



Early Childhood Family Handbook

Engage all students in learning a challenging curriculum
delivered through quality instruction.

Learn. Lead. Live.

Success for college, career and civic life.

www.southeastpolk.org

Welcome From the Southeast Polk Public Schools Early Childhood Staff

Dear Families,

We are looking forward to a successful year growing with you and your child in our SEP Early Childhood Program. Southeast Polk's Statewide Voluntary Preschool goal is to provide high quality preschool that meets each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds.

Little Rams 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 readiness skills.

Little Rams Preschool 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 and instructional practices. The maximum class size is 20 children in each session. Teaching staff includes a full-time certified teacher and a classroom associate. This combination of staff allows for a 1:10 staff ratio to be maintained at all times to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children.

We believe the SEP Early Childhood programs enjoy their good reputation largely because of the support of our families. Your participation is the key to the success of our programs. We welcome your involvement, in fact, we encourage it!

We have prepared this Early Childhood Parent Handbook for your information. The handbook should answer most of your questions. If you have additional questions, please contact your child's teacher or classroom staff.

Sincerely,

Southeast Polk Early Childhood Program Staff

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SOUTHEAST POLK SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

2023-2024

DISTRICT PRESCHOOL FACILITATORS

Jackie White, Early Childhood Coordinator	515-957-5664
Jo Ellen Latham, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction	515-957-3407
Lea Morris, Director of Special Education	515-957-3428

LITTLE RAMS PRESCHOOL LOCATIONS

Altoona Elementary
301 6th Street SW, Altoona 50009
Phone: 515-967-3771 FAX: 515-967-2079
Morgan Miller - Principal
morgan.miller@southeastpolk.org

Centennial Elementary
910 7th Avenue SE, Altoona 50009
Phone: 515-967-2109 FAX: 515-967-7076
Lori Waddell - Principal
lori.waddell@southeastpolk.org

Clay Elementary
3200 First Ave. S, Altoona 50009
Phone: 515-967-4198 FAX: 515-967-2018
Andrea Bruns - Principal
andrea.bruns@southeastpolk.org

Delaware Elementary
4401 E 46th Street, Des Moines 50317
Phone: 515-262-3197 FAX: 515-264-8239
Chelsea Clark- Principal
chelsea.clark@southeastpolk.org

Four Mile Elementary
670 SE 68th Street, Pleasant Hill 50327
Phone: 515-967-4294 FAX: 515-262-1933
Tammy Steenhoek - Principal
tamera.steenhoek@southeastpolk.org

Mitchellville Elementary
308 Elm Avenue, NW, Mitchellville 50169
Phone: 515-967-4274 FAX: 967-4934
Blake Kielman - Principal
blake.kielman@southeastpolk.org

Runnells Elementary
6575 SE 116th Street, Runnells 50237
Phone: 515-966-2068 FAX: 515-966-2396
Jake Bartels - Principal
jacob.bartels@southeastpolk.org

Willowbrook Elementary
300 17th Avenue SW, Altoona 50009
Phone: 515-967-7512 FAX: 515-967-1620
George Panosh - Principal
george.panosh@southeastpolk.org

DISTRICT OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS

Dr. Dirk Halupnik, Superintendent	515-957-4294
Joseph M. Horton, Associate Superintendent	515-957-4294
Jo Ellen Latham, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction	515-957-4294
Kevin Baccam, Executive Director of Financial Services	515-957-4294
Dr. Margi Belger, Executive Director of Human Resources	515-957-3402

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT - DIRECTORS

Dan Schultz, Director of Transportation	515-967-3793
Amy A'Hearn, Director of Food & Nutrition	515-957-3431
Gary Haines, Director of Buildings and Grounds	515-957-3434
Jason Kurth, Director of Technology	515-957-3403

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Lori Slings	President
Ric Powell	Vice President
Brigid Ernst	Board Member
Brett Handy	Board Member
Tom Naeve	Board Member
Chad Crabb	Board Member
Whitney Smith McIntosh	Board Member

Regular meetings of the board are held on the third Thursday of each month, starting at 5:30 p.m. A work session is held on the

first Thursday of the month. Meeting locations, agendas and minutes are posted on the district website, www.southeastpolk.org



WELCOME TO PRESCHOOL!

