

Dike-New Hartford Preschool Family Handbook

2018-2019

Dear Parents,

The Dike-New Hartford Preschool Classrooms wish to say "Welcome!" We are very anxious to get to know you and your child this year. The Parent Information Night in August is an opportunity for you and your child to meet us and explore our preschool classroom. We will also have an Open House in October.

Preschool is a wonderful way to set the pace for what we would hope to be a lifelong love of learning. We create an environment filled with socially and developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children, thus providing a much-valued "successful" first experience in a school setting.

As professionals, we are dedicated to the nurturing of all children. We value the trust you place in us at this delicate time in your child's development.

This handbook is intended to be used as a reference. After you have read it thoroughly, please keep it for the year to answer your questions when they arise. You will also receive notes and newsletters to keep you informed as to the curriculum your child is exploring and special events or field trips in which they will participate.

We are required to comply with QPPS (Quality Preschool Programming Standards) and Creative Curriculum. We thank you for your cooperation in this venture.

A child's attitude toward school is greatly influenced by parental involvement and excitement about school, so please feel free to share with us your views and your child's views about the program.

With questions or encouragement call, email or stop in. Our communication with you is important to us as we work together in your child's early education.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Mai, New Hartford, 319-983-2206, Sabrina.mai@dnhcsd.org

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Goals and Philosophy

Our program is developmental. Our purpose is to take each child at their present level and provide them with a variety of experiences to further their social, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth and development. Each child's readiness and developmental level will differ from others. Attending the preschool program can promise a more solid foundation on which to build in later grades.

****The following are the major areas of focus in our preschool program:**

Social Skills

Working and playing with others, sharing responsibilities of planning, preparing for and cleaning up after activities. Many opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperation, helping, and negotiating are provided.

Self-Respect

Children have many opportunities for creative play, creative dramatics, working with puppets, stories pertinent to a child's problems and joys, etc. A child's self-concept is of great importance to their approach to learning and to life. Our goal is to facilitate the development of self-esteem by expressing respect, acceptance and comfort for each child.

Cognitive Learning

Children are exposed to skills that are the basis for all learning such as, being observant, seeing relationships, listening, verbalization, sequencing of thought, etc. Emphasis is put on these visual and auditory skills because they are so important. Learning about math, science, and social studies, are all integrated through meaningful, hands on activities. Language arts is an important part of our program. We are interested in letters of the alphabet. Our focus is on how they are used- to write our names, make words, make stories, signs, and give messages. It is possible to drill children until they can correctly recite information such as the alphabet or numerals. However, for the children to understand fully and remember what they have learned and to be able to use this knowledge, the information must be meaningful to the child in the context of the child's experience and development. We closely observe to see what children understand and pose additional challenges to enhance and broaden this understanding.

Life Experiences

Field trips, science activities, and cooking will take place throughout the year.

Physical Skills

Many activities to further the development of large and small muscles are provided.

Our program is play oriented and implements Creative Curriculum. What looks like play to an adult is actually the work of childhood. While playing, children are developing an understanding of the world. It is our purpose to provide stimulating, exciting, and worthwhile experiences in order to take advantage of this period of tremendous growth, desire, and willingness in your child. Children's natural curiosity and desire to make sense of their world is used to motivate them to become involved in learning activities. Children have a natural desire to learn. We feel our role is to provide meaningful learning opportunities by observing, supporting, and guiding children along their way. (QPPS 2.1, 10.1)

Admission Policies

It is the policy of Dike-New Hartford Preschool not to discriminate based on race, sex, color, national origin, age, handicap, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status. (QPPS 1.7)

To comply with Quality Preschool Programming Standards (QPPS), it is necessary for parents to provide the preschool with:

- **copy of health insurance card**
- **emergency card, including the name of someone other than the parent who can be contacted in the event of an emergency.**
- **physical form signed by a physician**
- **up-to-date immunization card signed by both parent and physician with sources of immunizations to be listed.**
- **Intake form**
- **Picture/Video/ Website Release form**
- **Field trip release form**

These forms must be completed and turned in before your child attends class each year. They will be kept confidential and will be reviewed quarterly. For children returning to preschool a second or third year, a new physical form must be on file each year. The physical form may not be over one year old. (QPPS 10.10)

Licensing

The District Fire Marshall inspects our school each year. These inspections guarantee to you as parents that this preschool meets state standards for health and safety. The preschool is verified in Quality Preschool Programming Standards as is mandatory for the Voluntary Preschool Grant.

It is necessary to make you aware that, as required by the State Code of Iowa #235A, "certified school employees, employees of a licensed day care facility" are considered mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse. It is the responsibility of the Human Services Department to make any further investigation should such a situation arise.

