

THE TINTON FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
658 TINTON AVENUE
TINTON FALLS, NJ 07724
(732) 460-2400
FAX (732) 542-1158
<http://tfschools.org>

Lisa Goldey, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

Kristin Szawan
Director of Special Services

Vincent Daniels
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

February 2, 2026

Dear Parents/Guardians/Community Members:

The Tinton Falls School District is happy to announce that we will be continuing with our preschool programming at the *Mahala F. Atchison School for the 2026-2027 school year*. We look forward to another successful year expanding access and educational opportunities to our community. Please take a look at the information below, as it is time sensitive.

FOR: Three (3), Four (4) and Five (5) Year-Olds (ONLY if turning five **AFTER** October 1, 2026 per Board Policy [5112](#))

- Families must be residents of Tinton Falls or Shrewsbury Township
- Students **MUST** be three years old **by October 1, 2026**
- Toileting Success is recommended before the start of the program
- Students must have updated immunizations and the required physical examinations.

WHAT: The Tinton Falls School District offers an inclusive preschool program designed to support the growth and development of all young learners. This regular education preschool program brings together children with and without disabilities in a shared learning environment where students learn, play, and grow alongside their peers.

Our inclusive philosophy is grounded in the belief that children learn best through interaction, modeling, and imitation. Learning alongside typical peers encourages social, emotional, and academic development, benefiting all children in the classroom.

Students participate in teaching and learning through a state-approved curriculum, *The Creative Curriculum*, which emphasizes developmentally appropriate, play-based learning. Instruction incorporates best practices that support social-emotional development, early English language arts and mathematical skills, as well as fine and gross motor development.

The preschool program is tuition-based and, due to its popularity, enrollment for general education students is determined through a lottery. Placement of students with disabilities in the preschool program is determined by the Child Study Team and is based on each child's individual needs.

STARTING: September 3, 2026 - Following the school year calendar for 180 days.
Time: 8:30-1:30 (drop off starts at 8:20 and pick up at 1:30).
No transportation will be provided for general education students.

COST: \$600 per month, paid in 10 monthly installments, on or before the first of the month. Available is a free option if families meet the requirements for free lunch. You will be provided with a contract and required to provide the first and last month's tuition payment of \$1,200 by March 20, 2026 to hold a seat in the program.

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TO QUALIFY for a free option - the English or Spanish form must be completed and submitted by February 13, 2026.

[ENGLISH FREE LUNCH FORM](#) & [SPANISH FREE LUNCH FORM](#)

For more information on eligibility, please click on the link below
[Letter with Federal Eligibility Chart](#) (English)

[Letter with Federal Eligibility Chart regarding Free/Reduced Lunch](#) (Spanish)

TO SUBMIT - the Free/Reduced Lunch Form can be done in one of the following ways:

1. Email the completed form to PantherPK@tfschools.org.
2. Drop off the completed form at the Tinton Falls Board of Education Office, 658 Tinton Avenue, Tinton Falls, NJ (After-hours form can be dropped in the locked box). Office hours are from 8:00am-4:00pm Monday-Thursday). Write Free Lunch Form/Panther Preschool on the envelope
3. Mail the completed form to:
Tinton Falls Board of Education Office
Attn: Panther Preschool
658 Tinton Avenue
Tinton Falls, NJ 07724

I am interested! How do I sign up for this opportunity?

1. Please complete the online interest form found [HERE](#) by **February 25, 2026**. If you do not have access to complete this, you can obtain a paper copy at the Tinton Falls Board of Education Office or email PantherPK@tfschools.org for assistance.
2. There are an allotted number of seats available. A lottery selection will be conducted on February 26, 2026. A wait list will also be formed based on the lottery.
3. Selection notification will be completed and communicated on February 27, 2026.
4. Registration directions will be provided to those accepted to the program (if you are currently in our Preschool Program and plan to continue, you will not need to reregister). Online registration and proof of residency documents must be submitted on our website at www.tfschools.org by **April 1, 2026**. If proof of residency cannot be provided, your child will not be able to attend the program.

If you have any questions, please send an email to PantherPK@tfschools.org.

We look forward to this opportunity for our children and community.

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Panther Preschool Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where is the program located?

A: Our preschool program is at the Mahala F. Atchison School on Sycamore Avenue.

Q: How old does my child need to be to be considered for the program?

A: The program is for three, four and some five-year-old children. Per [Board Policy 5112](#), any child who is five years old BEFORE October 1st of the current year is NOT eligible for the Panther Preschool Program.

Q: What times and days should my child attend?

A: The students will attend preschool Monday through Friday and follow the school year schedule. The Tinton Falls School District calendar is on our website and linked [HERE](#). Arrival is at 8:30 am and dismissal is at 1:30 pm for days that are in "full session". On "single session" days, students will be dismissed by 12:30 pm.

Q: Where should I drop off and pick up my child?

A: More procedural information will be included in the welcome packet. As a reminder, no student will be provided with transportation in the Panther Preschool. Pick up and drop off are required.

Q: Is there before care and/ or aftercare for my child?

A: No. Before care and/ or aftercare is not provided.

Q: Who is teaching this class? Are they certified?

A: Each preschool teacher has a New Jersey Department of Education certification to teach preschool. A non-certified classroom paraprofessional will also support the teacher and students. You will receive the teacher's name and information by the end of August.

Q: How many children will be in the class?

A: There is a maximum of 15 students in each classroom.

Q: What is a typical day like for a preschool student?

A: The schedule depends on the teacher and student needs of the classroom. In addition to learning: classes do morning meeting, snack time, centers, weather permitting classes try to go outside (there is a playground dedicated to our preschool students), whole group lesson/activity, lunch, rest, play.

Q: What will my child be learning?

A: Our program will follow the Creative Curriculum Program. This is a play-based, hands-on, and research program with an approach to incorporating language, literacy, and mathematics throughout the day. The development of the whole child is an important facet of this curriculum. The teachers will share more information regarding the curriculum and the expectations at the beginning of the school year.

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Q: How will I know how my child is progressing?

A: Our teachers will provide routine updates on student progress. Additionally, your child will receive a progress report at multiple intervals during the school year.

Q: Will my child get to eat lunch?

A: Children will have the opportunity to have snacks and lunch during the school day. Children will eat in their classrooms. This is an opportunity for students to develop language and social skills. Any questions or concerns about food allergies should be brought to the attention of the teacher and school nurse prior to the first day of school. Nut free classrooms are based on student needs.

Q: What is the health and safety policy for the preschool classroom?

A: Our preschool classroom will follow all the same health and safety procedures as the rest of the school. Each school's access to our school can only be obtained through the main office. Staff and students will participate in monthly required state drills, which will be explained in an age-appropriate way. The preschool classroom will be cleaned and sanitized nightly. A school nurse will be available to support the health of our preschool students as well. The policy on sick children will follow the same as the school's policy.

Q: Will I be able to come to the classroom?

A: There will be opportunities to invite parents to come to school and be involved in educational programs.

Q: Who should I talk to if I have a question about my child?

A: All parents should contact the teacher first to discuss questions or concerns about their child. If they are not satisfied or the question concerns a building procedure, they should direct it to the building administration.

More information will be provided in our welcome packet prior to the start of the school year. We look forward to working with your child and family!

Sincerely,

Kristin Szawan

Kristin Szawan
Director of Special Services

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