

# AHSTW Community School Preschool Handbook 2021-2022

768 S Maple St

Avoca, IA 51521

712-343-6364



**AHSTW**  
AVOCA HANCOCK SHELBY TENNANT WALNUT

The AHSTW Community School District inspires students to learn and empowers them to excel.

Superintendent: Mr. Darin Jones  
Primary Principal: Mrs. Sarah Kock  
Intermediate Principal: Mrs. Cristin Rold  
High School Principal: Mr. Mike Embrock  
Technology Director: Mr. Ryan Smith  
Business Manager: Mrs. Kelly Allen

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**MISSION**  
(QPPS 10.1)

The mission of AHSTW's Early Childhood Preschool Program is to provide all students the skills and tools necessary to be successful.

**PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS**  
(QPPS 10.1)

AHSTW's Early Childhood Preschool Program is founded on the philosophy that children, their families, and society benefit from high-quality early childhood programs. We believe that early childhood education is critical to success later in life.

We will partner with families and community partners to provide a high-quality education through hands-on learning experiences, predictable routines, and a preschool curriculum that is directly aligned with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. We will provide a safe and nurturing environment while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of preschool-aged children.

**BELIEF STATEMENTS**  
(QPPS 10.1)

We believe each child should receive quality care and be provided with a developmentally appropriate education.

We believe that all children and families should be treated with respect and kindness. We will always appreciate family, cultural and individual differences.

We believe all young children experience success through active learning opportunities within a safe, nurturing environment to meet the individual needs of the child.

We believe with the combined efforts of parents, educators, community and students, all children will succeed intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially.

We believe young children learn best through activities and explorations that are hands-on and include supportive adult-child and child-to-child interactions. Active thinking, investigating, and experimenting, as well as adult-guided instruction, provide children an opportunity to learn and function at their own developmental age level, to discover how things work and to learn firsthand about the world around them.

We believe play provides the foundation for future academic learning. Active learning through play enables us to promote the standards and benchmarks of our curriculum.

## **ENROLLMENT**

### **Equal Educational Opportunity (QPPS 7.2)**

It is the policy of the AHSTW Community School District to provide equal opportunity in programs provided to all students regardless of race, color, national origin, gender (sex), sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, socioeconomic status, disability, religion or creed in its educational programs, activities, or rights legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975; and of all applicable Iowa statutes, rules and regulations of the public school district.

### **Eligibility**

- Children must be 4 years old prior to September 15<sup>th</sup> of the current school year, with the exception of those on Individualized Education Programs (IEP's).
- Current physical
- Immunization card (See "Immunization" section for further details.)
- Registration forms completed to include emergency information
- Permission form signed for emergency care
- Authorization for child pick-up/dismissal
- School registration fee

### **Class Size (QPPS 9.9, 10.4, 10.18)**

The AHSTW Community School District values a proper student:adult ratio. Our program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Each classroom which serves early childhood special education students has a teacher who is certified in Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education. Each classroom also employs an adult para-educator to aide in the education process. We maintain a 10:1 student:adult ratio to best educate our preschool students. Additional staff may be provided based on the individual needs of children. Adult-student ratios are maintained on field trips. Classroom student numbers will not exceed 20 and the number of children allowed is based on usable square footage. Class size may be reduced based on the number of students needing specialized instruction.

### **Enrollment Guidelines:**

Five-year-old students are not eligible for preschool enrollment at AHSTW. They are invited to attend our Transitional Kindergarten program.

AHSTW Community School has placed an emphasis on enrolling students within the AHSTW School District. We will prioritize enrollment in the following manner:

- Resident four-year-old students, or students whose older siblings are open enrolled into the district, demonstrating financial need;
- Resident four-year-old students, or students whose older siblings are open enrolled into the district;
- Non-resident four-year-old students demonstrating financial need;

- Non-resident four-year-old students
- Additional Guidelines:
  - A four-year old student with a documented IEP will receive priority. {At least two preschool slots will be held for three-year-old students with IEP's.}
  - If AHSTW's Preschool is near capacity and two students of similar age enroll for the upcoming school year, the decision will be brought to committee.
    - Names will not be provided to the committee, but the committee will determine entrance based upon the following criteria:
      1. IEP
      2. Lack of access to preschool in a previous year
      3. Academic observations over the year
      4. Physical needs
      5. Social/emotional needs
      6. Age {Young to Old}

### **Late Registration**

Families who would like to register their child after the beginning of the school year are welcome to do so, provided there are still openings available. If no openings are available, the student will be placed on a waiting list and the family will be contacted as openings occur.

### **Inclusion (QPPS 9.10)**

The preschool program serves 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.

### **HOURS & SCHEDULE**

(QPPS 2.3, 2.6, 3.12)

Classes will be offered Monday through Friday 8:30am-3:30pm. We will follow the District Calendar, with the exception of two additional preschool professional development days per month.

