Guthrie Center Community School District's Preschool & Transitional Kindergarten Program



Program Policies and Procedures

Updated 2026-27

Please see the Guthrie Center Elementary Student Handbook for more student information

Guthrie Center Elementary School
900 N. 4th Street
Guthrie Center, Iowa 50115
(641) 332-2720

Table of Contents

I. Welcome to Our Preschool Program
II. Mission, Philosophy, and Goals for Children and Families
III. Enrollment
1. Eligibility
2. Hours
3. General Information
4. Inclusion
IV. A Child's Day
1. Who works in the preschool
2. Daily Activities
3. Curriculum
4. Child and Program Assessment
5. Supervision Policy
6. Child Guidance and Discipline
7. Water Activities
8. Snacks, Foods, and Nutrition
9. Outside Play and Learning
10. Clothing
11. Toilet Learning
12. Objects From Home
13. Classroom Pets
14. Birthdays
V. Communication with Families
1. Open Door Policy
2. Arrival and Departure of Children
3. Transportation
4. Field Trips
5. Attendance
6. Ethics and Confidentiality
7. Children's Records
8. Preschool Advisory Committee
9. Grievance Policy
VI. Family Involvement
1. Home Visits
2. Family Teacher Conferences
3. Family Night
4. Transitions
5. Community Resources
VII. Health and Safety
1. Health and Immunization Certificates

2. Health and Safety Records
3. General Guidelines
4. Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children
5. Reporting Communicable Diseases
6. Medication Policies and Procedures
7. Cleaning and Sanitization
8. Handwashing Practices
9. First Aid Kit
10. Fire Safety
11. Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents
12. Inclement Weather
13. Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health
14. Smoke-free Facility
15. Child Protection Policies
16. Substance Abuse
17. Weapon Policy
18. Illegal items
19. Volunteers

VIII. Staff

1. Health Assessment
2. First Aid/CPR Certification
3. Orientation
4. Staffing Patterns and Schedule
5. Staff Development Activities
6. Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan

VIX. Notifications

1. Equal Educational Opportunity
2. Non-discrimination Policy
3. Affirmative Action Policy

Guthrie Center Community Preschool
Program Policies and Procedures

I. WELCOME TO OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The Guthrie Center Community School was awarded the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant in 2009 as a result of the Preschool Advisory Committee's dedicated work. The program's goal is to provide a high quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. The preschool provides a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected, and cared for. This is an opportunity for all four-year-old children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build their readiness skills. The preschool program has adopted the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices.

Welcome to Our Transitional Kindergarten Program!

The Guthrie Center Community School is proud to offer our **Transitional Kindergarten (TK)** program! Designed to bridge the gap between preschool and kindergarten, our program provides a high-quality learning environment tailored to meet the unique needs of every child, including those with disabilities and students from diverse backgrounds.

In our TK program, students experience the best of both worlds—spending **half of their day in the preschool classroom** and **half of their day in the kindergarten classroom**. This unique structure allows children to build essential foundational skills in a safe, caring, and supportive setting while gradually acclimating to the structure and expectations of elementary school.

Through planned, active learning experiences in both environments, our young learners embrace their natural curiosity, build confidence, and develop strong school readiness skills. Guided by the **Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards** and the **Iowa Early Learning Standards**, our curriculum supports early development and prepares children for a smooth, successful transition into full-time kindergarten and beyond.

We are excited to partner with your family as your child begins this inspiring foundational year!

II. MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOALS

Mission:

The mission of Guthrie Center Schools is to develop all individual students to the best of their abilities so they can realize their full potential as responsible members of the community and be contributing members of society.