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

We believe:

- Student learning is the most important element of society.
- Students learn best in a safe and caring environment.
- Innovative learning activities and various teaching strategies enhance learning.
- Respect for diversity develops tolerance within the school and our society.
- Effective learning produces life-long skills.
- Children learn by engaging in a variety of play opportunities.
- Leaders follow best practices for all students.
- Teaching the importance of citizenship benefits the school and the community.
- Productive discipline incorporates control, consistency, and care.
- Memorable and enjoyable activities foster learning.
- School, home, and community cooperation facilitates and reinforces learning.

INCLUSION

The preschool program is for all children including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff members are made aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is the district's belief that inclusion enriches the educational experience for teachers, students, other children, and their families. The preschool facilities meet Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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 the Southeast Polk district that curriculum content and instructional materials 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 eliminate bias on the basis of gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, and physical disability. The curriculum shall 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.



IOWA EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

Southeast Polk Early Childhood programs embrace and assess the six areas of the Iowa Early Learning Standards. Our Early Childhood curriculum is literacy based and is designed to provide young children with many ways of playing and interacting with others and the learning environment. Our teachers use Creative Curriculum, Second Step and PBIS as well as current research to help us meet the needs of our diverse population. By following the standards listed, we are ensuring that all children receive a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate experience.

Social and Emotional Development

- Self
- Self Regulation
- Relationships with Caregivers
- Peer Interactions
- Awareness of Community

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

- Healthy and Safe Living
- Play and Senses
- Large Motor Development
- Fine Motor Development

Approaches to Learning

- Curiosity and Initiative
- Engagement and Persistence
- Problem Solving

Communication, Language and Literacy

- Language Understanding and Use
- Early Literacy (reading readiness)
- Early Writing

Mathematics and Science

- Comparison and Number
- Patterns
- Shapes and Spatial Relationships
- Scientific Reasoning
- Scientific Problem Solving
- Measurement

Creative Arts

- Art
- Music, Rhythm, and Movement
- Dramatic Play

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

It is the 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 are 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.

SEP Early Childhood Programs use the Teaching Strategies GOLD® tool to assess each child's development. It describes the pathway, or progression, of how children develop and learn. This tool allows teachers to use authentic, ongoing, observation-based assessment.

This kind of assessment simply means that we will:

- observe your child during regular, everyday activities on a consistent basis
- document what we see and hear;
- take notes, collect samples of your child's drawings and writing attempts, or take photos or video clips;
- compare the information collected to research-based, widely held expectations for children of similar ages or grades; and
- use the information to support your child's learning and meet his or her individual need

DAILY ACTIVITIES

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. Each child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day:

- Large group, small group, and large motor/outdoor activities
- Self-directed, purposeful play and individual activities
- Literacy (story time, alphabet recognition, phonics)
- Learning centers: Art, Science/Discovery, Literacy, Math Manipulatives, Blocks/Construction and Dramatic Play
- Snack
- Weekly lesson plans posted in the classroom and newsletters sent home show how activities are incorporated into the daily schedule.



HOURS

Little Rams Preschool meets on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Students do not attend on Wednesdays. Start date is the Tuesday following Labor Day. Little Rams Preschool follows the Southeast Polk District school calendar.

Morning Session: 8:45 - 11:30 All Locations

Afternoon Session: 12:15 - 3:00 Runnells Elementary

12:30 - 3:15 Altoona, Centennial, Delaware Elementary

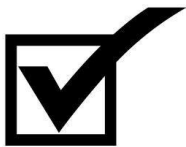
12:45 - 3:30 Clay, Four Mile, Mitchelville, Willowbrook Elementary

ENROLLMENT AND FEES

Little Rams Preschool is for children who are four years old by September 15 of the current school year. There is no cost for four-year-olds to attend.

APPLICATION FOR ENROLLMENT

Registration typically begins February 1 for the following fall. Registration is completed online at www.southeastpolk.org



Prior to enrollment, the following is required:

- Proof of age (birth certificate)
- Updated record of immunizations (see page 13 for more info)
- Physical form (must have had a physical within previous 12 months)
- Directory Information Form (Photo Release/Field Trip Permission)
- Proof of residency

Parents MUST contact the school office to update contact information that changes. For more information please contact the registrar, Deb Starcevich at the Southeast Polk Central Education Center (515-967-4294).

ATTENDANCE AREA

Students will be assigned to buildings and preschool classrooms according to Board Policy 501.5. It is possible students may not attend the school closest to their residence. Adjustments are made to ensure appropriate class sizes.



