

# PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

## Maquoketa Community School District Preschool Program

**2017-2018**

### Participating Centers:

Cardinal Elementary Preschool

Sacred Heart Preschool

Little Shepherd Preschool

Sunshine Preschool and Daycare

Cardinal Elementary School

612 S. Vermont

Maquoketa, Iowa 52060

Ph: 563.652.4984

*The Maquoketa Preschool Program believes that staff, families and community work together to provide opportunities for children to learn through developmentally appropriate activities in a safe, nurturing environment.*

Sherri Walker, Preschool Program Director and Cardinal Principal

Chris Hoover, Superintendent

Jan Wagner, Preschool Administrative Assistant and Registrar

Mike Wing, Transportation Director

**Maquoketa Community Preschool Program Policies and Procedures**

## **Maquoketa Community Preschool Program**

**QPPS 10.1**

The Maquoketa Community School District was awarded the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant in 2009. The program's goal is to work collaboratively with participating preschools to provide a high quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices. The preschool program has adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS), administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The policies and procedures defined in this handbook align to QPPS and are noted within each section.

## **MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOALS**

**QPPS 10.1**

### **Mission:**

The Maquoketa Preschool Program believes that staff, families and community work together to provide opportunities for children to learn through developmentally appropriate activities in a safe, nurturing environment.

### **Goals for Children:**

- To help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive, lifelong learners through the following areas of development.

### **Goals for Families:**

- 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.
- Families will advocate for their children.

## **ENROLLMENT**

### **Equal Educational Opportunity**

It is the policy of the Maquoketa Community School District not to discriminate in its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, national origin, color, religion, creed, marital status (for programs), gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status (for programs), or disability in its educational programs or activities.

The school district will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of the families with children with limited English proficiency, families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format.

The school district believes that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections.

### **Eligibility**

Children must be four years of age prior to September 15<sup>th</sup> of the current school year to participate in the preschool program for four year olds. Children participating in the program for three year olds may enter the program following their third birthday. Registration will begin in the spring of the previous year. Registration materials are available at each participating preschool centers, at the district's central office at 612 S. Vermont, Maquoketa Public Library, the Maquoketa Chamber of Commerce office, and on the district website.

**Hours**

Four year old preschool classes meet for approximately three hours each day, five days per week. Children attend Monday through Friday, either in morning or afternoon sessions. The preschool follows the Maquoketa Schools calendar.

**General Information****QPPS 10.4**

The maximum class size is 20 or fewer children in each session based on square footage of the specific center. A teaching staff-to-child ratio of at least 1:10 will be maintained at all times to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children. Each center will maintain a current list of available substitutes for both the teacher and teacher assistant. Should one of the teaching staff need to temporarily leave the room, the teacher will arrange for coverage of the classroom to maintain the staff-child ratio.

**Compulsory Attendance**

On July 1, 2013, the Iowa Legislature adopted changes that include the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program in the Compulsory Attendance Law. The amendment states:  
“A child who has reached the age of five by September 15th and who is enrolled in a school district is of compulsory attendance age unless the child’s parent or guardian provides written notice to the school district of the “intent to remove the child from enrollment in the school district.” Iowa Code 229.1A(2) (2013)

The purpose of this amended state law is to allow a school district to remove from its enrollment a child who is not regularly attending the district’s program. The amendment does not change the parameters of the program; it is intended only to hold parents accountable for ensuring regular attendance on behalf of their students. Requirements for program length and duration are set locally. The amendment allows school districts to provide a quality education for children and to efficiently allocate public resources.

**Inclusion****QPPS 9.10**

The preschool program includes children with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff are aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children and their families. The preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. Professional development training including special education practices and strategies are held throughout the school year.

**PROGRAM INFORMATION****Staff**

Program Administrator: The Maquoketa Cardinal Elementary Principal is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program. The Cardinal Elementary Principal meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. **QPPS 10.2 & 10.3**

Teacher A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an early childhood endorsement is assigned to each preschool classroom. **QPPS 6.3**

#### Teacher Assistant

A full time teacher assistant in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher assistant will have specialized training in early childhood education. **QPPS 6.4**

#### Support Staff

Mississippi Bend AEA 9 support staff provides resources and assistance to the teachers and classrooms 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.