Preschool-6th Grade School Philosophy of Education:

We believe:

1. All individuals have equal worth and deserve equal opportunity.
2. The school board is responsible for establishing policy and the administration, teachers, students, and community serve in an advisory capacity in the decision-making process.
3. Parents are an important influence on a child's development, behavior, and attitude about learning.
4. A dedicated teacher is one who sincerely cares about students and strives to motivate, educate, and maximize their potential.
5. An effective classroom relationship exists when teacher and student cooperate together in a respectful manner toward a common goal where both, as a team, work for the good of the student and the school.
6. It is our responsibility to provide all students with a positive, safe, and orderly academically focused learning environment.
7. An effective school should aid in the development of all employees to the best of their abilities so they may reach their full potential as lifelong learners, be responsible members of the community, and contributing citizens of society.
8. A quality instructional, co-curricular, and extra-curricular program offers opportunities and challenges that create an environment for all students to be successful.
9. Successful students are able to think and reason for themselves and are responsible, respectful, and resourceful individuals.
10. It is critical to the success of the learning process to apply knowledge and practice learned skills.

Goals for Children:

1. Children will show competence in social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and also language development skills.
2. Children will be enthusiastic and curious learners.
3. Children will be safe and healthy.

Goals for Families:

1. Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
2. Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared to learn to read and write.
3. Families will advocate for their children.

III. ENROLLMENT

Eligibility

Children must be four years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year.
Registration will begin in the spring of the previous school year. Registration materials are available from the elementary school office. A birth certificate or proof of birthdate on immunization records must be presented to the elementary office prior to starting school. Registration is finalized when all needed documents are received.

Eligibility for Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

To be eligible for Transitional Kindergarten (TK) at Guthrie Elementary, children must reach five years of age between May 1 and September 15 of the upcoming school year. The TK program is specifically designed as a general education bridge for non-IEP students who meet the state's kindergarten age standard but have no prior formal schooling experience and would benefit from an additional year to develop social, emotional, and academic readiness. Admission requires completed registration records, including proof of age (birth certificate), and state-mandated health screenings (dental, vision, and blood lead testing). Final placement is determined through elementary staff evaluations and screening assessments in consultation with parents to ensure TK is the best fit for the child's developmental growth.

Hours

Four-year-old preschool will meet for full day sessions every day except Wednesday. Full day enrollment is highly encouraged, but alternative programming is available. Not meeting on Wednesdays allows for parent meetings and home visits, documentation, planning time for the teaching staff, and collaboration with community agencies. Preschool follows the district calendar.

TK Hours & Program Structure

Our Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program offers a balanced, full-day schedule designed to ease children into the school routine while building key social, emotional, and academic skills. Monday through Tuesday and Thursday through Friday, students spend half of their day in the preschool classroom and half of their day in the kindergarten classroom, giving them a rich mix of foundational early childhood learning and elementary classroom structure. On Wednesdays, TK students spend the full day in the kindergarten classroom, allowing for immersive learning and a deeper experience in the primary elementary environment. TK follows the district calendar and meets five days a week; please note that TK begins on the same start date as preschool, which is one week later than the rest of the school district. This structure ensures consistent daily learning, routine, and support tailored to your child's developmental growth.

General Information
Within six weeks after a child begins the program, health records (physical) that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The maximum class size is 20 children in each session based on square footage of the current location. A teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:10 will be maintained at all times to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children. The elementary principal will maintain a current list of available substitutes for both the teacher and teacher assistant. Should one of the teaching staff need to temporarily leave the room, the teacher will call the elementary office and the principal will arrange for coverage of the classroom to maintain the staff-child ratio.

Inclusion
The preschool program provides for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff is aware of the identified needs of individual children and is trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children and their families. The preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Requirements.

IV. A CHILD'S DAY

Who Works With The Preschoolers

Program Administrators

The elementary principal and district superintendent are designated as the program administrators supervising the preschool program. The superintendent meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Teacher

A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an Early Childhood/Special Education endorsement is assigned to the preschool classroom.

Teacher Associate

A full time teacher assistant in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher assistant will have specialized training in early childhood education.

School Nurse

The preschool will also have the assistance of the school nurse who is a full time Registered Nurse for the district. The nurse maintains student health records by updating them quarterly and as needed. The nurse also attends to the health needs of the students while they are at school and is available for parent consultation.

Support Staff

Heartland AEA support staff provide resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early

childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and others.