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSITION MEETING

Teachers use a variety of 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. To help the teacher get to know your child, a home visit is scheduled before the start of the school year. This is a chance for you to ask questions about the classroom and the preschool program, and helps the child feel more comfortable on the first day of class.

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Little Rams Preschool has an advisory committee composed of parents, school staff, and community members interested in the preschool program. This group meets two times each school year to provide feedback and serve as a sounding board for new ideas. At the beginning of each school year, parents are provided information about the committee. Please contact your child's teacher if you have an interest in serving on this committee.

PRESCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Little Rams Preschool partners with local organizations to provide students and their families with varied experiences in the classroom and beyond. Community partners may visit preschool classrooms to provide enrichment activities and participate in family night events.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Little Rams Preschool implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, and receives evaluation from the Iowa Department of Education to confirm we are meeting these standards. The evaluation process includes gathering evidence from all areas of program functioning, and results are shared with families, staff, and appropriate advisory and governance boards. We also use the information to plan professional development and program quality improvement activities.

CHILD OUTCOMES

- Children will show competence in social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development skills.
- Children will be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- Children will be safe and healthy.

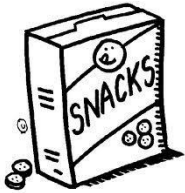
FAMILY OUTCOMES

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

STUDENT & FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Orchard Place Child Guidance Center:** Individual counseling for elementary and secondary students at school during the day. Available for families regardless of insurance. 246-3514
- **Student Assistance Program:** Confidential and caring help for students and immediate household members experiencing personal and/or family problems, through UnityPoint Health System. Contact the high school guidance office for more details, or call UnityPoint Health System to schedule an appointment at 263-4004.
- **Ram All*Star Program:** Provides preschool scholarships to income-eligible families. These scholarships can be used to attend private, community preschools. This program is funded through Early Childhood Iowa. 957-5664
- **Caring Hands Outreach Center:** Food Pantry and Clothes Hanger Assistance Programs. 201 9th Street NE, Altoona. Limit one visit per month. Please bring proof of address & ID. Call 515-967-4533 for hours of operation/ information.

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM



SNACKS AND LUNCH

Southeast Polk operates a National School Lunch and Breakfast program under the direction of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for all students and staff. School meals are designed to supply the proper nutritional levels and calories based on the age of the student.

All Little Rams students receive a free daily snack and milk.

DIET MODIFICATION REQUESTS

If your student has a special dietary need, download the Diet Modification Request Form from the district website. Once completed, submit the form to your school nurse. No special diets or substitutions will be made unless this form is properly completed and approved by the Food Service Director. Substitutions must be made if the licensed physician says the student has a disability. If the medical authority says it is a medical condition, not a disability, providing the substitution is at the discretion of the school district.

For any questions or concerns about the school nutrition program, please contact the Food & Nutrition Services Department at 515-957-3432 or email at school.nutrition@southeastpolk.org.



SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ROOM PARTIES

Room parties may be scheduled during the school year. Room parents may be asked to assist in making plans for the party games and refreshments. Gifts are not exchanged by students.

PARTY INVITATIONS

Party invitations may not be distributed at school unless ALL children (or ALL boys or ALL girls) in the class receive one. Neither the office nor the teacher will provide addresses or telephone numbers.

BIRTHDAY TREATS

Please contact classroom teachers for more information regarding building policies for birthday celebrations.

FLOWER AND BALLOON DELIVERY

Schools will not accept flower and balloon deliveries for students. The florist will be asked instead to deliver orders to the student's home.

GIFTS FOR TEACHERS/STAFF

The district discourages gift giving. Students should never feel obliged to give gifts to their teachers. Some parents cooperate with others to purchase a book or a recess game for the classroom. Such gifts benefit all of the students.

PETS

No live animals are to be inside preschool classrooms at any time. Permission must be granted by the teacher or principal before any pet may be brought to school. Pets and other living creatures (besides kids!) are not allowed on the bus, so other arrangements will have to be made for transportation. If the teacher approves, pets may be brought for a short sharing period and then returned home. Pets or visiting animals must be in good health and official documentation must be provided to prove the animal has had full immunizations and is appropriate for contact with young children. Options will be provided for children who are allergic

to the type of visiting animal.

