



Waterloo Community Schools Preschool and Partner Handbook

Partnership Sites

Immanuel Lutheran

Blessed Sacrament

Learn and Play

A to Z

Small World

Preschool Mission

We believe that all students have the ability to learn at individually high levels, within a safe and supportive environment, with the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, promoting the highest level of learning.

WCSD Mission

The Waterloo Schools community commits to a comprehensive system of education and support to assure that each and every student will graduate

prepared for college, career and citizenship as evidenced by continuing education, pursuing a career path and contributing to a community.

Introduction (QPPS 10.1)

Welcome to Waterloo Community Schools preschool programs. Our programs consist of both in-district and community-based classrooms. In-district classrooms are housed at Elk Run Preschool, Kittrell Early Childhood Center, Orange, Lincoln, Irving, Highland, Becker and Cunningham. Our community-based preschool classrooms are made possible through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program and are located at various (early care education child care centers) in the community. We are excited that your child is attending our preschool and we welcome the opportunity to serve your family.

Community Early Care and Education Partners Offering Statewide Voluntary Preschool

- Immanuel Lutheran Preschool
- Blessed Sacrament Preschool
- A to Z Learning Center & Day Care
- Learn and Play Preschool
- Small World Preschool

The programs meet Iowa Quality Preschool Programming Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices.

Early Childhood Beliefs:

- We believe in educating the whole child.
- We believe parents are a child's first and most important teacher.
- We believe schools must be able to accommodate the unique experiences and abilities of all children.
- We believe young children learn best through play and active learning.
- We believe in the importance of community and family partnerships and the impact they have on student learning.
- We believe in multicultural education that respects, understands, and celebrates the similarities as well as differences in our world.

(Also reference WCSD Equal Education Policy #104.0)

Preschool School Times:

In-district preschoolers attend MTWTH; no school on Fridays. There is some variance of hours by building due to specific needs at each building e.g. parking space, bus pick-up and drop-off etc. Preschoolers attend at least 6.5 hours of a

preschool day. For example, a typical preschool day would begin at 9:00 a.m. with arrival and end at 3:30 with parent pick-up. Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program partners are only required to offer 10 hours a week of free 4-year-old preschool. Partnership families will receive daily times for SWVPP instruction.

Age for Entering Preschool

To attend Waterloo School's Preschool Programs, students must be four-years of age on or before September 15th of the current school year. **Please contact our preschool central registration office at 319-235-0383 for enrollment. For instructions on registering a child with an Individual Education Plan please call WCSD Special Education office at 319-433-1800.**

Attendance (QPPS 10.9)

In order for your child to get the most out of the child development program, it is **important that they come to school on a regular basis**. Student's average daily attendance should be no less than 96%. If your child is not at school and we do not hear from you, **a staff member will contact you** to make sure your child is fine and offer and to help.

Please contact your child's building secretary, classroom teacher or Head Start family worker whenever your child will be absent.

Bad Weather/Emergency Closings and Cancellations (QPPS 10.10)

In order to ensure the safety of your child, it is likely that there may be times when we have to cancel school or close school early if the weather is bad. The Waterloo Community School Automated System will send out phone messages to inform you of emergency closings and cancellations. Building staff may also call you regarding school dismissal or school closing information. **Immediately** notify the classroom teacher of any phone number or address changes. Feel free to call the school if you have questions.

Preschool will follow the district cancellations for inclement weather. Some examples listed below:

- If school has a one hour delay we will have preschool. Bring your child to school one hour later than the usual time.
- If school has a one and a half hour delay we will have preschool. Bring your child to school one and a half hours later than the usual time.
- If school has a two hour delay we will have preschool. Bring your child to school two hours later than the usual start time. Afternoon Inclusion classrooms will be cancelled.

- Partner site families please contact your SWVPP provider for details on cancellations and inclement weather.

All families please listen to local media outlets for inclement weather notifications.

Before and After Preschool Child Care Programming (QPPS 8.2)

Please call the YWCA at 319-234-7589 for more information. Please check with your building principal for other information concerning before and after school care for PreK students as the YMCA at 319-233-3531 may provide care at some buildings. SWVPP families at childcare sites please check with your site for costs associated with before and after school care.