Attendance and Illness

We encourage regular attendance at preschool. Our curriculum is derived from well-planned units and your child will benefit from the continuity of objectives in these units if he/she attends on a consistent basis. If you know you are going to be out of town, please send a note or notify the teacher ahead of time. If a child is going to be absent or ill you need to notify the office at your earliest convenience. You may call Dike Elementary (319-989-2487), New Hartford Elementary (319-983-2206) or contact your child's teacher. (QPPS 10.6)

In fairness to your child and others, if your child is ill s/he should be kept home. **NO MEDICATION WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE STAFF UNLESS A PERMISSION SLIP IS SIGNED BY THE PARENT** stating the name of the medicine, dosage, and times to be given. The Elementary school nurse or secretary will administer all medications. Medications will be kept in a locked cabinet. A child with head lice will need to have been treated with the de-lousing shampoo and have nits removed to be able to attend. If a child is sent home with head lice, the staff will check him before being readmitted. (QPPS 5.10)

Health Policy

Quality Preschool Programming Standards require the following:

Our policy is set up to protect the children against the spread of illnesses. Hand washing is the best source of protection against illness. Each child must have an annual physical exam and an up to date immunization record. Please keep the staff informed of any changes in your child's health and/or eating habits. An emergency care plan is kept on file for all children with a food allergy, asthma, or any condition that regularly requires medication or technology support. Parents are responsible for applying sun block or bug spray before children arrive at preschool. (QPPS 10.6, 10.14, 5.6)

Children who are ill should not be brought to preschool. Children should be able to participate in daily activities, not compromise the health and safety of other children, or demand greater care than staff can provide. Alert the staff if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease. Please remember if your child is too sick to go outside, they are too sick to be at preschool. A child may not attend preschool or may be sent home if the following conditions exist:

- A. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the activities planned.
- B. The illness results in a greater care need than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the children.
- C. The child has any of the following conditions:
 - Fever, accompanied by behavior changes or signs or symptoms of illness until medical professional evaluation finds the child able to return to the center. Temperature should be normal without meds for at least 24 hours in order for the child to return.
 - Symptoms or signs of possible severe illness such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs for the child.
 - Uncontrolled diarrhea, the child will be sent home after 3 diarrhea bowel movements. The child must stay home a period of a full 24 hours after they have had a diarrhea bowel movement.
 - Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
 - Vomiting illness (may return after vomiting has stopped for 24 hours)
 - Mouth sores with drooling unless a health care provider determines the condition noninfectious
 - Rash with fever or behavior changes
 - Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge until 24 hours after treatment
 - Scabies or other infestation until 24 hours after treatment
 - Tuberculosis until medically cleared by a physician
 - Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment

- Strep Throat or other streptococcal infection until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Chickenpox until all sores have dried and crusted and fever free
- Pertussis until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- Mumps until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling
- Hepatitis A virus until 1 week after onset of illness or as directed by the health department when passive immunoprophylaxis has been administered to appropriate children and staff
- Measles until 4 days after onset of rash
- Rubella until 7 days after onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness

In the event of a communicable disease outbreak, such as strep throat or chickenpox, a note will be sent home with all students. If a child becomes ill while at the center, the parent will be notified. The child will be taken to a quiet area to rest, under the supervision of the school nurse or preschool associate, until the parent can pick up. We request that children be picked up within an hour of being notified. If you cannot pick up your child, please notify someone on your emergency pick up list. (QPPS 10.6, 5.3, 5.4)

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are held in November and March. Please check the school calendar dates. (QPPS 4.14)

School Arrival and Dismissal

For safe arrival to our preschool classroom please walk your child into the classroom. At the beginning of class a teacher will open the classroom door and greet the students and families. Classes start at 8:15, 12:00 or 12:20 for 4/5's and 8:30 for 3's. DIKE - When picking up your child, please wait outside the south elementary doors. A teacher will dismiss your child to you. NEW HARTFORD – When picking up your child please wait in the hallway by the preschool door.

Please notify us if someone new to us is going to pick up your child. We will not dismiss the child without talking to you previously or receiving a note or email from you. The names of people allowed to pick up your child are kept on file.

If possible, please call if you will arrive late for pick up and we will plan accordingly. It is reassuring to your child if the teacher can explain the delay.

When our class leaves our classroom, to go outside, a walk through the school, a fire or tornado drill, a field trip, etc., attendance is taken several times. Children are counted before leaving the classroom, several times throughout the time outside the classroom, and by each staff member after boarding the bus, prior to leaving a field trip. (QPPS 10.11)

Cancellations Due to Bad Weather

The preschool follows the school calendar. School closings and early dismissal days on the calendar apply to us.

If there is an UNSCHEDULED school closing or delay, or an early out, it will be announced on the radio and TV and is applicable to the preschool also. You can sign up for text alerts on <https://schoolalerts.iowa.gov> and or www.kwwl.com.

If there is a late start we will not have morning preschool. If an early dismissal for WINTER weather is announced before the start of the afternoon class, there will be no class. If there is an early dismissal for HEAT, the afternoon classes will dismiss at the same time as elementary students. If they dismiss at noon for heat there will be no pm preschool.