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. 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:

- Large and Small Group Activities
- Self-directed Play
- Learning Center Activities: Art, Science, Writing, Games and Puzzles, Book Center, Blocks and Wheel Toys, Pretend Play, Technology, Sensory Play

- Story Time
- Individual Activities
- Outdoor Activities
- Music and Movement

**Arrival and Departure of Children (QPPS 10.9)**

*Drop Off:* Families may drop off their children in the elementary cafeteria between the hours of 7:50 - 8:30. A preschool para-educator will be present in the cafeteria for student check-in. For safety reasons, please park and walk your student into the building using the east parking lot. Buses will be loading and unloading in the west parking lot.

*Pick Up:* Families can pick up their child on the east side of the elementary building, at their child’s classroom exterior door, at 3:20. A preschool para-educator will be present in the classroom when parents pick up their child. Those children who ride the bus home will be walked to the bus by the classroom teacher.

Teachers will incorporate lessons throughout the year regarding student safety as pedestrians and bus/vehicle passengers. A staff member is on duty before and after school outside of the building to monitor students’ safety as pedestrians upon arrival and dismissal.

If a student is disabled and requires assistance upon arrival or departure, a teacher or para-educator will be assigned this duty and will ensure proper safety precautions and regulations are followed that are specific to the disability.

**Transportation (QPPS 10.9)**

The AHSTW Community School District will transport 4 and 5 year old preschoolers on the regular school bus route if the child’s residence is within the normal bus route. It is recommended that the preschooler be partnered on the bus either with an older sibling or a responsible neighbor or friend.

At dismissal time, preschoolers have the following options:

1. Parent pick-up
2. Pick-up by other responsible adult as designated by the parent. Families must notify the classroom teacher or the office before dismissal.
3. Transported by the bus

If your student needs to ride a different bus or will have a change in pick-up arrangements, please send a note to the teacher. This will help us keep your child as safe as possible. If you are unable to send a note, please call the school at least thirty minutes before dismissal.

**Buses**

Buses are operated throughout the district for the convenience of the student. When riding school buses, the students are under the direct supervision of the bus driver and must obey

him/her. If a student does not adhere to the established bus rules, the driver will generate a Bus Referral. The administration reserves the right to determine the level of referral based on the severity of the infraction. If the misconduct continues to interfere with the safety of self and others, the student may be suspended from riding the bus.

When an incident occurs, the driver will speak with the student and notify his/her parents of the incident. An electronic referral is submitted to the office. Severe infractions may result in immediate suspension from the bus.

The bus driver, along with teachers/staff, will model expectations for behavior on the bus.

Please read and familiarize yourself with the following safety rules.

#### **BUS RULES:**

- Stay seated while bus is in motion.
- No food or drinks on the bus including sunflower seeds and candy.
- No littering.
- Open windows and escape openings by permission of driver only.
- Close windows before departing bus.
- No taunting, teasing, harassing, or physical touching of fellow students.
- Report problems to driver.
- Use appropriate language and voice level.
- Do not vandalize bus.
- No cleats worn on the bus.
- ALWAYS follow directions of driver.
- Driver may assign seats.

#### **ATTENDANCE**

Students who are enrolled for classes in the AHSTW Early Childhood Preschool Program are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Inconsistent 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 at 712-343-6364 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 will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

A child who has reached the age of four by September 15 and who is enrolled in a statewide preschool program shall be considered to be of compulsory attendance age unless the parent or guardian of the child notifies the school district in writing of the parent's or guardian's intent to remove the child from enrollment in the preschool program."

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** An excused absence is one in which school officials have approved the parent's request to excuse a student's absence. Parents do not determine whether an absence is an excused absence. Parents/guardians can assist in providing the best possible experience for the student by requesting to excuse their child from school only in cases of emergency or illness, and not for conducting business that can be completed on weekends or outside of school time. Examples of approved absences are: illness, doctor's appointments, or emergency situations. A doctor's note may be needed to have an absence be excused.

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:** An unexcused absence is one that has not been approved by school officials.

Attendance notification letters will be sent to parents that will provide information on the number of days absent from school. These letters will be sent at five days and ten days of unexcused absences and at ten days of excused absences.

A student exceeding 12 days of unexcused absences is subject to possible referral to a truancy officer. After 10 days of absence, a doctor's note is required for the absence to be considered excused.

#### 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 and receive a visitor's badge before visiting the preschool. Photo identification will be required for any unknown visitor to the classroom. Visitors are asked to please use discretion with regard to bringing babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt class sessions. We would also appreciate this visit to be arranged prior to coming in to help limit possible disruptions to the academic day.

### **STAFF**

(QPPS 5.1, 6.2, 6.3, 8.2, 8.4, 10.3)

#### Program Administrator

The elementary principal is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program. The principal 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 endorsement and, if serving early childhood special education students, certification in Early Childhood Special Education is assigned to each preschool classroom.