Birthday Treats/Classroom Parties (QPPS 5.10)

Preschool students are allowed to bring treats for a special occasion. Treats must be store bought and packaged individually. No homemade treats are allowed and we encourage parents to purchase healthy treats such as bananas and oranges or non-food treats such as stickers or pencils. Ask your teacher for ideas.

Bringing Your Child To School And Picking Them Up (QPPS 5.6, 10.9)

Preschool students must be walked to their classroom by an adult. Please do not leave your child until the teacher has acknowledged the child's presence. Be sure to contact the teaching staff when leaving your child in the classroom. Safety is our number one priority. Here are some expectations:

- When you get out of the car, hold your child's hand as you walk with them into the building.
- Walk with them into the classroom.
- Wash your hands and the child's hands when you enter the classroom*.
- Never leave the child unattended.
- Never leave any additional children unattended in the car.

*Due to COVID-19 please refer to *Handwashing Practices*.

Anyone picking up a child from school must be prepared to show picture identification and is on the child's "emergency cards/ release to" list or (limited special situations) have other written permission from the parent. **Please update this information as needed.**

Please pick your child up promptly. Children build trust by knowing you arrive on time. If your child is not picked up by the end of the school day, the teacher or other school staff will contact individuals on your child's emergency card. Individuals must be reliable and able to pick up the child within 15 minutes after the end of the school day.

If you do not pick-up your child at the designated end of the preschool day and the teacher has not reached any emergency contacts within 15 minutes after the end of the preschool school day, local authorities e.g. police department and/or DHS will be called to pick-up your child.

Hand Washing Practices (QPPS 5.6)

Frequent hand washing is key to preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Classroom staff 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.
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children as 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.
- After handling body fluids (blowing nose, coughing on hand, or any mucus, blood or vomit).
- Before meals and snacks, preparing food, or serving food.
- Before and after playing in water.

Busing

Transportation is not provided. This does not pertain to students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Bus Safety

During the year, preschool classrooms will have enhanced learning experiences and will be transported to participate in field trips on a school bus. **All preschool students will be safely secured on the bus.** If your child is attending a SWVPP in a community partner site, they will provide information on enhanced learning experiences and transportation of students, as these events occur after or before their SWVPP contracted time.

Bus Evacuation Drills/Field Trips

Children attending in district programs will participate in 1 bus evacuation drill throughout the year. This practice may take the form of evacuating an actual bus or the use of a planned lesson and video.

In case of an emergency:

1. Bus drivers will contact their bus garage.
2. The bus garage will notify Building Administrators.
3. Parents will be contacted by our staff.

Communication to and from School (QPPS 7.4)

Schools routinely send home notes, papers, and monthly newsletters with students. Teachers also use classroom apps, home-to-school notebooks and email to communicate with families. Please check your child's cubbies, lockers, and/or backpacks on a daily basis. Feel free to communicate with your child's teacher any way you choose as we encourage a strong school to home relationship.

Conferences (QPPS 4.9,7.3, 7.4, 7.5)

You will be asked to attend parent/teacher conferences twice a year, fall and spring, to receive and give input on your student's academic progress. Assessment information will be shared during conferences. Informal conferences can be requested at any time. If the teacher or family has concerns about student progress additional information and assistance can be requested from Central Rivers AEA.

Curriculum (QPPS 2.1-2.30, 4.1-4.7, 8.3,3.12-3.18)

- Teachers utilize Creative Curriculum© as a framework for providing developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for all students.
- Children engage in inviting interest areas created around the room that will stimulate and encourage imagination, play, creative expression and foster appreciation for the arts i.e. music, drama, and dance.
- Children engage in small group and individual learning while teaching staff ask thought provoking questions.
- Children engage in early-literacy skills and activities addressing proper book handling, letter recognition, beginning sounds, and writing to lay the foundation for reading.
- Children engage in beginning math, spatial & science concepts such as counting, sorting, patterning, and recognition of shapes, colors and beginning reasoning and logic. At times, children will engage in pre-coding and have access to technology.