STUDENT SECURITY

We need everyone's cooperation for the safety and security of all children:

- The dismissal plan on the registration form will be followed unless the school receives a note or phone call.
- Due to the number of children a teacher is responsible for at dismissal time, individual children cannot be walked by a teacher to cars parked away from the school. It is the parent's responsibility to get the child from the dismissal area where the teacher is located outside (or just inside the building if there is inclement weather).

TOYS, MONEY AND VALUABLES

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you limit toys brought from home. If your child brings an "attachment" item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack or cubby.

Toys, trading cards, playground equipment, etc. brought to school may become lost or damaged. Students must obtain permission from the teacher before bringing any items. Baseballs and other hard balls are potentially dangerous and must be left at home.

Valuable items brought to school sometimes disappear. For this reason, students should not bring more money than needed for lunch or supplies, and extra money should be given to the teacher for safe keeping. Any money brought to school should be put in an envelope with the student's name and the purpose for the money written on the envelope.

Radios, iPods cameras, electronic games, and other high tech items are too expensive to be brought to school and then become lost or damaged. They may also serve to distract from the educational process. We ask that these items be left at home.

Lost or stolen items are not the responsibility of the school.

CHEWING GUM

Students may not bring gum to school.

FIELD TRIPS

Notes describing field trips are sent home by the
STUDENT DRESS INFORMATION

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we can't guarantee 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.

In order to make sure children can play comfortably outside, it is important your child be dressed in layers according to the weather. Hats, mittens, and boots should be worn in the winter for outside play. Because neither snow boots nor socks alone are allowed to be worn in rooms, street shoes are needed for inside wear. Please mark all boots, gloves, caps, coats and gym shoes with your last name, so that lost items may be returned.

Parents are encouraged to bring a hat or other clothing for children to wear as another protection from the sun, and encouraged to apply sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher to the child's exposed skin.

DISTRICT RESPECT CODE

At Southeast Polk Community Schools . . .

- We respect ourselves, others, property and class time.
- We strive to be and do our best.
- We treat others the way we want to be treated.
- We respect the property of the school and others.
- We respect the right of teachers to teach and learners to learn.

ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOR and DISCIPLINE

Learning is directly dependent upon children's attitudes toward the task of learning. Children excited about learning and focused on getting along with others will do their best in school.

All eight Southeast Polk Elementary Schools are participating in PBIS, Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports, to help guide students to success by creating a positive, safe, and nurturing learning environment. At Southeast Polk all Elementary Schools follow the Rams Way:

classroom teacher. Parental permission is given on the registration form.

Respect

Always Responsible

Motivated Learners

Safety

What is PBIS?

PBIS is a systematic approach for achieving social and academic goals while preventing problem behaviors with ALL students.

Purpose of PBIS...

The purpose of implementing a PBIS System is to establish and maintain a safe and effective school environment that maximizes the academic achievement and social-emotional-behavioral competence of all students.

Components of PBIS...

- Common approach to discipline
- Positively stated school-wide expectations for all students and staff
- Consistent use of acknowledged system and consequence system
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of PBIS system on a regular and frequent basis
- Led by a leadership team at each school and implemented by all staff
- Behavioral expectations are taught to students

Why Teach Expectations?

- If a child doesn't know how to read -- we teach them.
- If a child doesn't know how to swim -- we teach them.
- If a child doesn't know how to multiply -- we teach them.
- If a child doesn't know how to drive -- we teach them.
- If a child doesn't know how to behave -- we...

Guiding Principles of PBIS

Academic achievement and appropriate behavioral skills are the results of school, staff, and families working together to provide a continuum of support

for all students. A continuum of academic and behavioral support includes:

- School-wide instruction for all students (Core Instruction)
- Instructional interventions for students who are at risk for academic or social and

behavioral problems (Supplemental Instruction)

- Individualized instructions for students with intense or chronic academic or behavioral problems (Intensive Instruction)

Making School Pleasant and Safe



Bus info. pertains only to qualifying preschool special education students.

BUS RIDING POLICIES More info. may be obtained by calling the Dir. of Transportation, 967-3793.

Riding a school bus is an important aspect of the school day for many Southeast Polk students. Riding a school bus is a privilege which can be terminated for students who cannot abide by the school bus regulations.

If a problem occurs (depending upon its seriousness), the driver will first try to solve it with the student and his or her parents. In order to improve communication, "School Bus Report" slips are available. The driver may send home a First Notice slip informing the parent of the problem. The parent is to sign and send the slip back to the driver.

The driver may also involve the building principal by giving a copy of the First Notice slip or by writing a Second Notice slip explaining the problem to the principal. The principal must be given time to speak with the student and parents to solve the problem.

As a further safety measure, the district has installed a "black box" in every bus. The box contains a video camera which may be used at any time in a bus. When the behavior on a bus warrants, the bus supervisor provides tapes for the principal to view in order to take appropriate action.

BUS ROUTE POLICY

Bus drivers operate on a regular schedule, although they may deviate from this schedule because of road conditions or weather. Students need to be ready, watching and waiting for the bus five minutes early. If

a bus must wait for someone, it is off schedule for the rest of the route. It is the recommendation of the State Department of Pupil Transportation and district policy that the bus NOT wait for students. If a student is not riding, the driver should be signaled to go on.

BASIC RULES FOR BUS RIDERS

1. Remember, the bus is an extension of the classroom.
2. Always follow the driver's instructions the first time.
3. Remain seated while on the bus.
4. Keep noise to a minimum. Use "indoor voices" and do not yell out the windows.
5. The use of profanity, name-calling and disrespectful gestures is not permitted.
6. For your safety, keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
7. Do not eat or drink on the bus (including candy and gum).
8. Treat the school bus with respect. Put litter in the trash can. Any damage to the bus will be billed to the parent or guardian.
9. Do not fight, horseplay, push, or throw things on or around the bus.
10. The bus driver reserves the right to confiscate any electronic device that causes a distraction or disruption on the bus. The item will be returned at a later time.



RECOMMENDED HEALTH PROCEDURE

In order to promote, maintain and restore health, these basic principles regarding ill students should be followed:

1. A student dismissed from school because of illness should remain indoors and under observation for 12 hours.
2. A student with a fever of 100.6 or greater must remain home until their temperature is normal for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.(i.e.: Tylenol, Motrin)
3. A student who has been vomiting or having diarrhea needs to remain home for 24 hours after the last vomiting or diarrhea episode. This will help eliminate children returning to school while still ill.
4. The regulations set by the Iowa Department of Public Health are the guidelines used to determine exclusion and re-admittance of students with communicable diseases. (See below.)
5. Head lice is a concern we see each year. Please observe your child's head for lice. If your child does contract head lice, please notify the school nurse, who can help you with treatment protocol. Parents should assume that lice are present where children are, and should screen their own children on a weekly basis. If head lice are detected, an information packet for treatment will be sent home and parents will be notified. One of the best preventatives for lice outbreaks is early detection by alert parents and staff members.
6. For the safety of students and staff, all personnel will implement universal precautions when providing health care to any individual. Recommended procedures are as follows:
 - Good hand washing practices will be observed when administering health service to any individual
 - Disposable gloves will be utilized when handling any body fluids.
 - Students will be encouraged to handle the initial care of minor injuries when possible.

7. The disease Reye's Syndrome can affect children from infancy through adolescence. After a viral infection, (such as chicken pox, upper respiratory illness, and influenza) has seemingly run its course (3-7 days), the following symptoms should be treated as serious and as possibly the first indication of Reye's Syndrome: persistent or continuous vomiting, listlessness, personality change, disorientation, and delirium or convulsions. Contact the doctor immediately if any of these symptoms are noted. Because of the association of aspirin with Reye's Syndrome, parents should consult their doctor before giving aspirin to their child.
8. All children should be closely observed for skin rashes or sores, since illnesses that cause rashes or sores can be highly contagious, i.e. scabies, ringworm, impetigo, etc. A doctor's note or medication prescription label showing treatment is required before the child can be readmitted to school. Children with questionable rashes may be excluded from school at the discretion of the school nurse until seen by a physician and the condition is determined as non-contagious.
9. The school shall follow guidelines as established by the Department of Education and the Southeast Polk School District and/or the State Department of Health, regarding infectious disease.

MEDICATIONS

1. Per school board policy: Only medications prescribed by a physician will be given in school. This means that medications such as headache, cold and stomach remedies, cough medications, cough drops or any other drug purchased without a physician written prescription cannot be given unless accompanied by a physician order.
2. Medication must be brought in a container appropriately labeled by the physician or pharmacist or in the original container in which the medication was packaged. The pharmacy will, for a nominal charge, provide parents with a separately labeled bottle to send medication to school. All medications must be brought to and from school by the parent/guardian or an adult designated by the parent/guardian.
3. Medications will be kept in the nurse's office and dispensed from there.