#### Para-Educators



A full time paraeducator in each 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 have the assistance of the school nurse. The school nurse is available full-time. She maintains student health records by updating them quarterly and attends to the health needs of the students while they are at school. The school nurse is available for parent consultation when necessary.

#### Support Staff

Green Hills Area Education Agency (GHAEA) support staff provides 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 or others.

#### **STAFF, General Information** (QPPS 10.15 - 10.20)

AHSTW Preschool has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer 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 a current health assessment.

Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the administrative office.

#### **Staff Orientation** (QPPS 6.2)

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 school board secretary will explain payroll procedures, employee benefit programs and accompanying forms to the employee. Regular employees ineligible for the school district's group health plan will be given information regarding where they can obtain healthcare or health care insurance.

### **Staffing Patterns and Schedule** (QPPS 10.18)

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.

Staff are provided space and time away from children during the day. Should staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff will be 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** (QPPS 6.6, 10.15)

Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. All teaching staff 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 are 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.

### **Staff Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan** (QPPS 6.5, 6.6)

All staff is evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or, in the case of the program administrator, by the superintendent. 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.

## **CURRICULUM**

(QPPS 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7)

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 should foster 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 preschool program uses Connect 4 Learning (C4L), a research and evidence-based comprehensive curriculum designed for early childhood. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills, and social skills. It provides children an opportunity to learn in a variety of ways - through play, problem solving, movement, art, music, drawing and writing, listening, and storytelling.

#### **CHILD ASSESSMENT**

(QPPS 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.9, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 8.2, 8.4)

Specific assessment plans are available upon request from the child's teacher.

*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 setting 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 results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD online creates a developmental profile of each child based on teacher observations and checklists. Teaching Strategies GOLD is based on 38 research based objectives that include predictors of school success and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, state early learning guidelines, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.
- Basic Knowledge Checklist are administered 4 times a year to collect a child's knowledge & recognition of letters, numbers, shapes, colors, rote counting, and 1-to-1 counting.
- Families are asked to contribute information about 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 gathered from assessments is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to intentionally plan developmentally appropriate experiences and instruction
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones and progress
- To indicate possible areas that requires additional assessment

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent/Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. In addition, a Preschool Progress Report will be sent home four times during the school year. The preschool teacher will communicate daily/weekly regarding children's activities during the daily routine. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or data collected, the teacher feels that there is a possible concern 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. Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- The teacher requests assistance from the Green Hills Area Education Agency (AEA) as an early intervention process. This team engages in problem identification, planned interventions, provides consultative support, and makes outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance. The Green Hills AEA team's assistance is available for all students and teachers in the building.
- A request made to Green Hills Area Education Agency for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing can be made.
- A request for special education evaluation can be made.

The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated. The family is encouraged to advocate for services for their child and be actively involved in the eligibility process.

If a child is determined to need special accommodations or modifications by the preschool team, those accommodations/modifications occur within 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.

- The program provides families with information about programs and services from other organizations, such as Green Hills AEA, DHS, Child Care Resource and Referral, Parents as Teachers programs, and medical professionals, etc.

### **PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

(QPPS 10.15)

AHSTW Preschool Program implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. We will receive a verification visit during the 2018-2019 school year 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. As part of our program assessment, in the fall and spring of each year, we also provide you with a family questionnaire to evaluate our 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.

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**

(QPPS 9.2, 9.7, 9.8, 9.11, 9.12, 10.5)

Before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher will complete the following daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor:

- All safety plugs and electric outlets are covered, heat/AC, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children reach and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of environment - spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems reported to head custodian.
- 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. Children will be within "line of sight" of adults both indoors and outdoors, unless toileting. (QPPS 3.7) Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the library area, etc.). When toileting, students will be monitored by sound and checked visually when necessary. (QPPS 3.7) Indoor and outdoor spaces will be zoned by teaching staff with special attention given to areas where injury could occur.

### **STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

(QPPS 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5)

Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, 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* (QPPS 1.2, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6)

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. (QPPS 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6)

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.

*Permissible Methods of Discipline:*

For acts of aggression and fighting (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. (QPPS 1.8, 3.6)

### *Prohibited Practices* (QPPS 1.3)

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

1. threats or derogatory remarks.
2. physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. subject a child to neglect.
4. withhold food as a form of discipline.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES**

(QPPS 1.1, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4)

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations. 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. Staff will use these notes to inform 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.

Various calendars (activities, lunch, district master calendar) can be found on our school website: <https://www.ahstwschools.org> The PK-3 Primary Building has a facebook page as well. Search for the name: AHSTW Primary School, PK-3rd Grade, and "like" the page to be notified of new postings.

### **Children's Records** (QPPS 4.1, 5.1, 10.8)

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 district 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.

### **Ethics and Confidentiality** (QPPS 4.1, 6.1, 10.8)

Staff follows 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 regarding 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 as part of their orientation.

