Lake Mills Community School District

FOUR-YEAR-OLD PRESCHOOL

2026-2027 school year

Program Policies & Procedures Family Handbook



Allison Greenfield, teacher

agreenfield@lake-mills.org (641) 592-1882

Connor Kem, principal

ckem@lake-mills.org

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WELCOME TO LMCS' FOUR YEAR OLD PRESCHOOL

Lake Mills Community School District Preschool program's goal is to provide a high-quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds. The preschool provides a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected, and cared for. This is an opportunity for children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build their school readiness skills. The preschool program has adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children's learning and instructional practices. The Teaching Strategies Gold Objectives and Dimensions serve as the primary assessment system for the children's daily interactions and performances.

MISSION, VISION, COMMITMENTS, ESSENTIAL OUTCOMES AND GOALS

IQPPS 1.1-1.4, 2.1, 6.1, 8.1-8.4, & 10.1

Mission: The mission of the Lake Mills Community School District is that, through our collective efforts, we are committed to teaching and learning for all.

Vision: We believe we are all learners who want what is best for every student, every day. We envision a school in which collaborative teams:

- Identify the essential standards for each grade level/content area
- Seek and implement research-based strategies focused on student learning
- Use formative assessment to monitor student progress and to drive instruction
- Demonstrate a personal commitment to the academic success and social/emotional well-being of each student

Collective Commitments: In order to achieve the shared vision of our school district, LMCS staff have made the following commitments:

- We will teach the identified essential standards of the Iowa Core curriculum.
- We will develop and implement common formative assessments to monitor each student's learning.
- We will create, implement, and evaluate individual professional growth plans aligned to our goals.
- We will engage in meaningful professional learning.
- We will utilize research-based instructional strategies to increase the growth of all students.
- We will continue to implement individual and small-group interventions.
- We will communicate with parents regarding the progress of their child.

Essential Outcomes For Learners at Lake Mills Community School (LMCS):

LIFELONG LEARNER LMCS provides opportunities for students to creatively utilize knowledge, skills, and processes to succeed in future life roles.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR LMCS provides opportunities for students to effectively communicate by using speaking, writing, reading, listening, and viewing skills and other forms of communication which broaden the students' view of the world.

RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN LMCS provides opportunities for students to display respect for themselves and others, exhibit acceptable social behavior, and use various resources which enable productive citizenship and achievement of goals.

CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKER LMCS provides opportunities for students to access and use various sources of information to establish and communicate viewpoints, and create original productions rather than reproduction of knowledge.

HEALTHY CONTRIBUTOR LMCS provides opportunities for students to understand and demonstrate components for healthy life roles both as an individual and as a group member of society.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Expectations:

Be safe, be responsible, be respectful, do your best.

Goals for Children: Preschoolers will show growth throughout the year on the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment objectives and dimensions in the areas of social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy, and math. Children will feel safe, connected, and successful at school.

Goals for Families: Families will feel welcome in the school environment, comfortable communicating through Seesaw and email, as well as willing to be a part of an open and meaningful partnership with the school in order to help their child(ren) begin, and continue on, the journey of learning. Families will advocate for their children, access available community resources, and assist in the natural growth and development of a child.

ENROLLMENT

ELIGIBILITY

Lake Mills Community School District's Preschool serves children who are the age of four on or before September 15th. Pre-registration will begin in the spring of the preceding school year. Registration information will be posted on the school's website, the Lake Mills Community School District's Facebook page, or by calling the elementary office. Students who live in Iowa and within the school district are given first priority if a waiting list occurs (due to the Iowa Statewide Voluntary Preschool funding).

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

IQPPS 1.2R, 1.2R, 3.14, 6.1, 7.2

Lake Mills Community School District Preschool Staff will not discriminate in offering education programs or activities on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status, or disability. Our program will foster knowledge of, and respect for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society. Students who feel they have been discriminated against are encouraged to report it to the Equity Coordinator, Connor Kem, at (641) 592-1882. Procedures and levels are outlined in district policy for resolving complaints and are available online or through the district office.