Daily Activities
A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day:

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Large and Small Group Activities</td><td>Self-directed Play</td><td>Snack</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Learning Center Activities: Art, Science, Writing Table, Games and Put together toys, Book Center, Blocks and Wheel Toys, Pretend Play</td><td>Story Time</td><td>Technology</td></tr>
<tr><td>Outdoor Activities</td><td>Individual Activities</td></tr>
</table>

A weekly newsletter will be sent home to families in children's backpacks.

Curriculum
Our curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting.

It is the policy of this district that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, and physical disability. The curriculum fosters respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a multicultural nonsexist society.

The Creative Curriculum® *for Preschool* forms the basis of our fully integrated program for our preschool students. Nationally known for its forward-thinking, comprehensive, and rigorously researched model, *The Creative Curriculum*® has a unique approach that helps us successfully plan and implement a content-rich, developmentally appropriate program that supports active learning and promotes children's progress in all developmental areas. *The Creative Curriculum*® utilizes an appropriate learning experience for all the children in the classroom, including children who are English-language learners, children with disabilities, and children who are gifted.

The Creative Curriculum® focuses on ten interest areas or activities in the program environment: blocks, house corner, table toys, art, sand and water, library corner, music and movement, cooking,

computers, and the outdoors. Each of these interest areas or activities are familiar and meaningful to young children, providing children an opportunity to learn in a variety of ways.

Child Assessment

Guiding principles:

It is the school district's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural context by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All assessment results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet file.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

1. *The Creative Curriculum®* *Progress Report* is modified to align with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. It records student progress in all developmental areas at the beginning, middle and end of the year.
2. Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
3. Early Literacy Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) are given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to monitor the growth of early literacy skills.
4. Child portfolios are electronically organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data, and child work samples collected on an ongoing basis.
5. Families will be asked to contribute input on their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development,

The information from the above is used in the following ways:

1. To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them;
2. To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones;
3. To indicate possible areas that require additional assessment.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. Informal conferences are always welcome and additional conferences can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information collected through progress reports or IGDIs, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern**.** The procedure will be as follows:

1. The teacher requests assistance from the Building Assistance Team (BAT), Special Education teachers, and/or the AEA Early Childhood Consultant as an early intervention process. This team engages in problem identification, plan interventions, provide support, and make outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance. The BAT team is available and functional for all students and teachers in the building.

2. A request would be made to Heartland AEA for staff to provide support and ideas or more formalized testing.
3. The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for formal assessment when indicated.
4. If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays, and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

Program Assessment

Guthrie Center Community Schools Preschool implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS) and will receive periodic visits to confirm we are meeting these standards. Administrators, families, staff, and other routinely participating adults will be involved annually in a program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. The annual evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. A report of the annual evaluation findings is shared with families, staff, and appropriate advisory and governance boards. The program uses this information to plan professional development and program quality-improvement activities as well as to improve operations and policies.

Supervision Policy

Before children arrive at school, preschool staff will inspect the classroom and make sure it is ready for the day's sessions. This inspection will include, but is not limited to:

1. ŸAll safety plugs and electric outlets covered, heating, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order.
2. ŸAll cleaning supplies/poisons out of children reach and are stored properly.
3. ŸClassroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
4. ŸSupplies checked--first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
5. Ÿ Daily monitoring of the environment - spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems reported to the head custodian.
6. Ÿ Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two or three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, etc.)

Child Guidance and Discipline

Teaching staff will equitably use PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports), positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect, property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They

will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

Challenging Behavior
The teaching staff in the preschool is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors, teachers promote prosocial behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors.
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed.

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

For acts of aggression (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Prohibited Practices
The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

1. Harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children, nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
2. Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. Any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect.
4. Withhold or threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Sensory Activities
The classroom contains many opportunities for sensory exploration. These activities may include water and/or sand tables, nature centers, etc.