**Grievance Policy (QPPS 7.5)**

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 AHSTW Primary School Principal.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the AHSTW Primary School Principal who is the program administrator for the preschool. If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the Superintendent of AHSTW Community Schools.

**FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

(QPPS 1.1, 3.3, 4.9, 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7)

AHSTW Preschool 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 with prior notice of at least 24 hours.

Teachers and administrators use a variety of formal and informal (including conversations) 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 communicates with families, on a regular basis, regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared caregiving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of their children. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as when either party requests.

AHSTW Community School District 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 rely on notes home, phone calls, and social media as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

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

- 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.
- Attend family meetings.
- Return all forms, questionnaires, and so on, promptly.
- Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences in the Fall and Spring semesters.
- Check your child's folder and backpack each day.
- Participate in field trip activities.
- Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, preparing visuals, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken.
- Share any of your families' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
- Read all the material sent home with your child.
- 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, run errands, photography, setup before the event, or clean afterwards.

It is the policy of the AHSTW Preschool 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 made prior to the start of school. 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. It also allows your child to become familiar and comfortable with his/her teacher and answer any questions you may have. 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.

Teachers also spend some time with the child during the home visit, interacting with them in their familiar environment to facilitate their transition to school.

Families are also given handouts about developmentally appropriate activities they can do at home with their child.

## **Open House**

Families are invited to attend an Open House night at the school prior to the first day of school.

The focus of Open House is:

- Children are introduced to the classroom and allowed to explore and become familiar with their preschool setting.
- Staff answers any additional questions families may have in regard to policies and procedures.
- Families may bring the child's school supplies that evening to help encourage the child to feel ownership of their new classroom.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

The preschool program will have formal Parent-Teacher Conferences twice each year - fall and spring. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Conferences will allow you the opportunity to share what new skills you have seen your child developing at home or in the community. Together we can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

## **Family Events**

Family events provide an opportunity for you and your family to come to school to participate in fun as well as educational activities. With help from family volunteers, the event will be planned to meet the needs of the children and families in the classroom

## **Transitions**

Home-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, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible. In addition, Kindergarten round-up is held annually in the spring.

### **School Advisory Committee (SIAC) (QPPS 10.15)**

The AHSTW Preschool has a school advisory committee composed of parents, school staff, and other community members interested in the school programs. This group provides feedback on services that meet children and family needs. They also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and services. Please let teachers know if you are interested in being part of the SIAC Committee.

### **Early Childhood Advisory Committee**

The AHSTW Early Childhood staff feel it is important to develop a cooperative partnership with our parents and the community to ensure continued development and expansion of our preschool program. Through this committee, we hope to develop recommendations to the board of education and provide information to the public and prospective parents regarding the rules, regulations, and expectations of an Iowa preschool program. It is our belief that through group discussions and gathering input from all interested parties, this organization will collaboratively improve the education process.

The following statements are goals of the Preschool Advisory Committee:

- Develop ideas regarding the expansion of our existing preschool program;
- Design surveys to send to district patrons;
- Review data and form recommendations for program decisions;
- Present recommendations to the AHSTW Community School Board.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

AHSTW Preschool Program 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.

### **Emergency Procedures (QPPS 10.10)**

The AHSTW Preschool has in place an "Emergency Operations Plan" that describes the following situations and procedures to follow:

- Emergency phone numbers
- Fire procedures
- Severe weather
- Bomb threats
- Physical Threats/Armed Intruder

- Evacuations
- Crisis Intervention Plan, Crisis Intervention Steps, and Media Procedures
- Accidental Injury or Illness procedures for life threatening and non-life threatening situations

This plan will be posted by the telephone and included in the first aid kit. The plan will be reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made to it.

### **Health and Immunization Certificates (QPPS 5.1)**

Before a child begins the program, health records 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 Iowa Department of Public Health.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both 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, except for immunization for which parents are using medical or religious exemption.

### **Health and Safety Records (QPPS 5.1, 10.8)**

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: (QPPS 5.1)

- Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
- 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;
- Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;
- Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
- 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);
- 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; and (QPPS 10.14)

- 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** (QPPS 5.2, 5.6, 10.4, 10.10)

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- 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.
- All staff is to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff is familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- All teaching staff completes "Occupational Exposure to Blood-borne Pathogens" annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training and CPR, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children.

**Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children** (QPPS 10.5)

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 100.4 degrees
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Pink eyes with drainage
- Cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge
- Cold sores or lesions

The school'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
- Cold sores or lesions shows signs of healing (scabbed over)
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

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. AHSTW will follow the most recent CDC and Public Health guidelines regarding specific communicable diseases, such as COVID-19.

### **Reporting Communicable Diseases (QPPS 5.3)**

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 (QPPS 5.8)**

**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. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

**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 administrator or teaching staff who administers medication has (a) specific training and (b) a written performance evaluation updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the six 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. (6) The person giving the medication signs documentation of items (1) through (5) above. Teaching staff who are required to administer special medical procedures have demonstrated to a health professional that they are competent in the procedures and are guided in writing about how to perform the procedure by the prescribing health care provider.

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, storage, and disposal instructions.

For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child.

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 physician or other 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 a sturdy, child-resistant container that is locked and prevents spillage.

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 other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

A medication log will be maintained by the health associate to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted on this log. See sample form in Appendix.

### **Cleaning and Sanitization** (QPPS 5.18, 5.19)

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. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. The solution will be left on for at least two 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. Non-toxic substances will be used whenever possible. Staff are trained yearly prior to the start of the school year.

Ventilation and sanitation, rather than sprays, air freshening chemicals, or deodorizers, control odors in inhabited areas of the preschool facility and in custodial closets.

### **Hand Washing Practices (QPPS 5.6)**

Frequent hand washing is important toward preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers will teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing 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 will assist children with hand washing 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 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 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

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 hand-washing 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 hand washing in any situation listed above.

- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- Staff does not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material.

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

#### **First Aid Kit** (QPPS 9.12)

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** (QPPS 9.13)

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.

#### **Medical and/or Dental Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents** (QPPS 10.10)

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, our teacher will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and 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, 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.

Emergency phone numbers will be updated at least quarterly. Emergency phone numbers will be verified by calling the numbers to make sure a responsive, designated person is available.

### **Inclement Weather**

It may be necessary at times to dismiss school early, start late, or cancel school because of weather conditions. Announcements will be made through JMC (an automated district message through our Student Information System,) local radio (KNOD & KMA, KJAN & KSOM), and television (KETV, WOWT) stations. Please DO NOT call the school. In the event of an early dismissal or cancellation of school, extracurricular activities will also be canceled.

### **Protection from Hazards & Environmental Health (QPPS 9.11, 5.18)**

Program staff will protect 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 or slipping.

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 will maintain the building's heating, cooling, 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.

### **Smoke Free Facility (QPPS 9.15)**

In compliance with the Iowa Smoke free Air Act of 2008, AHSTW Community School 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 (QPPS 10.8, 10.9, 10.16, 10.19)**

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 who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are 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. The school district has designated the school counselor as our Level I Investigator.

### **Substance Abuse**

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

### **Volunteers** (QPPS 10.15, 10.17)

Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. Please contact the teacher if you would like to be a school volunteer. We request that all volunteers complete the application process and allow the district to complete a background check before working with students. This is done for the safety of our students. If a volunteer works more than 40 hours per month with children, he/she will also need to provide a current health assessment, not more than one year old.

### **Snacks/Foods and Nutrition** (QPPS 1.3, 2.27, 2.28, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15, 5.17)

Attitudes about food develop early in life. 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.

A snack is served daily. Two food groups will be represented at each snack time as outlined in USDA guidelines. 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.

Food brought from home:

- a. The teacher will provide families a list of foods meeting the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines.
- b. All foods and beverages brought from home will be labeled with the child's name and date.
- c. Food requiring refrigeration will be refrigerated until served.
- d. Food will be provided to supplement food brought from home, if necessary.
- e. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.

Meals and snacks are at regularly scheduled times, two hours apart and not more than three hours apart. Staff do not offer children younger than four years of age these foods: hotdogs, 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.

All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Snacks and meals brought from home must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Clean, sanitary drinking water (city water source) is 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 in individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialist 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. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

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.

### **Weapon Policy** (QPPS 10.5)

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.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Birthdays** (QPPS 5.10)

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. The teacher will provide families a list of foods meeting 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.

### **Clothing**

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child 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, or disruptive in nature. Families may be 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.

It is our belief that clothes and personal attire directly influence a student's behavior and attitude. Our major objective is to provide the best education possible and the best learning environment. A student's dress may cause a disruption to the learning environment in our school. Articles of clothing or dressing styles inappropriate for our learning environment include (but not limited to):

- Clothing having vulgar, profane, or suggestive language and/or gestures
- Clothing having racially biased, offensive language/pictures, or sexually inappropriate references
- Clothing that advertises alcohol, tobacco, or anything representing the drug culture
- Clothing that does not appropriately cover the body (exposes the back, shoulder blades, or chest) or detracts from the learning process
- Clothing that does not cover the midriff (the shirt must meet the belt line)
- Hats or head coverings, including bandannas
- Shoes/sandals must be worn
- All undergarments must be covered
- Slacks/shorts/pants must be worn appropriately (cannot be worn below waist)
- **Muscle T-shirts, spaghetti strap tops or dresses, halter tops, short shorts, short mini-skirts, and crop tops are examples of inappropriate articles of clothing for school.**

Students having inappropriate clothing will be required to change or will be given clothing that is appropriate.

**Field Trips** (QPPS 2.11, 7.2, 9.12, 10.4, 10.9)

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. The AHSTW Community School District buses or vans are used for these field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip through a newsletter and calendars in advance. A parent or legal guardian must sign an informed consent form for trips for each child upon enrollment. Adult family members may be asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios.

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 counted periodically while on a field trip. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

Attendance will be taken of all children before, during, and after transport for any field trip during the school day. Prior to and during the field trip, teachers will review with students safety precautions, procedures, and protocols regarding how to be a safe pedestrian, bus/vehicle passenger, and participant during the field trip.

**Objects From Home**

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you do not bring toys 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.

**Outside Play and Learning** (QPPS 5.4, 9.1, 9.5, 9.7, 9.8)

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. 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.

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. For example, tumbling mats may be offered for upper body activities or rolling across the mat.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside, it is important to dress them according to the weather. When it is cold outside, they need a warm coat, mittens or gloves and

a hat (labeled with your child's name). For the warmer days, dressing them lightly is just as important. For those in-between days, dressing them in layers is a practical idea. It is expected that all students will go outside unless there is a doctor's note indicating the reason why the child cannot go outside.

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. Sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied to your child's exposed skin (The parent will provide the sunscreen and we will apply only with your written parental permission to do so). We will also use an insect repellent containing DEET (The parent will provide the insect repellent and we will only apply with your written permission to do so.) no more than once a day to protect your child from insect bites when the public health authorities recommend its use.

Program staff will complete the National Program for Playground Safety's Suggested General Maintenance Checklist on a weekly basis. In addition, our program administrator from QRS inspects the playground equipment and outdoor space yearly and provides written feedback.

### **Toilet Learning** (QPPS 5.5, 10.6, 10.7)

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:

- Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area, i.e., the nurse's office and or the bathroom adjacent to the nurse's office. Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area.
- Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 7:
- 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.
- The teacher or para-educator will check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
- The teacher or para-educator will change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
- At all times, the teacher or para-educator have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.
- 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.
- 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.

- Diapering and Gloving posters will be posted in the changing area showing procedures through the use of visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program administrator to evaluate teaching staff that change diapers.
- Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea, unless it is for a student's specific educational goal according to the IEP. The potty chair will be specific to the child.

**Water activities** (QPPS 5.7, 9.1, 9.14)

There is a water table in the classroom for children to engage in learning activities through play. 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. Staff will supervise all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

**MISCELLANEOUS POLICY INFORMATION**

**Jurisdictional Statement**

This handbook is an extension of board policy and is a reflection of the goals and objectives of the district's Board of Directors. The AHSTW Board and Staff expect students to conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity and with respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students are expected to treat staff, students, visitors, and guests with respect and courtesy. Students may not use abusive language, profanity or obscene gestures or language.

This handbook and board policies, rules and regulations are in effect while students are on school grounds, school property or on property with the jurisdiction of the district, while on school-owned and/or school-operated buses or vehicles or chartered buses, while attending or engaged in school activities, and while away from school grounds if they are attending or engaged in school activities, and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order (efficient management) and welfare of the AHSTW Schools or involves students or staff.

The school reserves and retains the right to modify, eliminate or establish school policies, rules and regulations as circumstances warrant, including those contained in the handbook.

**Definition**

In this handbook, the word "parent" also means "guardian" unless otherwise stated. An administrator's title, such as superintendent or principal, also means that individual's designee unless otherwise stated. The term "school grounds" includes the schools or school-operated



buses or vehicle and chartered buses. The term "school facilities" includes all school buildings. The term "school activities" means all school activities in which students are involved whether they are school sponsored or school-approved, whether they are an event or an activity, or whether they are held on or off school grounds.

### **Activity Tickets**

Activity tickets are available to all students. The fee entitles admission to numerous school sponsored activities. Students must have the activity ticket in hand at the gate or they will be charged the admission price. Activity tickets may be purchased at any of the school sites and at some activities. Activity tickets are not honored at tournament games.

### **Asbestos Notification**

The Environmental Protection Agency has developed guidelines for schools to use in identifying asbestos within buildings. The Institute for Environmental Assessment has designed a system for determining relative risks and suggesting appropriate safety responses.

A district asbestos management plan is in place to monitor buildings containing low risk levels of asbestos. The plan is located in the High School Building, Avoca, Iowa. For additional information detailing the AHSTW Community School Building's management plan, contact the Superintendent at (712) 343-6364.

### **Breakfast/Hot Lunch Program**

The AHSTW Community School District offers breakfast and lunch to the students and staff. Those who wish to eat school lunch and/or breakfast may establish accounts with the building secretaries. Breakfast will be served from 7:50 – 8:20 at both the elementary and secondary cafeterias.

Students are notified by the front office when their account is under \$5. If the account cannot be paid, students will be expected to bring meals from home. Students, parents and guardians shall not bring meals to school for other students. Students, parents and guardians shall not collect money from students and then deliver food that was purchased from other vendors.