#### **Daily Activities**

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a variety of learning activities. Lesson plans for each week are posted in the classroom showing how these activities are incorporated into the daily schedule. Weekly notes will be sent home to families in children's backpacks and electronically, if parents desire.

#### **Curriculum**

**QPPS 2.1 - 2.3**

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.

The preschool program uses *Creative Curriculum*, which is a research and evidence based comprehensive curriculum designed for preschoolers. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills, and social skills. **QPPS 2.1, 2.2**

It is the policy of this district that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, and physical disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a multicultural nonsexist society. **QPPS 1.7**

#### **Child Assessment QPPS 4.1, 4.2**

##### *Guiding principles:*

It is the school district's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. Curriculum and assessment are interrelated. Quality assessment focuses on the child and enables the teacher to make adjustments to the daily curriculum. 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.

A variety of tools are utilized to assess students. They include:

- Observational data, which provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities. This data is entered into the GOLD Online Assessment System, and this data is collected by the Iowa Department of Education three times per year.
- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data, and child work samples collected on an on-going basis.
- During home visits and via on-going communication throughout the school year, families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.
- Progress and charting of goals for students with an Individual Education Plan

The assessment information is used:

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

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. The preschool teacher will communicate on a regular basis regarding children's activities and developmental milestones. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

**QPPS 7.3, 7.5**

If, through observation or information on the *The Creative Curriculum Child GOLD*, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern.

Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- The teacher requests assistance from the Mississippi Bend AEA Support team as an early intervention process. This team engages in problem identification, plan interventions, provide support, and make outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance. The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

**QPPS 7.4**

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 sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

### **Program Assessment**

Maquoketa preschool program centers implement the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. The district participates in a verification visit to confirm that we are meeting these standards.

Administrators, families, staff, community members and other routinely participating adults will be involved annually in a program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives.

### **Supervision Policy**

**QPPS 9.2, 9.12**

Before children arrive at school, the preschool staff will complete the following daily safety checklist indoors and outdoors:

- All safety plugs and electric outlets covered, heat/AC, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children reach and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, protective gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of environment - spills, sand, etc.
- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently).

### **Child Guidance and Discipline**

**QPPS 1.11**

Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect, property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn taking turns.

### **Challenging Behavior**

**QPPS 1.2, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10**

The teaching staff in the preschools are highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors teachers promote pro-social behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed.

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

Permissible Methods of Discipline:

*For acts of aggression and fighting* (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they

have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident.; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action is there is a recurrence.

*Prohibited Practices of Discipline:*

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

1. harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
2. physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect.
4. withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

*Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports - Professional Development for Staff*

Preschool staff has received professional development in Preschool Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS). PBIS provides an operational framework to ensure that all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented practices when dealing with behaviors.

**Water activities**

**QPPS 5.9, 9.15**

We have a water table in the classroom for children to stand and play with their hands in the water. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as the water table. Staff supervise all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

**Snacks/Foods and Nutrition**

**QPPS 5.12- 5.21**

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

Children are served a snack at a regularly scheduled time. Two food groups will be represented at each snack time as outlined in USDA guidelines. A written snack calendar 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 discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialist involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. The program posts information about the child's allergies

in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day.

High risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served. For children younger than four years, these include hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

The school district does not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

### **Outside Play and Learning**

**QPPS 5.5, 5.6 9.5-9.7**

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions) children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment. For example, tumbling mats may be offered for upper body activities or rolling across the mat.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside it is important to dress him according to the weather. When it is cold outside he needs a warm coat, mittens or gloves and a hat (labeled with your child's name). For the warmer days dressing your child lightly is just as important. We encourage you to bring a hat or other clothing for your child to wear as protection from the sun. Sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied to your child's exposed skin (only with your written parental permission to do so).

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

### **Clothing**

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as comfortable shoes to school. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal, or disruptive in nature. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

### **Toileting**

**QPPS 5.7**

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

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area, i.e., the bathroom adjacent to the classroom with a fold down changing table. Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards.