Field Trips

The Preschool schedules field trips each year. Parents will have a note sent home telling them about the trip. We will transport children in school buses. If parent chaperones are needed, a note will be sent home. Buses are driven by drivers employed by the Dike-New Hartford school district. (QPPS 10.11)

Supplies

Each child is asked to bring a book bag **large enough to hold papers at least 9x12**. Children's work, notes to parents and newsletters are sent home daily. Please check bags daily so you do not miss anything. For additional supplies, please see the Elementary Supply List to be found on the DNH Website.

School Attire

Please have your child come in **play clothes** so he or she may freely enter into all activities such as art, creative dramatics, or outdoor play.

Please make sure your child is **dressed appropriately for the weather**. Please mark all items (each boot, mitten, hat, coat, book bag, etc.) with your child's name. It is surprising how often a child does not recognize his own outerwear in a large group setting. We will inform you ahead of time if your child should wear snow pants and boots to preschool. If your child wears boots to school, they need to bring different shoes to wear in the classroom.

Special Days

Halloween Celebration – Children can wear costumes to preschool on the day of their party. If your child would like to bring treats to the party, we would love them. (There won't be a sign-up for bringing treats.)

Christmas - We will have a grab-bag gift exchange. These gifts should be kept under \$3. If this is a problem at all, let your teacher know. Girls bring a girl's gift and boys bring a boy's gift. If your child would like to bring treats to the party, we would love them. (There won't be a sign-up for bringing treats.)

Valentine's Day - Your child may bring Valentines the day of the party. If you would like to bring treats to the party, we would love them. (There won't be a sign-up for bringing treats.)

Birthdays - Children may bring treats on or near their birthday. If your child has a summer birthday and you'd like to celebrate it during the school year, we would love that. Just let us know when you would like to bring them.

When your child is having a birthday party we would prefer that you not take the children from preschool for the party, unless you are taking all of the class, or all of the boys or all of the girls. We do not want to squelch the excitement of the birthday child or the party attendees, but it is VERY hard for the children who were not invited to understand why they were not asked to a party and other children were.

Snacks

Each day the children will share a snack and milk during their preschool class time. A calendar will be sent home telling you the number of children and date of your turn to provide snack. For each month, there will be a different food group will be assigned. Some possible snack suggestions are listed below, but use your imagination too. One of our goals is to have the children try new things and let eating be an adventure. (QPPS 10.6, 5.13)

Snack suggestions:

<i>cheese</i>	<i>sandwich</i>	<i>cereal mixtures</i>	<i>bread sticks</i>
<i>fruit</i>	<i>granola</i>	<i>muffins</i>	<i>pretzels</i>
<i>veggies and dip</i>	<i>snack mix</i>	<i>jello</i>	<i>cereal bars yogurt</i>
<i>Rice Krispie treats</i>	<i>meat slices</i>	<i>crackers</i>	

Tuition and Fee Information

5-year-old (Pre-K) tuition is covered by the Department of Ed.

4-year-old tuition is covered by the Voluntary 4-Year-Old preschool grant

3-year-old – Monthly tuition is \$100.00 (2017-18 tuition is now \$80 per months due to fundraising efforts.)

Since the fee is figured on a yearly basis and divided into nine equal payments, the fee is the same for each month although the number of classes may vary. Children may not be absent for any months and return unless tuition is paid for each month. We are offering a yearlong program, not a month-by-month program. Payments are divided into monthly

payments for your convenience. Tuition is due the first of each month. No part of the fee will be returned because of absences. Please send your payment to your child's classroom or to the office.

Donations

Donations of used toys and equipment are very welcome. If you have some toys that your family has outgrown or you think would benefit our children, please know that we do appreciate donations.

Discipline Policy

We use positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirection, and setting clear limits. Children feel comfortable and confident knowing their teachers' expectations match and respect their developing capabilities.

Should inappropriate behavior continue, the teacher and the child will talk privately about how to change the behavior. Inappropriate behavior that continues beyond this point will be discussed with the parent.

Access to Classrooms

Parents shall be afforded continuous access to their children during the preschool's hours of operation, unless parental contact is prohibited by court order. There are also some field trips that we only have teachers accompany the children due to safety needs or number of tickets, etc.

Weapons

Weapons of any kind will not be allowed on the premises. Children should not bring toys to school that are or look like weapons. (QPPS 10.6)

Visiting Pets

There may be times throughout the year that we invite students to share their pets with our class. (Pending no student allergies to these animals.) The visiting animals must be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. **Reptiles** are **not** allowed in the classroom. (QPPS 5.26)

Water Play

When children are playing in the water table precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious disease. No child may drink the water. Children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in communal water play. Fresh portable water is used, and water is changed before a new group of children comes to participate in the water play activity. When the activity period is completed with each group of children, the water is drained. Alternatively, fresh portable water flows freely through the water play table and out through the drain in the table/sink. (QPPS 5.9)

If you have any questions about any of the information in our handbook, please give us a call. We look forward to having a great year with your children!!