GENERAL INFORMATION

IQPPS 10.4

LMCS Staff should confirm (required prior to registration) that within six weeks after a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service have been submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The Lake Mills Community School District Preschool program maintains a staff-to-child ratio of at least 1:10, with a maximum class size of 20 children per session. Class size maximums will not be increased based on the availability of additional staff. Required ratios and class size limits will be maintained throughout all hours of operation, including indoor activities, outdoor play, transitions, and other program activities. Staff-to-child ratios will be maintained during all outdoor activities. Staff will position themselves to provide appropriate supervision of all children while maintaining the required classroom ratio.

Preschool staff-to-child ratios will be maintained during all field trips and off-site activities. At least one additional adult beyond the standard classroom staffing ratio will accompany the group to provide additional supervision and support student safety. Staff will maintain appropriate supervision and account for all children throughout the activity.

The morning session begins at 8:10 A.M. and concludes at 11:10 A.M.; the afternoon session begins at 12:10 P.M. and concludes at 3:10 P.M.

School days are every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, unless noted in the Lake Mills Community School District's yearly calendar, which can be accessed at lake-mills.k12.ia.us.

INCLUSION

IQPPS 1.2, 1.2R, 1.8, 3.2, 1.2R, 3.6, 6.1,9.8 6.5R

The preschool program serves all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Teaching staff are prepared to evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. Varying interactions are sensitive and responsive to differing physical abilities, temperaments, activity levels, and cognitive and social development. Individual accommodations and/or modifications are decided upon and implemented by the specified team. Staff is aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific district and/or federal plans.

It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children, and their families. Teaching staff attempt to prevent and/or counter potential

bias/discrimination and/or challenging behavior by treating all children with equal respect and consideration as well as providing models, schedules, and visual images of adult roles, differing abilities, and ethnic or cultural backgrounds that counter stereotypical limitations.

The preschool facility meets the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. The classroom space as well as the playground or gym are designed and arranged to provide children with disabilities full access (making adaptations as necessary) to the curriculum and activities.

A PRESCHOOLERS' DAY

ASSESSMENT

IQPPS 3.6, 4.1-4.9, 7.3, 7.4

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. A variety of assessment methods will be used throughout the year, including assessments linked to Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold. These assessments provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for children and guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include/exclude them from a program.

Families will be informed of the purpose of the assessment, the procedures used, the timing of the assessment, the method in which results will be shared, and how the program will use the information. Ongoing communication will enable families and staff to continually assess students' progress. Families will have opportunities to share the results of observations from home to contribute to the assessment process. Link to assessment timeline posted in the preschool classroom.

Teaching staff will meet at least weekly to:

- Interpret and use assessment results to align curriculum and teaching practices to the interests and needs of children
- Communicate with families regarding children's activities and developmental milestones

Assessment results will be used to:

- Provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones
- Arrange for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated
- Identify children's interests and needs
- Describe the developmental progress and learning of children
- Improve curriculum and adapt teaching practices and the environment
- Communicate with families confidentially in English or other languages spoken by families

The preschool teacher will assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated. If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include, but are not limited to, sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose interactions do not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

BIRTHDAYS

IQPPS 5.10

Birthdays are a significant event in the life of a child and afford the opportunity for special recognition. Students who wish to bring snacks for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Healthy options are encouraged. 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 in May to celebrate with their class. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

IQPPS 1.2, 1.8, 1.9, 3.2, 3.6

The teaching staff in the preschool are highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors through environmental design, schedules that meet the needs and abilities of children, effective transitions, and engaging activities. 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 respect in relationships with peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and/or challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. Teaching staff has been trained in Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI).