A water table may be used in the classroom for children to stand and play with their hands in the water. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children

with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as the water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff will supervise all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

Snacks, Foods, and Nutrition

The food children eat affects their wellbeing, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

Children may choose to purchase breakfast prior to school starting. Children may apply for Free and Reduced breakfast services. A snack is served at a regularly scheduled time in the daily schedule at least two hours after breakfast. The preschool serves a wide variety of nutritional snacks, and encourages children to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered. At each snack two food groups will be represented. An appropriate choice for a snack sheet is available to families.

All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program with an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day.

High-risk foods, often implicated in choking incidents, will not be served. For children younger than four years, these include hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

The school district does not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Outside Play and Learning

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. Sometimes we spend longer getting bundled up than we spend outside. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by

Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play. The school will use the website, www.weather.gov our location, to determine the weather conditions for the day.

In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions) children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. When it is cold outside he/she needs a warm coat, mittens or gloves, boots, and a hat (labeled with your child's name). For the warmer days dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in-between days, dressing your child in layers is a practical idea.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. We encourage you to bring a hat or other clothing for your child to wear as another protection from the sun.

Program staff will use the Public Playground Safety Handbook Suggested General Maintenance Checklist on a weekly basis.

Clothing

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. They should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal, negative, or disruptive in nature. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place:

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area. Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards:
    1. Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
    2. Staff checks children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces (a) at least every 2 hours when children are awake. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
    3. Staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
    4. Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
    5. Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container will be clearly labeled to show its intended use.

3. Potty chairs will only be used by students with an IEP.

4. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an “accident” or messy play. (All day preschoolers need two sets.) Please clearly label the clothing with your child’s name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Objects From Home

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you limit toys brought from home. If your child brings an “attachment” item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack or cubby. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

Classroom Animals and Pets

No live animals are to be inside the Guthrie Center Schools buildings or classrooms at any time, unless the teacher deems it appropriate for learning, and the principal has approved it.

If the principal has approved your pet’s visit, the animal may be required to remain outside the school buildings during the visit. The preschool teacher will ensure:

the animal does not create an unsafe or unsanitary condition.

the animal would appear to be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animal is fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and suitable for contact with children.

staff and children practice good hygiene and handwashing before and after coming into contact with the animal.

The teaching staff supervises all interactions between children and animals and instructs children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals.

Any children allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles are not allowed because of the risk for salmonella. The classroom teacher is responsible for checking that safety requirements have been met.

Birthdays

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers, which meet the guidelines provided by the teacher at the beginning of the school year. The list will be in accordance with the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. Those who have summer birthdays are welcome to choose a school day to celebrate with their class. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

If your religious belief does not allow for birthday celebrations, please notify the teacher.

V. COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent’s communication. Teaching staff

will communicate with families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs - email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

Open Door Policy
Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. As a safety feature, all parents and visitors will check in at the elementary school office. Visitors are asked to please use discretion with regard to bringing babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt class sessions. Photo identification will be required for any unknown visitor to the classroom.

Arrival and Departure of Children
All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians should include the use of age-appropriate, and size-appropriate seat restraints.

When bringing your child to school, we ask that you park your car in the parking lot and turn off the engine before entering the building. Please hold your child's hand as you enter the building to decrease the possibility of an accident. Parents or legal guardians must either accompany children to the classroom at the beginning of the day or leave their child in the care of one of the teaching staff. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult.

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them.

If your child's dismissal plan changes for the day, call the school office at 641-332-2720 at least 30 minutes prior to the session's end.

In the interest of students' safety, parents/guardians/authorized individuals are requested to report directly to the office when picking up their child rather than going to the child's classroom. Likewise, when a student returns to the building following an absence during the school day, the adult should stop in the office and sign the child in. When picking up your child from the school, please wait in the front entry area for all the children to be brought up to that area.

At class start time, attendance will be recorded for the class session. Throughout the day, each time children transition from one location to another, (i.e. classroom to outdoor), the teacher will be responsible for counting the number of children whenever leaving one area and when arriving at another to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times.

Transportation
The Guthrie Center Community Schools makes school bus transportation for four-year-old preschoolers available if an older sibling is on the bus or there are older students who are being picked up or delivered to the same address/daycare.