4. Written parent consent is required for administration of all medications at school. This form is available online by clicking on parents/students and then health and wellness. Under the health and wellness click on medication and print the **Medication Authorization form**. This form is also available in the nurse's office.

SEVERE ALLERGIES

If your student has a severe allergy PLEASE make sure you communicate the information to your school nurse. The school nurse will work with you to develop an individual health plan, and if needed an emergency response plan, for your student.

ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

When a child becomes ill or has an accident at school, we may need to notify parents. It is very important that the information on the registration card be as accurate and complete as possible. Parents should notify the school of any changes in information on the card from the beginning of school.

No child is sent home until arrangements have been made. In cases where parents cannot be contacted, the school will contact the name of the person designated on the registration card by the parent. If no one can be reached and in extreme emergencies, we will transport your child to the nearest physician or hospital by the most appropriate transportation available. All information regarding your child's health will be shared with the necessary staff involved with your child unless otherwise specified.

Toileting/Diapering Procedures

All age-eligible children, regardless of ability to use the restroom independently, are welcome to attend Little Rams Preschool. For students who are unable to use the toilet consistently, parents/guardians are asked to provide pull-ups/diapers, and wipes. Staff will change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas separated from other children. Staff will work with families to provide consistency in reaching bathroom independence.

HEALTH PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, health protocols for ill

students are as follows:

- Any student exhibiting one high risk, or two low risk symptoms, according to the Iowa

Department of Public Health, must stay home from school or will be sent home from school.

- High Risk Symptoms:
 - New cough
 - Shortness of breath /difficulty breathing
 - New loss of taste or smell
- Low Risk Symptoms:
 - Fever equal to or greater than 100.4 degrees F. (we will always exclude for a fever whether or not accompanied by other symptoms)
 - Headache
 - Muscle/body aches
 - Fatigue
 - Sore throat
 - Runny nose
 - Congestion
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- You will be asked to contact your child's provider for next steps.
- If the provider determines a COVID-19 test is needed, the child must stay home until the test results are known.
- If the test results come back positive, please let your school nurse know right away so the next steps may be taken.
- If an alternate diagnosis is provided (i.e. allergies, cold, strep throat, etc), the child may return to school after 24 hours of fever free without medications, 24 hours starting antibiotic treatment, 24 hours free of vomiting or diarrhea, or with provider note/approval.
- If you choose to not take your child to a healthcare provider and a COVID-19 test was not administered, we may ask you to keep your child home for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and until all symptoms have resolved. Each situation is unique and will be determined on a case by case basis.

Health procedures and protocols will be updated as public health guidance evolves throughout the global pandemic.



IMMUNIZATIONS

Iowa state law requires that all children who are enrolled in an elementary school or preschool must have documentation of the state recommendations for childhood immunizations: **On the day of enrollment, parents must submit the necessary** data to show that their child has completed his/her immunizations or qualifies for a provisional certificate (has received one dose of each of the required vaccines and is under medical care for completion of the necessary immunizations).

Medical and religious exemptions may be granted under certain conditions. The necessary forms for these exemptions, all immunizations and any further information may be obtained through your school nurse, the Polk County Health Department, Iowa State Health Department or your physician's office.

TESTING AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

The following may be offered to Little Rams Preschool students:

Hearing tests are conducted by audiologists from Heartland Area Education Agency every year for grades K-5, special education children, and children with a recent history of hearing loss. Parents and other school personnel may refer children not already scheduled for screening. Parents will be notified of the

results if a problem is identified.

Distance vision screening is conducted by the school nurse in the fall of each year for grades K-6 and special education. We do not screen for up-close (reading) vision, and recommend if your child has vision concerns you have him/her evaluated by a professional eye doctor. Parents and other school personnel may refer children not already scheduled for screening. Again, parents will be notified if a problem is identified. If your student needs a professional eye exam and you are unable to afford one, notify your school nurse to be connected with available resources.

The speech-language pathologist conducts communication adequacy screenings for students pre-K through 6th grade during the school year at a teacher or parent's request. Parents or guardians will be contacted if there are any concerns about a child's communication skills.