Free and reduced price meal applications are available for those children whose parents meet federal income guidelines. Application forms for these services are available at fall registration and in the front offices. Students requiring special diets (i.e. milk allergies) should bring a note from their family doctor.

### **Electronic Devices**

**CELL PHONES:** Cell Phones are not permitted during the school day.

**MP3/AUDIO DEVICES:** iPods, or any other digital music device is not to be used during the school day (8:30 AM to 3:30 PM). The use of such a device may result in disciplinary action. Teachers may allow use of MP3/Audio Devices for instructional purposes only.

HEADPHONES: Headphones are not to be worn at any time throughout the school day (8:15 AM to 3:30 PM). Teachers may allow use of headphones for instructional purposes only.

Chromebooks: Since we are a 1:1 Chromebook school, we believe that the Chromebook issued to the student should be the primary piece of technology needed throughout the day.

Any other electronic device will need administrative approval to be used throughout the school day. The use of any unapproved device may result in disciplinary action.

**Students bringing their own electronic devices to school do so at their own risk and assume all responsibility and liability for their devices. Student-owned devices can be confiscated by school employees if disrupting the educational environment.**

### **Emergency Drills**

*Code No. 507.5*

The school holds two emergency fire and tornado drill each semester. At the beginning of each semester, teachers notify students of the procedures to follow in the event of a drill. Students are expected to remain quiet and orderly during a drill or an emergency. Students who pull the fire alarm or call in false alarms, in addition to being disciplined under the school district's policies, rules and regulations, may be reported to law enforcement officials.

### **Equity Statement**

AHSTW Community School District declares and affirms to its students, employees, and to the public that it does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, personality traits and/or disability in its educational programs, activities, admission procedures, or employment practices. The AHSTW Community School District affirms its commitment to comply with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and orders as required by Iowa Code 216.9 and 256.10(2), Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX, Section 504, and the American with Disabilities Act.

If you have any questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy, please contact the AHSTW School Equity Coordinator, Darin Jones, at 768 South Maple Street, Avoca, Iowa 51521 or by phone at 712-343-6364; or the Director of the Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Health and Human Services, 601 East 12th Street, Kansas City, MO 64106, or telephone number 800-368-1019.

### **Fee Reduction or Waiver**

Students whose families meet the income guidelines for free and reduced price lunch, the Family Investment Program (FIP), Supplemental Security Income, transportation assistance under open enrollment, or who are in foster care are eligible to have student fees waived or partially waived.

Students whose families are experiencing a temporary financial difficulty may be eligible for a temporary waiver of student fees. Parents or students who believe they qualify for temporary financial hardship should contact the main business office for a waiver form. All who believe they are eligible on an annual basis must complete waiver forms. The waiver does not automatically extend from year to year.

## **Harassment**

Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, gender identity, age, or marital status includes conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble persons when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition the student's participation in school programs or activities.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a basis for decisions affecting the student.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile working or learning environment.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse.
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications
- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats.

Harassment based upon factors other than sex includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc.
- Demeaning jokes, stories or activities

Harassment and abuse are violations of school district policies, rules, and regulations and, in some cases, may also be a violation of criminal or other laws. The school district has the authority to report students violating this rule to law enforcement officials.

Students who feel that they have been harassed should:

1. Communicate to the harasser that they expect the behavior to stop, if they are comfortable in doing so. If the student needs assistance communicating with the harasser, the student should ask a teacher, counselor or principal to help.
2. If the harassment does not stop, or the student does not feel comfortable confronting the harasser, the student should:
  - a. Tell a teacher, counselor or principal
  - b. Write down exactly what happened, keep a copy and give another copy to the teacher, counselor or principal including:
    - What, when, and where it happened

- Who was involved
- Exactly what was said or what the harasser did
- Witnesses to the harassment
- What the student said or did, either at the time or later
- How the student felt
- How the harasser responded

### **Homeless Children and Youth**

Parents of, or children or youth from the age of 3 years through 21 years who are identified as homeless under Chapter 33 of Iowa Administrative Code should contact the District Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth, the student services coordinator, for assistance enrolling in school, transportation assistance, and the allocation of clothing and supplies.

The definition of “Homeless child or youth” is a child or youth from the age of 3 years through 21 years who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes the following:

1. A child or youth who is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; is living in an emergency or transitional shelter; is abandoned in a hospital; or is awaiting foster care placement;
2. A child or youth who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
3. A child or youth who is living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting; or
4. A migratory child or youth who qualifies as homeless because the child or youth is living in circumstances described in paragraphs “1” through “3” above.

### **Interrogation by Outside Agencies**

As a general rule, individuals from outside of the school district may not interrogate students. If an individual, such as a law enforcement officer wishes to interrogate a student, the request must come through the administrative office. The Department of Human Services, however, has the right to interview students without administrative or parental approval or notification.