Parents/guardians may request transportation at enrollment, indicating the pick up and drop off address, the name of the responsible person at that address, and emergency contact information for all parties involved. Parents/legal guardians are asked to keep their information current by reporting

changes to the preschool teacher or elementary school secretary. All information will be updated at least quarterly by teaching staff.

For children who have special needs for transportation, the school will use a plan based on a functional assessment of the child's needs related to transportation that is completed by the child's physician. This plan will address special equipment, staff, and care in the vehicle during transport. Any accommodations indicated in a child's Individualized Educational Program will be implemented as described.

Field Trips

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. Guthrie Center school buses are used for these field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip well in advance. A parent or legal guardian must sign an informed consent form for trips for each child before each out-of-town trip. Trips within the city limits, will not require a special permission form, but will fall under the general permission form that parents sign at registration.

Adult family members may be asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios. Each child will be assigned to an adult for every part of the trip. Before every trip, the teaching staff will instruct children and all adults using the bus about the 10-foot danger zone around the vehicle where the driver cannot see.

A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips**. Children will be supervised by an adult at all times.**

Attendance

Students who are enrolled for classes in the Guthrie Center Schools are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. **Please call the elementary office with the reason for an absence no later than 8:30 A.M.** For safety's sake, if a student is absent without notification, the school secretary or teaching staff will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school. If necessary, law enforcement may be contacted to ensure the safety of a child if a parent/guardian cannot be reached.

Ethics and Confidentiality

Staff follow an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

All teaching staff will receive training on ethics and confidentiality on the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct as part of their orientation. Each staff person will sign a Statement of Commitment to document their willingness to hold close the values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood education.

Children's Records

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular office hours. Parents may also file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they feel their rights regarding their child's records have been violated. For a complete copy of the school district's policy on student records or the procedure for filing a complaint, contact the board secretary in the high school administration office.

Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

Preschool Advisory Committee

The Guthrie Center Community School's Preschool has an advisory committee composed of parents, school staff, and other community members interested in the preschool program. This group meets twice a year to provide feedback on services that meet children and family needs. They also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and services. Please let the preschool teacher know if you are interested in being part of the Preschool Advisory Committee.

Grievance Policy

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for the assistance from the Elementary Principal.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the Elementary Principal. If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the Superintendent of Guthrie Center Community Schools.

As part of our program assessment, the Preschool Advisory Committee will meet each spring to discuss and evaluate the program. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses.

VI. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Guthrie Center School encourages families to be very involved in their child's education by observing their children during the day when possible and meeting with staff. Family members are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions. We do request a prior notice if you are visiting.

Teachers and administrators use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication; and information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds as they wish to share. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences. Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year. Program staff communicate with families on at least a weekly basis regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well being of their children. Family teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring, as well as when either party requests. At least one Family Night is held during the year.

The Guthrie Center School District's Preschool values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the families' expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for your child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, preschool staff also relies on notes home, emails, phone calls, newsletters, and bulletin boards as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

Guthrie Center Preschool invites you to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcomes other ideas as well.

1. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keeping the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child allows the teacher to be more responsive to your child's needs.
2. Attend family meetings.
3. Return all forms, questionnaires, and other requests promptly.
4. Attend Family/Teacher conferences in the fall and spring.
5. Check your child's backpack each day.
6. Participate in field trip activities.
7. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken.
8. Share any of your families' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
9. Help prepare snacks and enjoy it with your child.
10. Read all the material sent home with your child.
11. Help with special events. Helping takes many different forms such as preparation of materials at home, making telephone calls, preparing or posting flyers, recruiting other volunteers, collecting donations or prizes, running errands, photography, setup before the event, or clean afterwards.

It is the policy of the Guthrie Center Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or physical disability in its education programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI or VIII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The school district will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of the families with children with limited English proficiency, families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats on request, and, to the extent possible, in a language families understand.

The school district believes that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections.

Home Visits
Home visits are required by the State of Iowa and will occur at the beginning of the school year. Although they are “home visits,” these meetings can occur at home or at a public meeting place.