RECESS REQUEST

Parents sometimes request that a student stay inside during recess time. However, a child well enough to attend school should be well enough to participate fully in all school activities, including outside play. Requests to remain inside for recess must be accompanied by a doctor's note.

DISTRICT ASSURANCES

CHILD ABUSE

Neglect, sexual molestation, emotional abuse and any non-accidental physical injury suffered by a person under 18 years of age as a result of acts or omissions by parents, guardians or persons legally responsible for the child, is child abuse. School personnel, such as nurses, teachers, counselors, and principals, are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse to the Department of Human Services.

ABUSE OF STUDENTS BY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Legislation has specific guidelines pertaining to what will be considered acts of physical or sexual abuse by school employees, including inappropriate as well as intentional sexual behavior towards students. All such activities are clearly in violation of the policies of the Southeast Polk School District.

To ensure compliance, the superintendent, 515-967-4294, has been appointed as the district's Level I investigator, with a designated Level II as his alternate. If the complaint is found to be without grounds, the Level I investigator can cause the complaint to be dropped. If legal action is required, or the incident comes under the auspices of the Department of Human Services, then the appropriate agency is notified. The investigator may also refer the case to the Level II investigator, as can another person if they disagree with the Level I findings.

TOBACCO-FREE AND DRUG-FREE

In an effort to provide a healthy, safe and productive environment in which to work and learn, the following board policies have been adopted:

- All district buildings and vehicles are tobacco free. This includes the school campus. No smoking is allowed outside of the buildings.
- Employees of the district are prohibited from the possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs while on duty.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

As the parents of a child who is receiving the benefits of education in a public school, you have certain rights which are safeguarded by state and federal statute. You should know that:

RECORDS - You have the right to:

- Inspect and review your child's educational records;
- Ask for an explanation of any item in the record;
- Have copies made at a reasonable cost;
- Be informed of types and locations of records being collected or used by the school;
- Ask for the amendment of any record if you feel it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates privacy rights;
- Request a record hearing if the school does not make the requested amendment;
- Give or withhold consent to disclose your child's record;
- Be told to whom information has been disclosed;
- Be informed before information in your child's file is destroyed.

NOTICE - You have the right to:

- Receive notice before the school initiates or changes (or refuses to initiate or change) the identification, evaluation or placement of your child;
- Have that notice in writing, in your native language or other principle mode of communication, at a level understandable to the general public.
- Have the notice describe the proposed action, explain why it is proposed, describe the options considered and explain why other options were rejected;
- Be notified of each evaluation procedure, test, record or report the school will use as a basis for any proposed action.

CONSENT - You have the right to:

- Give consent before an initial evaluation is conducted and before initial placement is made in special education;

- Withhold or revoke consent at any time, but the school has the right to proceed in the absence of consent to a hearing to determine if your child should be evaluated.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES - You have the right to:

- Have a full and individual evaluation of your child's educational needs;
- Have more than one criterion used in determining an appropriate educational program for your child;
- Have the evaluation performed by a multidisciplinary team;
- Have your child assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability;
- Have a reevaluation every three years, or more frequently if the conditions warrant, or if you or the child's teacher request it.

With these rights come certain responsibilities for parents and the school system. Both are responsible for keeping communication channels open and discussing concerns. Talk with your child's teacher or principal if you have concerns or questions, so differences may be resolved as early as possible.

PARENT NOTICE SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. In order to fulfill obligations under Section 504, the Southeast Polk Community School District has the responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability should knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices of the school system. The Southeast Polk Community School District has the responsibility under Section 504 to identify and evaluate students with disabilities and, if the student is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services.

If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, she/he has a right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also specifies rights related to educational records. This Act gives the parent or guardian the right to:

- Inspect and review his/her child's educational records;
- Make copies of these records;
- Receive a list of individuals with access to the child's records;
- Ask for an explanation of any item in the records;
- Ask for an amendment to any report on the grounds it is inaccurate, misleading, or

violates the child's rights; and

- Have a hearing on the issue if the school refuses to make the amendment.

If there are questions, please feel free to contact the Director of Special Education, Section 504 Coordinator for the Southeast Polk Community School District, at (515) 957-3423.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Southeast Polk Community School District hereby serves notification that this District does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, national origin, religion, age, marital status, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities.

Any person having inquiries concerning the Southeast Polk Community School District's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI or Title IX is directed to contact: Title IX Coordinator, Southeast Polk Community School District Office, 8379 NE University Avenue, Pleasant Hill, Iowa 50327, phone 515-967-4294, Extension 1003.

Any persons with inquiries concerning the district's compliance with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504, please contact: Director of Special Education, ADA and Section 504 Coordinator, Southeast Polk Community School District Office, 8379 NE University Avenue, Pleasant Hill, IA 50327, phone 515-957-3423, who has been designated by the Southeast Polk Community School District to

coordinate the district's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing the ADA and Section 504.

SCHOOL PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS

The normal procedure for registering a complaint relating to a school matter or individual is to go directly to the person involved, i.e. the staff member or principal. State the problem and the concern in a discreet, courteous manner. If a staff issue is not resolved, any justified concerns should then be taken to the building principal and then, if not resolved, to the superintendent of schools. Complaints of a general nature such as disapproval of a textbook or library book should be written, dated and signed, and sent to the Southeast Polk District Office.

The manner in which a complaint is handled is

important to all persons concerned. Reactions to a complaint might vary from unawareness that a problem even exists, to a feeling of exasperation, to feeling threatened and defensive. All persons involved should remember there are at least two sides to any story, and that all viewpoints should be considered. Being a good listener and attempting to understand the other person's concern are important tools for working out problems. Harassment of students or employees will not be tolerated. Employees and students who believe they have suffered harassment should report such incidents to the Superintendent, at 967-4294, Ext. 1006 for investigation.

DISTRICT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SCHOOL ABSENCE

Being absent from school is sometimes necessary. Students should not attend school if they are ill, for example, because others may be exposed to that illness. When students are absent, parents should call the school to explain the absence by 8:30 a.m. for children enrolled in the morning session, and by 12:30 p.m. for those enrolled in the afternoon session.

LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY

Students who need to leave school must be excused from the office. Parents who wish to have a child excused during the day should call first to make arrangements, then stop by the office to sign out the child. This regulation is for the safety of your child. If a child is to leave school with someone other than parents, a note or call is necessary. All dismissals are made from the office.

TRANSFERS OUT OF DISTRICT

Whenever a student is planning to move from the Southeast Polk School District to another school district, the following procedure will be followed. We ask that parents give advance notice in order for us to prepare records and attendance. Please contact your child's teacher and building secretary. The building will notify the district registrar of your transfer out of district.

When students leave Southeast Polk Community

School District, educational records will be sent to requesting schools in which students seek to enroll. Parents have the right to review the child's records prior to those records being sent to the receiving school.

SCHOOL VISITATION

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit our schools. Visitations during the two weeks at the beginning and end of the school year are usually not as rewarding as at other times of the school year. It is requested that younger brothers or sisters not be brought to visit, as they distract the class from a normal routine. As a courtesy to the teacher, please call ahead to find out the best time for the visit. Youngsters from other schools may not visit and spend the day at school. Visitors to the building must stop in the office to sign in and obtain a visitors' pass.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

Fire drills and tornado drills are practiced monthly in preschool classrooms in accordance with Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.



WEATHER AND EMERGENCIES

In event of any emergency such as storms, bad roads, power or heating failure, water system failure, or other

emergency, the following policies will be followed:

If school is cancelled due to weather, road conditions, or other emergency, radio stations and local TV stations will broadcast the information. Every effort will be made to get this information on the air by 6:35 a.m. Other early closing or emergency information will also be broadcast. To get an updated recording of the school schedule information, call the District Office at 967-4294. When the menu starts, press "6" for the recording. If the receptionist answers, ask to be connected to the school closing information line.

Overnight snow storms or heavy morning fog may cause an hour or more delay in opening school. This will also be announced on the radio. The purpose of this delay is to provide more time for snow removal, or fog to clear, and allow extra time for school staff to arrive during difficult driving conditions. When school is delayed in the morning, there will be no morning preschool session. When school is dismissed early, there will be no afternoon preschool session.

Emergency Bus Procedures

If school is in session and an emergency occurs, the school will deliver all children home as soon as possible after the emergency arises.

Unless the school is notified to the contrary, we will follow parent instructions on the registration sheet regarding early dismissals.

Parents are requested not to call the school so that our phone lines will be open to issue and receive information regarding the emergency.