- Children engage in social studies, social interactions, and social emotional learning such as sharing, problem solving, appropriate ways to get attention and making friends. Children will learn about community and citizenship.
- Children engage in health and nutrition activities such as brushing teeth, following simple recipes, healthy food choices, the importance of rest, and hand washing.

We welcome and invite your input and encourage your participation as we value your involvement. **You are your child's first and most important teacher.**

Assessment (QPPS 2.5, 2.6)

Student assessment is done primarily using Creative Curriculum Gold Assessment©, observation and anecdotal notes. We also participate in the IGDI's developmental pre-literacy screener administered fall, winter, and spring; as is the GOLD Assessment. Planning for instruction occurs daily and the student data from these assessments and screeners drives our classroom instruction. Any remaining questions after you have discussed the curriculum and assessment may be directed to the Early Childhood Administrator by calling 319-433-2660.

Child Guidance and Discipline (QPPS 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Waterloo Community Schools Preschool Programs which include our SWVPP Partners must follow the Discipline Policy that is required by the Iowa Department of Human Services.

The policy is as follows:

- Corporal (physical) punishment including spanking, slapping, and shaking shall not be used.
- Punishment, which is humiliating or frightening, shall not be used.
- Children will not be punished or threatened with punishment, for concerns to do with illness, lack of progress in toilet training or in connection with food or rest.
- No child shall be subject to verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about such child or child's family.

Parents and volunteers must follow the Discipline Policy and all other program procedures when working with children or volunteering on school property. Volunteers may be asked to submit to a background check.

The teacher's goal is to create a setting and activities that encourage fun, learning and a safe classroom. To do this, all staff provide a supportive and nurturing atmosphere, activities that are developmentally appropriate, a consistent schedule, as well as clear and reasonable expectations.

Teachers model and encourage calm, patient behavior and facilitate children's development of self-regulation.

Dress (QPPS 5.4)

- **Check with your building principal, director or teacher for clothing items that cannot be worn.**
- Active play and exercise are part of healthy child development and our curriculum.
- **Children's shoes must allow safe participation in activities.** Tennis shoes with socks are the best choice to prevent injuries.
- Children should come to school dressed to play outside, layered for cold weather.
- Please be sure that your child's possessions are marked with his or her name.

Home Visits (QPPS 7.1, 7.2, 8.3)

You will be invited to participate in at least 1 home visit, prior to the start of the school year. The purpose of the home visit is to:

- Develop an educational partnership between home and school.
- Learn the family structure, child-rearing practices, language preferences and other cultural practices.
- Listen to concerns and make suggestions to the family to help locate resources in the community.

Family Support Services (QPPS 8.1-8.4)

Family support services are available through our PreK family support worker for both in-district and community partner families. The family support worker services provide but are not limited to:

- Assisting families to access community resources by sharing a list of resources.
- Making referrals as necessary to community resources.
- Partnering with other community agencies like Family & Children's Council to provide household items and training for students and family i.e. car seat safety training and "Take Charge of Your Body."
- Goal setting and problem solving to eliminate barriers

Health (QPPS 5.1, 5.13)

We are committed to promoting wellness and safety of children who participate in our program. We follow the guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field. Health and Dental Certificates are due within 30 days of a child beginning in the program. Immunization documentation is due upon registering including immunization for which parents are using religious exemption. All religious

exemptions must be notarized. All health records and documents are kept confidential and in a locked file cabinet.

The school nurse or center director maintains student health records that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. 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.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

- 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.
- Current emergency contact information, which is kept up-to-date using a check-in with parents.
- 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).

Cleaning and Sanitation (QPPS 5.5, 5.18-5.19)

The routine frequency of cleaning and sanitizing all surfaces in the facility is as indicated in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table. Please ask staff to see routine cleaning schedules or completed cleaning frequency information.