This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child’s needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child’s interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you’d like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with either the classroom teacher or administrator.

Family Teacher Conferences
The preschool program will have formal family/teacher conferences at the same time as the elementary school in the fall. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of each student’s work. Together, the teacher and parent can make a plan to continue to encourage the student’s growth and development, not only during the early years of preschool, but through their educational careers for many years to come. Starting the student’s early basic education with meaningful goals will ensure individual growth for each child.

Family Night
Family night is an opportunity for you and your family to come to school to participate in fun as well as educational activities. The night will be planned to meet the needs of the children and families in the classroom.

Transitions
Home and school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child’s family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program’s staff. Preschool staff will provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, the program, options available, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible.

Community Resources
Community resources are available from New Opportunities. Families can contact the elementary office at 641-332-2720 or by visiting the website at www.newopp.org.

VII. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Guthrie Center Community Schools Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

Health and Immunization Certificates

Within six weeks after a child begins the program, health records (physical) that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both will provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, exception would be for an immunization(s) for which parents are using a religious exemption.

Health and Safety Records

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse's office. Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

1. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results.
2. Current emergency contact information for each child that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year.
3. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child.
4. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes).
5. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support.
6. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implements a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

1. All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
2. Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.

3. All staff is to follow proper procedures for handwashing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
4. All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
5. All teaching staff complete “Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens” annually.
6. At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times.
7. Students that need emergency medical help will be treated at the Guthrie County Hospital located in Guthrie Center, IA.

Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms during the night, he or she will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children.

Fever greater than 100º F. orally
Vomiting
Diarrhea
Pink eyes with drainage
Cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge

The program’s established policy for an ill child’s return:

Fever free for 24 hours without medication
Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
Conjunctivitis (pink eye): 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage
Lice: If lice are detected at school, parents will be contacted and encouraged to pick up their child and provide treatment. If the student does not leave school early, treatment must be completed before the child returns to school.

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child’s ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably; if the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group; or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other person authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child’s pediatrician. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives under the supervision of someone familiar with the child. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until she or he can be picked up, the child is located where new individuals will not be exposed.

Reporting Communicable Diseases

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

Medication Policies and Procedures

Policy: The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. A Request to Give Medication form will need to be filled out prior to the school staff administering medication. The form can be found on the school website or obtained from the office. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction. The school does not administer home remedies. All over-the-counter medications need the same form filled out prior to administration.

Procedure: The school nurse coordinates and/or administers medication during school hours only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Any other person who would administer medication has a current Medical Procedures Administration certificate on file. This certification is based on the five "right" practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

<u>For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration and storage instructions.</u>

For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer.

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the teaching staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a person legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication in the nurse's office or locked cabinet.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or parent. Instructions which state that the medication may be

used whenever needed will be returned to the parent or guardian at the end of the school year unless the medication expires prior to the end of the school year.

The school nurse or staff that have completed the Medication Administration Certification will maintain a medication log. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will also be noted on this log. This log is kept in the nurse's locked file cabinet.

Cleaning and Sanitization

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using a non-toxic solution of one tablespoon household bleach to one quart of tap water made fresh daily. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. The bleach solution will be left on for at least 2 minutes before it is wiped off with a clean paper towel, or it may be allowed to air dry. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in Section III, page 47 of the QPPS manual. A checklist will be completed as indicated in the table.

Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Nontoxic substances will be used whenever possible.

Handwashing Practices

Frequent handwashing is key to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper handwashing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding handwashing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught handwashing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Handwashing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff assists children with handwashing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- upon arrival for the day
- after diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants)
- after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit)

- before and after meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry)
- after playing in water that that is shared by two or more people
- after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals
- after playing outside

Adults also wash their hands

before and after feeding a child
before and after administering medication
after assisting a child with toileting
after handling garbage or cleaning

Proper handwashing procedures are followed by adults and children and include

- using liquid soap and running water
- rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water)

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for handwashing in any situation listed above.

· Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur
· Staff do not use handwashing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material

In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is located in the preschool classroom next to the door. It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa. Following each use of the First Aid kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The First Aid kit will be inspected monthly. The first aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Fire Safety, Severe Weather, and Safety Drills

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classroom with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire and severe weather drills are conducted two per semester following procedures guidelines set by the State Fire Marshal's Office and school safety advisors. Preschool may be in session when the district conducts a Safety Drill. Children will be instructed on those safety procedures.

Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents

The Guthrie Center Community School District has in place a “Safety Procedures Cheat Sheet” that provides instructions for a variety of emergencies. describes the following situations and procedures to follow:

This sheet will be posted, and will be reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when or if changes are made.

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, the teacher will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water; bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any incident or injuries will be documented on an “Injury and Illness” form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

All staff will have immediate access to a device that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, Guthrie County Hospital, and Poison Control will be posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers, and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

Inclement Weather
If there is a late start, preschoolers who attend all day are to arrive at the late start time.

In the event that the Guthrie Center Schools must be closed due to bad weather, the principal will send out text messages to inform parents. Contacts listed in JMC that have a cell phone with SMS (Text Message) selected will receive these messages.

The superintendent will also contact radio and television stations in the area.

Protection From Hazards and Environmental Health (QPPS 9.16, 9.17)
Program staff protects children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping.

The preschool classroom building has been tested for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, and other hazards that could impact children’s health with documentation on file. Custodial staff maintains the building’s heating and ventilation systems in compliance with national standards for facility use by children.

The program maintains facilities so they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer’s instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children. The program uses the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) so that the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation.

Smoke Free Facility
In compliance with the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act of 2008, Guthrie Center Community Schools buildings and grounds are smoke free. A “No Smoking” sign meeting the law’s requirements is posted at the

entrance to the school building to inform people that they are entering a non-smoking place. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children.

Child Protection Policies
The health and well being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An applicant or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the preschool program involves direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The program has written school board policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies. Staff reporting suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work is immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. All teaching staff complete “Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse” at least every five years and within six months of employment.

The school district does not tolerate employees physically, or sexually abusing or harassing students. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, legal guardians, teacher, principal, or another employee. The Iowa Department of Education has established a two-step procedure for investigating allegations of physical or sexual abuse of students by employees. That procedure requires the school district to designate an independent investigator to look into the allegations. This person is the Superintendent who can be reached at (641) 332-2972. The alternate investigator is the elementary principal and may be reached at (641) 332-2720.

Substance Abuse
Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of the Guthrie Center Community School. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Weapon Policy
No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or a look-alike weapon on any school premises, in any school vehicle or any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any school building or other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. "Look-alike weapon" means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon. A zero tolerance policy on dangerous weapons (real or toy) is in effect; i.e., guns, squirt guns, water rifles or pistols, slingshots, toy guns, toy grenades and other similar items knives, etc. Violation may result in a student suspension/expulsion.

Illegal Items Found in School or in Students' Possession
Students are prohibited from distributing, dispensing, manufacturing, possessing, using, and being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or look-a-like substances; and possessing or using tobacco, tobacco products or look-a-like substances. Weapons are not allowed on school grounds or at school

activities including hunting rifles even if unloaded and locked in cars with the exception of weapons in the control of law enforcement officials, or those being used for educational purposes and approved by the principal. Students bringing firearms to school or possessing firearms at school will be expelled for not less than one year. Parents of students found in violation of this policy may be contacted, and the students may be reported to law enforcement officials.

Volunteers

Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. For safety's sake, if you will be working with children in your volunteer role, you may be asked to submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children. If you work more than 40 hours per month with children, you will also need to provide us with a current health assessment, not more than one year old. Please contact the teacher, the elementary principal, or our office secretary if you would like to be a school volunteer.

When volunteers arrive at the elementary, they are to report to the office to sign in and receive a visitor's pass. They may then proceed to the classroom.

VIII. Staff

The Guthrie Center Community School district has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, including reporting relationships; salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, and performance evaluation; benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures. Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring.

Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and current health assessment.

Teaching staff will maintain a current certificate of Pediatric First Aid Training, including managing a blocked airway. A person trained in First Aid will be with the students at all times.

Health Assessment

The preschool program maintains current health information from documented health assessments for all paid staff and for all volunteers who work more than 40 hours per month and have contact with children. A current health assessment (not more than one-year-old) is to be received by the program before an employee starts work or before a volunteer has contact with children. The health assessment is updated every two years. Documented health assessments include:

- Capacities and limitations that may affect job performance
- Documentation by a licensed health professional of TB skin testing using the Mantoux method and showing the employee to be free from active TB disease. For those who have a positive TB skin test and who develop a persistent cough or unexpected fever, immediate assessment by a licensed physician is required. For those who have increased risk of TB according to the

Centers for Disease Control (CDC), documentation is required annually by a licensed health professional showing that the employee is free from active TB disease.

Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, health-assessment records, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a locked file in the Principal's Office.

Staff is evaluated on a regular basis by the principal. Staff also evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflections and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families.

Orientation

Employees must know their role and duties. New preschool teaching staff will be required to participate in an initial orientation program that introduces them to fundamental aspects of the program operation including:

- Program philosophy, mission, and goals
- Expectations for ethical conduct
- Individual needs of children they will be teaching or caring for
- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques
- Daily activities and routines of the program
- Program curriculum
- Child abuse and reporting procedures
- Program policies and procedures
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria
- Regulatory requirements

Follow-up training expands on the initial orientations.

The employee's immediate supervisor should provide the new employee with a review of the employee's responsibilities and duties. The superintendent or principal will explain payroll procedures, employee benefit programs and accompanying forms to the employee.

Staffing patterns and schedule

The preschool program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our program follows requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times. The principal will maintain lists of current substitutes for both the preschool teacher and the preschool teaching assistant in case of absence. If one of the teaching staff needs to temporarily leave the classroom, the person will call the elementary office to arrange for coverage in order to maintain the adult/child ratio.

Staff is provided space and time away from children during the day. Should staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff is provided breaks of at least 15 minutes in each four-hour period. In addition, staff may request temporary relief when they are unable to perform their duties.

Staff development activities

Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. All teaching staff will continuously strengthen their leadership skills and relationships with others and work to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community, and beyond. Teaching staff is encouraged to participate in informal and formal ways in

local, state, or regional public-awareness activities. They may join an early childhood group or organization, attend meetings, or share information with others both at and outside the program.

Teaching staff will be informed of professional development activities provided by Child Care Resource and Referral, the local Empowerment areas, and the Area Education Agency. Staff is expected to attend all staff trainings and meetings throughout the year. Trainings selected will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program and community.

Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan
All staff is evaluated regularly by the building principal. Staff also evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflections and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. From this, they develop an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and use it to inform their continuous professional development.

VIX. Notifications

Equal Educational Opportunity
It is the policy of the Guthrie Center Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, socioeconomic status, religion, or disability. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society. Students who feel they have been discriminated against are encouraged to report it to the school district Affirmative Action Coordinator, the Superintendent at 641-332-2974. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Education, 310 W. Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 800, Milwaukee, WI, 53203-2292, (414) 291-1111, or the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, (515) 281-5294. Procedures and levels are outlined in district policy for resolving complaints and are available upon request from the principal's office.

Non-Discrimination Policy
It is the policy of the Guthrie Center Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact the district's Equity Coordinator, Karla Mahaffey, Curriculum Director, 906 School St, Guthrie Center, IA 50115, 641-332-2236, kmahaffey@acgcschools.org

Affirmative Action Policy
It is the policy of the Guthrie Center Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C.§§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.). If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Adair Casey Community School District, please contact the Karla Mahaffey, Curriculum Director, 906 School Street Guthrie Center, Iowa 50115 (641) 332-2972: or by email at kmahaffey@acgcschools.org.; or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison

Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661, telephone number 312-730-1560, fax 312/730-1576, e-mail: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov