST be formally registered in PALS before utilizing the program. Please visit the PALS webpage for a direct link to the online registration page. Registrations and fees may be collected online or dropped off to our PALS office.

There is a \$40.00 registration fee per child for the school year program and \$40.00 registration fee per child for the summer program. Even if a student attends PALS all year long, they must be registered separately for summer and pay the summer registration fee in order to be admitted into the summer program.

School year PALS begins on September 5, 2019.

Summer PALS begins on Monday, June 29, 2020.

Remember you must submit the completed online registration and paid registration fee before your child(ren) may attend the PALS program.

Computers are available in the CER office so that all families have access to the online registration process. Parents are required to keep their children's forms up to date by promptly reporting any changes of information to PALS Manager.

PALS and CER

PALS families must be current in all CER accounts before students are accepted into the PALS program. Likewise, students are not permitted to join CER clubs if they owe money on their PALS accounts. Please contact the CER office with any questions regarding account balances.

Any PALS student participating in a CER club will not be billed concurrently for PALS during the time which the child is participating in a CER club.

If you elect for your child to return to PALS after a CER club, you will be billed from club dismissal until the time your child is picked up from PALS.

If you elect for your child to be dismissed and picked up immediately after the CER club, your promptness in picking up your child at the club's stated end time is expected. If there is a child who is not picked up promptly, they will be brought back to PALS, and your account will be charged.

Administration of Medication

The PALS staff is **not** permitted to administer medication. Administration of medications during Latchkey hours is the responsibility of the parent. There is no exception to this guideline.

We do have staff members who are certified to administer an Epi Pen if necessary. If your child

is prescribed an Epi Pen, please contact the CER office to arrange to have their medicine available to our PALS staff. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that any Epi Pens are up to date and not expired. **We do not have access to the nurse's medications.**

Sick Children

If your child is ill or gets injured, you will be called to pick up your child to take him/her home. We ask that you make every effort to make arrangements to pick up your child promptly. We **do NOT have a nurse on staff at PALS.**

Weekly Attendance Schedules

In order to keep your child(ren) safe, it is required we know the days they will be attending PALS for the week. **The task of providing your child(ren)'s PALS schedule is your responsibility.** It is incredibly important that we have advanced notice of their attendance in PALS.

Your child's PALS schedule must be communicated to us in writing one of the following ways:

- Via our online scheduler, available under the *PALS Before and After Care* tab at www.bcsberlin.org
- Via email to sojdakm@csberlin.org by 9:00 am on the Monday of the school week for which you are requesting your child to attend PALS.
- Send us a monthly calendar in advance.
- Keep a regular schedule (i.e., every Monday/Wednesday/Friday,) and notify us via email or in writing at least **48** hours in advance of any changes to this schedule.

If you have not notified us of your child(ren)'s schedule and you are not responding to our calls, we will hold them in PALS for their safety and you will be required to pick them up. You will

be charged for PALS in this situation. We always fault on the side of safety, and would rather have your child safe in our care as opposed to going home to an empty house.

****Any changes to your child's schedule which are called in or emailed to the PALS office after 12:00 pm on any given day will be assessed an additional \$10.00 readjustment fee per child.****

Due Date for Schedules:

PALS schedules are due on the Monday of the week of attendance. If we do not receive your weekly schedule (whether or not your child will attend PALS,) by 9:00 am on Monday, we will charge a \$10.00 late submission fee.*

The following WILL NOT be accepted:

- Calling after 9:00 AM or 10 minutes before dismissal
- Writing a note in your child(ren)'s agenda (we don't see these)
- Sending the teacher a Remind or Class DoJo message (we don't receive these)
- Emailing only the teacher
- Calling or texting the teacher
- Telling your child(ren) to tell us. **This is not an acceptable form of notification.**
- Not telling us any schedule at all

Please make every effort to send us your PALS schedule at least a week in advance, if not more, and give us at least 48 hours' notice if there is a change to the schedule. **Dismissal time is NOT the time to be scrambling to determine whether or not a child should go to PALS, walk home, or take the bus. We will default to hold them in PALS for their safety, and you will be charged for our services.**

Sign In/Sign Out Procedures

You must come into the school and check your child IN and OUT every day. Students are NOT permitted to check themselves in or out. Please use the PALS computer and your individual PIN number to check-IN and check-OUT your child every day they are in PALS. *** If, after utilizing the after care program, your child is not signed out, you will automatically be charged the full time of 3 hours.**

Identification will be required to pick up children at staff member's request. We will not release your child(ren) to anyone unless they are on the Authorized Pick-Up list you provide at registration. Authorized Pick-Up people must be adults. Parents are responsible for making PALS aware of the individuals who are permitted to pick up their children.

Late Pick-up Penalties

In the event your child is not picked up by 6 PM, a fee of \$25.00 per child will be charged up to 6:15 PM. After 6:15 PM, an additional charge of \$50.00 per child will be assessed. We ask you respect the fact that our PALS staff and administration have families at home whom they want to get home to after PALS closes.

After 6:00 PM, we will begin to call emergency contacts. At 6:30 PM the Berlin Police Department or Child Protection and Permanency will be notified and it will be necessary for the parent to meet with the PALS Supervisor prior to the child's return to the program.

Late Payment Penalties

Any student whose account becomes delinquent after two weeks will not be permitted to attend PALS until the account is made current. We will contact you directly if your account is

not kept current. If your account becomes delinquent and you do not respond to our requests for payment within 24 hours, your account will begin to accrue an additional \$10.00 per day late payment fee. Please contact the CER office with any extenuating circumstances which would prohibit payment at the beginning of the week.

Payments

You are billed weekly at an hourly/weekly rate depending on your schedule.

PALS rates are as follows: Single Hourly Rate \$5.00

Full time school year attendance (4 hours per day/5 days per week) would normally cost \$100, but is discounted to \$90.00.

Full time summer attendance (55 hours/5 days) would normally cost \$275, but is discounted to \$200.

You will be billed by the hour, no matter the minutes after the hour. If your child begins the PALS day at 3:00 p.m. and is picked up at 4:15 p.m., you will be charged for 2 hours. If your child is checked into PALS and you pick up within the hour you are still charged for that entire first hour.

All invoicing will be generated by our automated system and weekly bills will arrive in your email every Monday. Please check your SPAM folder if you have not received your weekly

PALS bill. The emailed invoices have a **CLICK to PAY** button in which you may pay your bill directly online with a credit or debit card. You also have an option to set up an EFT payment by which your weekly payment is directly withdrawn from your bank account automatically. Please contact Christina Weber or Michelle Soj dak with any questions regarding the online billing system.

Of course, we also accept cash or check payments in the CER office, and we have a credit card machine that can process payments in the office as well. Please call Michelle Soj dak with your credit/debit card information and your payment may be processed over the phone if necessary.

For any returned checks you will be charged a \$40 returned check fee. In addition, we will only accept money order, credit card, or cash payments after a check has been returned.

Emergency Numbers

If you have an emergency, the numbers to call are:

CER Office: 767-0129, x201

BCS Main Office: 767-0129, x200

Christina Weber, PALS Manager 767-0129, x203

Snow Days/School Closing

When inclement weather is severe enough to close school for the day, BCS will implement the Global Connect System to automatically dial your home phone number and cell phone numbers with a recorded message. Announcements will also be made on local TV and radio stations, as well as the main page of our school website www.bcsberlin.org. The school closing number for BCS is 579. When school is closed, there is **no** PALS program. If school should open with a delay, PALS will be open based on the time of the delay.

If school is closed early due to inclement weather, the PALS program will be cancelled for that day and parents are responsible for picking up their children.

Receipts for PALS

You will receive a complete billing statement every Monday with your weekly emailed invoice. You may use this document for tax purposes. Our Federal ID number is 21-6000131. This is the number you need for your federal tax return.

Snacks

Please send your children in with a snack for their time in PALS. The children are extremely hungry after school. Vending machines are available in the cafeteria, but PALS cannot always guarantee their availability because they are supplied by an outside vendor.

Photos

At times, we take photos of children participating in PALS activities. The photos could be shared with the Board of Education or on our PALS or BCS website. **Please let us know in writing if you do not want us to take photos of your child.**

Parking

Parking along all yellow curbing (either on school property or blocking private residences on Franklin Avenue,) is prohibited at all times. Police will ticket any car parked in these areas with no exceptions. Always park in designated parking spaces when picking up your child.

Discipline and Behavior Expectations

The school's discipline code is in effect during the PALS program and may be found in your

child's school handbook. Children who do not cooperate or follow instructions will be spoken to by staff or receive an Oops! Slip. If the child has to be spoken to on a consistent basis, the parent will also be made aware of the situation. In severe discipline cases, the parent will be called and asked to pick their child up immediately.

If behavior does not significantly improve, the parents will be notified of possible suspension or even exclusion from the program. Participation in the BCS PALS Program is a privilege. This privilege can be revoked due to continued misbehavior or failure to follow the procedures listed in this manual. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. This is for everyone's safety and well-being.

We will be abiding to the policies in the State of New Jersey Expulsion Policy which is found below.

10:122-6.8 STATE OF NEW JERSEY EXPULSION POLICY

IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION

- Child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up child.
- Verbal abuse to staff.

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/ angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.

SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION

If the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period. The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety). Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED

If a child's parent(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.
- Was not given sufficient time to make other child care arrangements.

PROACTIVE ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO PREVENT EXPULSION

Staff will:

- Redirect child from negative behavior.
- Reassess classroom environment, appropriateness of activities, and supervision.
- Use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Praise appropriate behaviors.
- Apply consequences for rules.
- Give verbal warnings.
- Allow time for child time to regain control.

Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality. Parent/guardian will be notified verbally. Parent/guardian will be given written copies

of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion. The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors. The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior. Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises or by local school district child study team will be given.