### **Objects From Home**



Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you limit items 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. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

### **Weapon Policy**

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or a look-alike weapon on any school premises, in any school vehicle or any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any school building or other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. "Look-alike weapon" means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon. *A zero tolerance policy on dangerous weapons (real or toy) is in effect; i.e., gun, squirt guns, water rifles or pistols, slingshots, toy guns, toy grenades and other similar items knives, etc. Violation may result in a student suspension/expulsion.*

### **Birthdays**

#### **QPPS 5.13**

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. The teacher will provide families a list of foods meeting the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. Those who have summer birthdays have a designated school day to celebrate with their class. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

### **Communication with Families**

#### **QPPS 1.1, 7.5**

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Teaching staff will write notes for families on a regular basis. Staff will use these notes to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, ongoing, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs - email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

### **Open Door Policy**

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. As a safety feature, all parents and visitors will check in at the preschool office. Visitors are asked to please use discretion with regard to bringing babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt class sessions. Photo identification will be required for any unknown visitor to the classroom. As a safety feature, parents are asked to sign in prior to entering a preschool classroom.

### **Arrival and Departure of Children**

#### **QPPS 10.11**

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians will include the use of age-appropriate, and size-appropriate seat restraints.

When bringing your child to school, we ask that you park your car in the parking lot and turn off the engine before entering the building. Please hold your child's hand as you enter the building to

decrease the possibility of an accident. Parents or legal guardians must either accompany children to the classroom at the beginning of the day or leave their child in the care of one of the teaching staff. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult.

Other than parents or legal guardian, only persons with prior written authorization (Parent Consent Form) will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them.

If your child rides the school bus to school, teaching staff will go to each bus as it arrives to greet and assist the student off the bus. At dismissal, teaching staff will accompany each student to the bus and assist the student onto the bus.

### **Transportation**

The Maquoketa Community Schools will provide school bus transportation for four year old preschoolers. Parents or legal guardians may request transportation at enrollment, indicating the pick-up and drop-off address, the name of the responsible person at that address, and emergency contact information for all parties involved. Parents or legal guardians are asked to keep their information current by reporting changes to the preschool teacher. A responsible adult needs to meet the student when being dropped off after a class. Drivers can not leave children unattended at the bus stop. For children who have special needs for transportation, any accommodations indicated in the child's Individualized Educational Program will be implemented as described.

### **Field Trips**

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. Parents will be informed of each field trip through a newsletter and signs posted in the classroom well in advance. A parent or legal guardian must sign an informed consent form for trips for each child. Adult family members are sometimes asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios.

During the field trip, all children will wear identifying information that, for children, gives the program name. A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children will be counted every 15 minutes while on a field trip. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will not be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

### **Attendance**

Students who are enrolled for classes in the Maquoketa Preschool Program are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Since space in the class is limited, regular attendance is necessary. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the learning progress of your child. Please call the center with the reason for an absence no later than 8:15 A.M. if your child for the morning session and by 12:15 P.M. for the afternoon session.

### **Ethics and Confidentiality**

Staff follow an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families.

Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

### **Children's Records**

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular office hours. Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

### **Preschool Advisory Committee**

#### **QPPS 7.2**

The Maquoketa Community Preschool has a preschool advisory committee composed of parents, school staff, and other community members interested in the preschool program. This group meets annually to provide feedback on services and for new ideas that meet children and family needs.

### **Communication**

#### **QPPS 7.6**

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for the assistance from the Program Administrator, Helen Snell.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

#### **QPPS 7.1, 7.2**

Maquoketa Community School encourages families to be very involved in their child's education by observing their children during the day when possible and meeting with staff. Family members are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions.

Teachers and administrators use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication; and information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds as they wish to share. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences. Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year. Program staff communicate with families on at least a

regular basis regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the wellbeing of their children. Family teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as when either party requests. At least one Family Night is held during the year. Preschool staff rely on personal contact, notes home, emails, phone calls, newsletters, and bulletin boards as alternatives means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

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

1. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keeping the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child allows the teacher to be more responsive to your child's needs.
2. Attend family meetings.
3. Return all forms, questionnaires and other materials promptly.
4. Attend Family/Teacher conferences in the Fall and Spring semesters.
5. Take time to read the family bulletin board.
6. Check your child's backpack each day.
7. Participate in field trip activities.
8. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken.
9. Share any of your family's' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
10. Read all the material sent home with your child.
11. Help with special events. Helping takes many different forms such as preparation of materials at home, making telephone calls, preparing or posting flyers, recruiting other volunteers, collecting donations or prizes, run errands, photography, setup before the event, or clean afterwards.