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

Procedures for standard precautions are used and include the following:

- Surfaces that may come in contact with potentially infectious body fluids are cleaned and sanitized.
- Staff use barriers and techniques that minimize contact of mucous membranes or of openings in skin with potentially infectious body fluids and reduce the spread of infectious disease.
- When spills of body fluids occur, staff clean them up immediately with detergent followed by water rinsing and sanitizing.
- After cleaning, staff sanitize nonporous surfaces
- Staff clean rugs and carpeting by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent-disinfectant, and shampooing or steam cleaning.
- For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces in the changing area. These checks are documented and **diaper change and toilet use** notes are sent home.
- Staff dispose of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie that is placed in a closed container.

Illness (QPPS 5.3)

In order to keep all of our children as healthy as possible, we cannot allow children who are sick to stay at school. We may ask for a note from your child's doctor before they can return to school.

Do not send your child to school if:

- She/he has a fever
- She/he complains of not feeling well
- She/he has diarrhea or is vomiting
- She/he shows signs of a contagious disease such as pink eye, impetigo, staph infections or chicken pox.

Your child may be sent home if:

- She/he has a fever. A fever is defined as:
 1. For an infant or child older than 2 months, a fever is a temperature that is above 101° F [38.3° C] by any method.
 2. For infants younger than 2 months of age a fever is a temperature above 100.4° F [38° C] by any method.
 3. Temperature readings do not require adjustment for the location where the temperature is taken.
- She/he has flu-like symptoms (diarrhea, vomiting, etc.)
- She/he has open, bleeding or oozing sores
- She/he is contagious (chicken pox, impetigo, pink eye, etc.)

Iowa Early Learning Standards

The State of Iowa has written Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS) for children age's birth to five years. The standards are statements that describe expectations for the learning and development of young children. If you would like to review the Iowa Early Learning Standards please ask your child's teacher or contact the District Early Childhood Administrator.

Nutrition (QPPS 5.9-5.17)

All in-district preschool students will be offered breakfast, lunch and/or P.M. snack at school free of charge. Students attending morning or afternoon classes only will be offered either breakfast in the mornings or a PM snack in the afternoons. Partner site families please check with your site for nutrition program guidelines as meals are not a part of SWVPP instruction.

WCS Programs follow the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Children that have documented special feeding needs are provided for and documentation is kept. The school nurse, teacher and family work together to ensure the child's needs are met.

- Children are provided clean water throughout the day and at mealtime.
- Written menus are posted and available for families
- Meals and snacks are served at established times and at least 2 hours apart
- High-risk foods that are often involved in choking will not be served.
- Pork will not be served due to religious and cultural preferences.

Medication (QPPS 5.8)

If your child needs to take medicine at school, our staff can give your child medication **only if it is prescribed by a doctor. The medicine you bring in must be in the original pharmacy container.** It must be clearly labeled with:

- Child's first and last name
- Physician's name
- Date the prescription was filled
- Name and strength of the medication
- Instructions from manufacturer, pharmacy or doctor

We are not able to give your child any over-the-counter medication such as cold medicine or Tylenol™ without a doctor's prescription. Over-the-counter medications prescribed by your doctor must be in the original manufacturer's container labeled by the parent with the child's first and last name and specific instructions given by the child's doctor.

You will also need to fill out a **Medical Authorization form** that gives our staff permission to give medicine to your child. The authorization is good for 30 days.

Parent Involvement (QPPS 7.2)

We want you to become involved in the preschool Program. Parents are welcome to visit any classroom at any time. Some volunteer opportunities are:

- Volunteering in the classroom.
- Serving on the Board of Directors at a childcare partner
- Attending family gatherings
- Participating in home visits
- Participating in parent teacher organizations
- Participating in Policy Council through Tri-County Child and Family e.g. Head Start

- Reading nightly to your preschooler

Parent Organization/Vision Committee

The purpose of the parent organization/policy council is to improve the education and welfare of children through the cooperative efforts of parents and teachers. We invite you to participate in a parent organization. The meetings are generally held monthly. If you have questions about parent organizations, please contact the building office or ask your teacher.

Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) 3-5

PBIS 3-5 is a framework that encourages teachers to build strong positive relationships with children, design supportive environments and utilize social-emotional teaching strategies. More information can be found at www.pbis.org

Possessions

Students' possessions are sometimes lost or misplaced. A "Lost and Found" is located in each building. You are welcome to come and check there if your child has lost something.

We ask that students not bring toys, jewelry or expensive possessions to school, especially radios and other electronic games. Schools are not responsible for lost or stolen possessions.

Problem Solving

If you have a complaint or concern about the program, it is your responsibility to discuss the situation with the staff directly involved. Talk to the teacher or staff person involved. If a solution cannot be agreed upon, please talk to your Building Principal or Administrator. If a satisfactory solution has not been reached, please contact the Early Childhood Administrator by calling 319-433-2660. To resolve the situation a meeting may be requested.

Program Self-Assessment (QPPS 10.5)

The Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS), Head Start Performance Standards and The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards are all a part of Waterloo PreK program and our Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Childcare sites standards of quality. Administrators, families, and staff will be involved annually in a program assessment that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives.

The annual assessment process often includes gathering evidence in 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 a part of Waterloo Community Schools preschool programs both you and staff will receive a survey to complete to help gather this information. The program uses this information to plan professional development and program quality-improvement activities as well as to improve operations and procedures.

Pro-Social Behavior

(Reference WCSD Policy #103.1)

We teach preschool students to develop initiative, self-control, and attachment by creating a classroom and following a curriculum that supports the development of all children.

Reporting Child Abuse (QPPS 10.6)

Preschool staff members are mandatory reporters for child abuse. The preschool program complies with the State of Iowa law requiring all mandatory reporters working in licensed child care or schools to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Services. This is in the best interest of your child.

The law tries to protect children from abuse and helps others find ways to handle the stress of raising children. If you would like help in coping with any area of your child's behavior, please ask or seek assistance from your child's teacher, counselor, family worker, administrator or the health services staff. We will try to help you find solutions to your concerns.

Children's safety and best interests are always our goal. We will notify authorities should we have concerns regarding any child's safety.

Sending Money to School

Please do not send money to school with your child.

Toilet Learning (QPPS 5.5)

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

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area. Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area. Toilet changing areas will be separated by a partial wall or separated by at least 3 feet from other areas.

2. Staff use only commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use (the health provider documents the medical reason).
3. For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper has an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and outer unit are changed as a unit.
4. Staff post and follow changing procedures (as outlined in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table). These procedures are used to evaluate teaching staff who change diapers. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 5:
 - a. 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.
 - b. Staff checks children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours when children are awake and when children awaken. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
 - c. Staff changes children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
 - d. At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.
 - e. 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.
 - f. 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.
 - g. Staff members whose primary function is preparing food do not change diapers until their food preparation duties are completed for the day.
 - h. Staff is evaluated on the use of the proper procedures for diapering.
 - i. 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.
5. Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
6. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Volunteers (QPPS 7.2)

Waterloo Community Schools has implemented the Raptor™ System. Please be prepared to present a current government issued photo ID upon visiting the school building.

Volunteers are a very important part of the Preschool program.

To provide the best services, parent and community volunteers are needed to share their talents, knowledge and energy. This sharing creates funds of knowledge that the program and classroom can draw upon to expand children's learning and expand opportunities for the classroom. While volunteer activity is not required for a child to be in the program, parents who volunteer report how beneficial the experience was to them and their family.

Some specific jobs that volunteers may do:

- Assist in classrooms for small increments of time.
- Assist with field trips.
- Provide special musical and dramatic activities.
- Assist with snack/meal preparation and serving at special events.
- Support on-going activities.
- Complete parent/ child take-home activities.
- Participate in monthly meetings.
- Join PTO or Vision committee.

Parents and volunteers must follow the Discipline Policy and all other program procedures when working with children.

You may be asked to document your volunteerism. Volunteers may be asked to submit to a background check.

Non-Discrimination (QPPS 4.3)

It is the policy of the Waterloo Community Schools 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 1972 Education Amendments, and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.