CHILD GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

IQPPS 1.3R, 1.4, 1.6, 1.9, 1.11

Teaching staff will:

- equitably use positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems.
- 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.
- use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child.
- explain discipline to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action.
- model respect for people, property, and possessions.
- teach the children to be responsible for their actions.
- help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively when with other children, and use language when communicating needs or wants.
- never use threats or derogatory remarks, and neither withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.
- talk frequently with children and listen to children with attention and respect.
- respond to children's questions and requests.
- use strategies to communicate effectively and build relationships with every child.
- engage regularly in meaningful and extended conversations with each child.
- assist children in resolving conflicts by helping them identify feelings, describe problems, and try alternative solutions.
- Help children manage their behavior by guiding and supporting them to learn turn-taking, gain control of physical impulses, express negative emotions in ways that do not harm others or themselves, use problem-solving techniques, and learn about self and others.

Suspension and Discipline

Suspension, Expulsion, and Exclusionary Discipline

Lake Mills Community School District is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive preschool environment where every child has the opportunity to learn, develop relationships, and grow. Challenging behaviors are viewed as opportunities for teaching, relationship-building, and providing additional support.

The program will use suspension and expulsion only as a last resort when a serious safety concern exists that cannot be adequately reduced or eliminated through reasonable modifications and additional supports.

When behavioral concerns arise, the preschool program will:

- Partner with families to discuss concerns, identify possible triggers, and develop strategies to support the child.

- Use developmentally appropriate positive behavior supports, redirection, prevention strategies, and individualized interventions.
- Consider whether additional supports, staff training, environmental adjustments, or changes to classroom routines are needed.
- Collaborate with appropriate school personnel and support providers when additional assistance or evaluation may be beneficial.
- Document significant behavioral concerns, interventions attempted, and progress toward improving the child's success.
- Review whether current strategies are effective and adjust supports as needed.

Suspension and Expulsion Practices

- Suspension and expulsion will not be used as a routine response to challenging behaviors.
- Informal or "soft" suspensions, including routinely asking parents to pick up their child early due to challenging behavior, will not be used as a substitute for appropriate behavioral supports.
- Any consideration of suspension or expulsion must involve building administration and include a review of the child's individual needs, supports provided, reasonable modifications considered, and applicable legal protections.
- Disciplinary decisions will be made consistently and equitably, without discrimination based on disability, race, gender, or other protected characteristics.
- Parents will receive appropriate notice and an opportunity to participate in the process before an expulsion or lengthy removal, consistent with applicable law and district procedures.
- Children with IEPs or Section 504 plans will receive all applicable procedural protections and consideration of their individual educational and behavioral needs.

The district will prioritize maintaining the child's connection to the preschool program and minimizing disruptions to learning and development while ensuring the safety of all children and staff.

CLOTHING

Preschoolers will be learning through creative and active play that can sometimes be messy. Children should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. While we use paint smocks during art projects, we can’t guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an accident or messy play; this set of clothing can be kept in their backpack or in their individual bin in their locker.

CURRICULUM

IQPPS 2.1-2.5, 3.9R

A curriculum is an established, yet fluid, framework for teachers to use when planning intentional learning opportunities and daily experiences. Within the curriculum, the teacher considers and implements family home values, beliefs, experiences and language. The daily and weekly schedule includes the needs of children insofar as allowing time and support for transitions, including indoor and outdoor experiences, and choosing rest or active engagement.

Materials and equipment reflect the children and families in the community as well as those in a diverse society, including gender diversity, age diversity, language diversity, and diversity of abilities. The materials and equipment will provide for children's safety while being appropriately challenging; encourage exploration, experimentation and discovery; promote action and interaction; are organized to support independent use; are rotated to reflect changing curriculum and accommodate new interests and skill levels; are rich in variety; and accommodate children's special needs.

The preschool program staff will use Creative Curriculum, a research- and evidence-based comprehensive curriculum designed for three-, four-, and five-year-olds. The curriculum addresses all areas of early learning and development: language, literacy, math, science, physical, technology, creative expression/art, health/safety, social studies, and social-emotional. They are based on interest areas, themes, and pillars that are adaptable to different strengths and needs of all children in the preschool. Creative Curriculum provides children an opportunity to learn in a variety of ways - through play, problem solving, movement, art, music, drawing and writing, listening, and storytelling. Teachers and staff can make modifications and adaptations as part of the curriculum.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

IQPPS 1.2, 1.5, 2.6, 3.15R,4.6R, 3.12, 6.5R

A consistent daily schedule is planned offering a balance of learning activities, responding to individual student needs, and keeping play at the forefront of every detail. Learning and assessment are both formal and informal. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, and quiet play with noisy play.

Children will have the opportunity every day for:

- Large and small group interactions
- Individual activities
- Child-initiated and teacher-directed play
- Creative expression
- Fine motor practice such as eating snack, writing, cutting, gluing, painting
- Large motor activities outside on the playground or inside at the gym
- Learning Centers including technology, science, the arts, social studies, library, blocks
- Read aloud story time and opportunities to experience literature
- Pretend play and real-world experiences
- Development of social skills and building friendships

There is a minimum of 35 square feet of usable space per child in each of the primary indoor activity areas.

LEARNING TO USE THE TOILET

IQPPS 5.5

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the program makes sure that:

Diapering will only be done in the designated changing area (the bathroom within the classroom which includes a changing table). Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area.

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 the outer covering are changed as a unit.

Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards:

- 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.
- Staff checks 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.
- Staff changes children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
- At all times, caregivers 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 who change diapers.
- Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
- All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an accident; this set of clothing can be kept in their backpack or in their individual bin in their locker.

PERSONNEL IN THE CLASSROOM

IQPPS 6.1-6.5, 7.7, 8.2, 10.2, 10.3

Program Administrator: The elementary principal is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program. The principal has the educational qualifications and personal commitment required to serve as the program's operational and pedagogical leader.

Teacher: A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an early childhood endorsement is assigned to the preschool classroom.

Assistant Teacher: A full-time assistant teacher in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher associate will have a high school diploma or GED as well as specialized training in early childhood education.

New teaching staff are given an initial orientation that introduces them to fundamental aspects of the program operation. All teaching staff have specialized coursework or professional development

training in the program's curriculum as well as in communication and collaboration skills that prepare them to participate as a member of a team. All teaching staff will also have specialized training in how to accurately use the program's assessment procedures for assessment of child progress and program quality. The training is used to adapt classroom practices and curriculum activities.

School Nurse: The preschool will have the assistance of the school nurse. The current nurse is employed full-time, is a certified RN, and is recertified every three years. She maintains student health records by updating them quarterly, and attends to the health needs of the students while they are at school. She is available for parent consultation when necessary.

Support Staff: Central Rivers AEA support staff provide resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist, or others.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

IQPPS 10.15

The Lake Mills Community Preschool implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. A desk audit is completed each year to confirm the meeting of these standards. Administrators, families, staff, and other participating adults will be involved annually in a program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. The annual evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. A report of the annual evaluation findings is shared with families, staff, and appropriate advisory boards.

OUTSIDE PLAY and LEARNING

IQPPS 5.4, 6.1R-6.11

There are daily opportunities for outdoor play (indoor play when weather conditions dictate) with a variety of age and developmentally appropriate materials and equipment. The equipment includes gross motor equipment for activities such as riding, pushing, pulling, swinging, jumping, moving through/around/under, walking, and climbing in/on/over. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large motor skills, get exercise, and be active in clearly defined spaces with semi-private areas. The space in which the children play is protected by fences, preventing access to streets and avoiding other dangers. The outdoor play area is arranged so staff can supervise children by sight and sound.

A fully equipped first-aid kit is readily available and maintained, taken to the outdoor play area. The outdoor play area meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements. The play area is also entirely smoke-free.

The outdoor play area protects children from...

… injury from falls (resilient surfacing should extend six feet beyond the limits of stationary equipment.

… catch points, sharp points, and protruding hardware.

… entrapment (openings should measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.

… tripping hazards.

… excessive wind and direct sunlight.

Program staff will complete the National Program for Playground Safety's Suggested General Maintenance Checklist on a yearly basis.

The Child Care Weather Watch guidelines (produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa) are used to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play. When the weather conditions require inside play, children are given the opportunity to use space and equipment for similar activities in the gym. In order to make sure that children can play comfortably outside, it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. The preschool program will ensure that children wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. When in the sun, we welcome the use of a hat and/or other sun-protective clothing. Sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied to your child's exposed skin (only with your written parental permission to do so). An insect repellent containing DEET (only with your written permission) will be used no more than once a day to protect your child from insect bites when the public health authorities recommend its use.

SNACKS/FOOD and NUTRITION

IQPPS 5.9, 5.11-5.16

Children attending preschool will have an opportunity to eat a snack. Two food groups will be represented at each snack time as outlined in USDA guidelines. A written snack menu is posted in the classroom and available to families. All menus are kept on file for review by a program consultant. 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.

All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discard any foods with expired dates. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program with an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. Information about a child's allergies is kept in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses for 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.

High-risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served. For children younger than four years, these include 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.

TEACHING APPROACHES and GOALS

IQPPS 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8-3.11, 3.13-3.18

Teaching staff will

- organize space and select materials in all content and developmental areas to stimulate exploration, experimentation, discovery, and conceptual learning;
- help individual children learn socially appropriate behavior by providing guidance that is consistent with the child's level of development;
- manage behavior and implement classroom rules and expectations in a manner that is consistent and predictable;
- coach and support children as they learn to participate in daily cleanup and maintenance of the classroom;
- create opportunities for children to engage in group projects and to learn from one another;
- scaffold children's learning by modifying the schedule, intentionally arranging the equipment, and making themselves available to children;
- use their knowledge of children's social relationships, interests, ideas, and skills to tailor learning opportunities for groups and individuals;
- help children understand spoken language (particularly when children are learning a new language) by using pictures, familiar objects, body language, and physical cues;
- support the development and maintenance of children's home language whenever possible;
- use their knowledge of content to pose problems and ask questions that stimulate children's thinking;
- help children express their ideas and build on the meaning of their experiences;
- help children identify and use prior knowledge; they provide experiences that extend and challenge children's current understandings;
- promote children's engagement and learning by responding to their needs for and interest in practicing emerging skills and by enhancing and expanding activities that children choose to engage in repeatedly;
- promote children's engagement and learning by guiding them in acquiring specific skills and by explicitly teaching those skills.

WATER PLAY and ACTIVITIES

IQPPS 7.13

During water play, children are involved in active experiences with science, art 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. A large rug with rubber backing is secured underneath and around the sensory table to absorb any drops or spills and also to prevent adults or children from slipping. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as a sensory table. Staff supervises all children by sight in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and sensory tables.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE OF CHILDREN

IQPPS 10.9

During arrival and departure times, parents, legal guardians, or others designated by parents or legal guardians must accompany the child(ren) to/from the school entrance, then leave in the care of the teaching staff. No preschooler will be permitted to leave the building without an adult.

If the preschooler is arriving or departing via the school bus, a member of the teaching staff will accompany the preschooler to/from the classroom and bus, ensuring safe transitions at all times.

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization/parent consent will be allowed to pick up a child from preschool.

In the interest of students' safety, parents/guardians/authorized individuals are requested to report directly to the elementary office when picking up their child earlier than the dismissal time rather than going to the child's classroom. Likewise, when a student returns to the building following an absence during the school day, the adult should stop in the office and sign the child in.

Throughout the day, each time children transition from one location to another, such as from the classroom to the playground, the teacher will be responsible for counting the number of children to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times.

For a student with disabilities, the IEP or 504 plan will be followed as outlined by their team.

ATTENDANCE

Students who are enrolled in Iowa's Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program at the Lake Mills Community School are expected to be in school for the full session, being punctual in their arrival and departure each school day. Families are asked to schedule appointments for outside the preschool session times. Irregular attendance interferes with the child's progress of growth and development, as well as full participation in the curriculum.

Please send a message through Seesaw or call the elementary office with the reason for an absence as soon as possible. The preschool teacher or elementary office secretary will message or call the parent/legal guardian when no contact has been made with the school on behalf of the preschooler.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

IQPPS 1.1, 2.1R, 7.2, 7.4-7.7

The Lake Mills Community School District's Preschool program encourages families to be actively involved in their child's education, including raising concerns and working collaboratively with the staff. Additionally, the program desires a genuine partnership to grow between staff and families. At the forefront of the involvement and partnership is regular, ongoing, two-way communication.

In addition to electronic forms/questionnaires, strategies to learn about the families (including family structure, child-rearing practices, and background) are also utilized. These include, but are not limited to: conversations in person and/or via email, Seesaw, preschool home/ school connection questions, parent-teacher conferences, home visits, and open house night.

Program staff communicate with families on at least a weekly basis regarding children's activities, developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of their children. Information about programs and services from other organizations will be provided to the families supporting their efforts in the areas of health, mental health, assessment, and educational services for their child(ren). The established linkages with other early education programs, including special education programs, will also be shared with families to assist with communication.

The Lake Mills Community School District Preschool program 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 corresponding growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning, instruction, and practice.

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

PRESCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

IQPPS 7.2, 7.6, 8.1, 8.2, 10.15

The Lake Mills Community School District has a Preschool Advisory Committee composed of parents, school staff, and other community members interested in the preschool program. This group meets once per school year.

The committee's purposes are to

- ensure all families- regardless of family structure, socioeconomic status, racial, religious, cultural backgrounds, gender, abilities, or preferred language- are included in all aspects of the program.
- work collaboratively with preschool staff brainstorming ideas, problem-solving issues, considering family interests/skills, and supporting the needs of the preschool staff.

- apply diverse knowledge of community and resources to the preschool program and support services available based on the needs observed among families.
- develop partnerships and professional relationships to further the program's capacity to meet the needs and interests of the children and families served by the preschool program.
- assist in making decisions to improve the program, building trust and enthusiasm for making program changes.
- provide feedback on programs, services, and opportunities that meet the current children and family needs.

Let the preschool teacher know of your interest in being a member of the Preschool Advisory Committee.

HEALTH and SAFETY

The Lake Mills Community School's Preschool program is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguarding the health and safety of children and adults in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and the Iowa Department of Public Health.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES

IQPPS 10.6, 10.7

The program has written 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 program also has written procedures to be followed if a staff member is accused of abuse or neglect of a child in the program that protect the rights of the accused staff person as well as protect the children in the program.

CLEANING and SANITIZATION

IQPPS 5.18

The routine frequency of cleaning and sanitizing all surfaces in the facility is as indicated in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table.

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

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS and EMERGENCY EVACUATION IQPPS 10.10

The program has written and posted disaster preparedness and emergency evacuation policies and procedures. The procedures designate an appropriate person to assume authority and take action in an emergency when the administrator is not on site.

The procedures include

- plans that designate how and when to either shelter in place or evacuate and that specify a location for the evacuation;
- plans for handling loss of missing children, security threats, utility failure, and natural disasters;
- arrangements for emergency transport and escort from the program; and,
- monthly practice of evacuation procedures with yearly practice of other emergency procedures.

FIRE and CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY IQPPS 7.6R

A fully working fire extinguisher and fire alarm are installed in the preschool classroom with a tag indicating its annual service date. Fully working carbon monoxide detectors are also installed in the HVAC system and are checked 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.

FIRST AID and CPR CERTIFICATION IQPPS 7.3R

At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training and satisfactory completion of pediatric CPR is always present with each class of children.

FIRST AID KIT IQPPS 6.3R

A fully equipped first aid kit is located in the preschool classroom next to the door. It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. Following each use, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The kit is taken to the outdoor play area and the gym.

HAND WASHING PRACTICES IQPPS 5.6

Frequent hand washing is key to preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers 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 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 20 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 do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material. In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food. Hand hygiene with an alcohol-based sanitizer with 60% to 95% alcohol is an alternative to traditional hand-washing (for children over 24 months and adults) with soap and water when visible soiling is not present.

HEALTH and SAFETY RECORDS

IQPPS 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.

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 a religious exemption.

Child health records 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 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).

HEALTH, NUTRITION, and SAFETY POLICIES and PROCEDURES

The program has written policies to promote well-being and safeguard the health and safety of children and adults. Procedures are in place that address:

Steps to reduce occupational hazards such as infectious disease (e.g. exposure of pregnant staff to CMV (cytomegalovirus), chicken pox), injuries (e.g. back strain, falls), environmental exposure (e.g. indoor air pollution, noise stress); management plans and reporting requirements for staff and children with illness, including medication administration, and inclusion/exclusion; supervision of children in instances when teaching staff are assigned to specific areas that are near equipment where injury could occur; the providing of space, supervision, and comfort for a child waiting for pick-up because of illness; the providing of adequate nutrition for children and adults; sleeping and napping arrangements; sanitation and hygiene, including food handling and feeding; maintenance of the facility and equipment; prohibition of smoking, firearms, and other significant hazards that pose risks to children and adults; and, the providing of referrals for staff to resources that support them in wellness, prevention and treatment of depression, and stress management.

ILLNESSES and EXCLUSION of SICK CHILDREN

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

- fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- vomiting
- diarrhea

- pink eyes with drainage
- cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge

The school's established policy for an ill child's return:

- fever-free for 24 hours without medicine
- chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- vomiting/diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- conjunctivitis: 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, make sure current, accurate phone numbers are in PowerSchool for you, your authorized emergency contact person, and the 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.

MEDICATION SAFEGUARDS

IQPPS 5.8

Safeguards are used with all medications for children:

Staff administers both prescription and over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent or legal guardian has given the program written permission.

The child's record includes instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended the medication for that child.

Any administrator or teaching staff who administers medication has specific training and 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.

Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it. Medications will be kept in a locked container.

REPORTING COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

IQPPS 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.

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

IQPPS 5.19

Procedures for standard precautions are used and include the following:

- Surfaces that may come in contact with potential infectious body fluids must be disposable or made of a material that can be 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 fluid occur, staff clean them up immediately with detergent followed by water rinsing.
- After cleaning, staff sanitize nonporous surfaces by using the procedure for sanitizing designated changing surfaces described in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table.
- Staff clean rugs and carpeting by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent-disinfectant, and shampooing or steam cleaning.
- Staff disposes of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie that is placed in a closed container.

STAFF

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

IQPPS 8.1, 8.3

Program staff maintain a current list of child and family support services available in the community based on the pattern of needs that they observe among families and based on what families request (e.g., health, mental health, oral health, nutrition, child welfare, parenting programs, early intervention/special education screening and assessment services, and basic needs such as housing

and child care subsidies). They share the list with families and assist them in locating, contacting, and using community resources that support children's and families' well-being and development.

Program staff used their knowledge of the community and the families it serves as an integral part of the curriculum and children's learning experiences.

Child & Family Support Services list

EVALUATION and PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

IQPPS 6.6, 10.14

All staff are evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or, in the case of the program administrator, by the governing body. 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.

GENERAL INFORMATION

IQPPS 10.11, 10.12

The Lake Mills Community School District 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 ensure that all employees in the program who come in contact with children in the program or who have responsibility for children:

- have passed a criminal-record check
- are free from a history of substantiated child abuse or neglect
- are at least 18 years old
- have completed high school or the equivalent
- have provided personal references that attest to the prospective employee's ability to perform the tasks required to carry out the responsibilities of their position

ORIENTATION

IQPPS 6.1

Employees must know their role and duties. New preschool teaching staff will participate in an 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.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

IQPPS 8.4

All teaching staff continuously strengthen their leadership skills and relationships with others as well as work to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community, and beyond. Teaching staff are encouraged to participate in joint and collaborative local, state, or regional events/activities. They may join an early childhood group or organization, attend meetings, or share information with others both within and outside the program.

Teaching staff will be informed of professional development activities provided by Child Care Resource and Referral, the local empowerment areas, and the area education agency. Staff is expected to attend all staff training and meetings throughout the year.

STAFFING PATTERNS and SCHEDULE

IQPPS 10.4, 10.13

The preschool program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our program follows requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times. The program administrator will maintain lists of current substitutes for both the preschool teacher and the preschool teaching assistant in case of absence.

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