### **Intervention Process**

AHSTW Community Schools has a process in place to assist students experiencing behavior and/or learning difficulties. The building SAT (Student Assistance Team) will work in cooperation with the guidance counselor, at-risk coordinator, GHAEA personnel, and administration. Students or parents who wish to access this process should contact the building principal.

### **Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting**

Schools have a legal and moral responsibility to report all suspected cases of child abuse. A teacher who has reason to believe or suspect that a child has been abused is legally responsible

to report such information to the DHS. The school may notify parents that a report is being made to the Department of Human Services, but is not required to do so by law.

### **Multicultural-Gender Fair Education**

*Code No. 603.4*

Enrolled students have an equal opportunity for a quality public education without discrimination regardless of race, color, sex, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, gender identity, disability, or marital status. The educational program is free of such discrimination and provides equal opportunity for participants. The program fosters knowledge of and respect and appreciation for the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society. It also reflects the wide variety of roles open to both men and women and provides equal opportunity to both genders.

### **Open Enrollment**

Iowa's open enrollment law allows students residing in one school district to transfer to another school district upon parental request. Contact the superintendent's office for information and forms.

### **Release of Information and Photographs**

In the AHSTW Community School District, photographs or likenesses may be released without written consent unless qualified objectors comply with the following procedure:

If any parent or guardian of students under the age of 18, or students over the age of 18, object to this policy of releasing photographs or likenesses, they should contact in writing by September 15 of the current year (or within two weeks of the student's enrollment should it occur after this date), the superintendent who will then notify the appropriate school principal. Address requests to: AHSTW Community School District, Superintendent, P.O. Box 158, Avoca, IA 51521.

### **Search and Seizure**

*Code No. 502.8*

School authorities may, without a search warrant, search a student, student lockers, desks or work areas based on a reasonable suspicion under the circumstances and in a manner reasonable in scope to maintain order and discipline in the schools, promote the educational environment, and protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel. School authorities may also seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in the search. Items of contraband may include but not be limited to nonprescription controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products; cigarettes; e-cigarettes; vape products; any component, part, or accessory for an e-cigarette device (including tobacco/vapor oils); or any other smoking/vaping device or paraphernalia, weapons, explosives, poisons, and stolen property. Possession of such items will be grounds for disciplinary action and may be grounds for reporting to local law enforcement authorities.

### **Sexual Abuse or Harassment of Students by Employees**

*Code No. 402.3*

The AHSTW School District does not tolerate employees physically or sexually abusing or harassing students. Any employee who commits such acts is subject to disciplinary sanction up

to and including discharge. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, teacher, principal, or another employee. Guidance Counselors and Building Level Principals are designated the Level I investigators. Additionally, a trained, experienced professional has been contracted to serve as its Level II investigator. The program protects the rights of the accused staff person as well as protect the children in the program.

### **Special Education**

*Code No. 603.3*

The special education services are designed to provide both direct and indirect assistance for children with speech, hearing, physical, academic, emotional and/or social problems. Direct services include individual diagnostic work-ups, therapy, counseling, and special classroom placement, among other services. Indirect services include consultation with teachers and other school personnel, along with providing in-service programs in all the above areas. For more information on these services, please contact the principal.

### **Student Conduct**

#### Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

All students will follow the Viking Pride expectations by being safe, respectful, and responsible.

Posters will be displayed in certain areas stating the specific expectations for that area. The students will be taught exactly what is expected of them in each area. Classrooms will also display individual teacher expectations, in addition to the PBIS procedures.

If students fail to follow the PBIS expectations, they may be issued a referral. The Building Principal will contact parents when major referrals are issued to students. Minor referrals are those handled by classroom teachers, and may or may not result in a parental contact. If the staff PBIS Team or building administration determine that a student has had an unreasonable number of minor referrals, a major referral may be given. Major referrals result in discipline determined by the Building Principal.

### **Viking Pride Expectations for Primary School**

Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe

### Lunchroom

Use quiet voices  
Use good manners  
Stay in your personal space  
Keep your area clean

### Hallway

Walk quietly  
Hands to your side  
Keep hallway clean  
Keep to the right in a single file line

### Classroom

Stay in your personal space  
Follow teacher direction  
Work completed on time  
Bring appropriate materials  
Keep classroom clean

### Special Events

Stay in your seat  
Hands and feet to yourself  
Enter/Exit quietly  
Respond appropriately

### Restroom

Keep restroom clean  
Respect privacy of others  
Wash your hands with soap and water  
Return to class promptly and quietly

### Bus

Stay seated  
Follow bus driver's directions  
Keep belongings to yourself  
Use quiet voice  
Stay in your personal space  
Keep bus clean

### Pod

Use quiet voices  
Stay on task  
Respect personal/school property  
Keep pod area clean

### Playground

Use equipment appropriately  
Use kind words  
Enter/Exit peacefully  
Treat others the way you want to be treated  
Leave the playground clean