### **Home Visits**

Home visits are made prior to the start of school. This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child's needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you'd like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with either the classroom teacher or administrator.

### **Family Teacher Conferences**

The preschool program will have formal family teacher conferences in the fall and spring. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together you can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

### **Family Night**

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

### **Transitions**

**QPPS 7.9, 7.10**

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool staff will provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Maquoketa Community Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

### **Health and Immunization Certificates**

#### **QPPS 5.1**

When a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

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 religious exemption.

### **Health and Safety Records**

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in each preschool'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.

#### **QPPS 10.10**

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

#### **QPPS 5.1**

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;
4. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
5. 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);
6. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures,

orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support; and **QPPS 10.14**

7. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implement a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

### **General Health and Safety Guidelines**

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.
- All staff are to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times. **QPPS 5.4**

### **Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children**

**QPPS 5.3**

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 F
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- pink eyes with drainage
- cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge

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

- Fever free for 24 hours, without fever reducing medication
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- 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. 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, the child's parents will be notified. When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other person authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child's physician.

### **Reporting Communicable Diseases**

**QPPS 5.4**

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

### **Medication Policies and Procedures**

### **QPPS 5.10**

**Policy:** The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

**Procedure:** Medication is administered during school hours only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Persons who would administer medication have specific training and a written performance evaluation, updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five 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. Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

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

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the teaching staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a physician or other person legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications. Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant container that is locked and prevents spillage.

A medication log will be maintained by the school staff to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication.

### **Cleaning and Sanitization**

### **QPPS 9.11**

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using a non-toxic solution of one tablespoon household bleach to one quart of tap water made fresh daily. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. The bleach solution will be left on for at least 2 minutes before it is wiped off with a clean paper towel, or it may be allowed to air dry. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

**QPPS 5.24**

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and a checklist will be completed during each cleaning. Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children.

**Classroom Animals and Pets**

**QPPS 5.26**

Classroom pets and other animals can offer important teaching experiences for young children. If you, as a parent or legal guardian want to bring your family pet to share with your child's classroom, you are welcome to do so. The animal should appear to be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animal is fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and suitable for contact with children. Documentation must be given to the teacher prior to the visit. The teacher would ensure staff and children practice good hygiene and hand washing when coming into contact with the animal and after coming into contact with the animal. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Any children allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles are not allowed because of the risk for salmonella. The classroom teacher is responsible for checking that requirements have been met.

**Hand Washing Practices**

**QPPS 5.8**

Frequent hand washing is key to prevent 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 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; and

Adults also wash their hands

- before and after feeding a child;
- before and after administering medication;
- after assisting a child with toileting; and
- after handling garbage or cleaning

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include

- using liquid soap and running water;
- rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water).

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for handwashing 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 used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

### **First Aid Kit**

### **QPPS 9.13**

A first aid kit is located in the preschool classroom in a readily accessible location. It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa. Following each use of the First Aid kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The First Aid kit will be inspected monthly. The first aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

### **Fire Safety**

### **QPPS 9.14**

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classroom with a tag indicating its annual service date. 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. Fire drills are conducted 3 times a year, and recorded on a log.

### **Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents**

### **QPPS 10.13**

Each preschool center has in place a "Safety Procedures Booklet." This booklet will be posted by the telephone. The booklet will be reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made to it.

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, our teacher will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Any incident or injuries will be documented on an "Injury and Illness" form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

All staff will have immediate access to a device that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, Hospital, and Poison Control will be posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers, and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event that the Maquoketa schools must be closed due to bad weather, we will notify school patrons through our student/family messenger system. If school is delayed in the morning, there will be no morning class, and if an early dismissal for the afternoon is announced prior to noon, there will be no afternoon class.

### **Smoke Free Facility**

**QPPS 9.19**

In compliance with the Iowa Smokefree Air Act of 2008, Maquoketa Community Preschool buildings and grounds are smoke free. A “No Smoking” sign meeting the law’s requirements is posted at the entrance to the preschool building to inform people that they are entering a non-smoking place. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children.

### **Child Protection Policies**

**QPPS 10.8, 10.16, 10.19**

The health and wellbeing of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An applicant or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the preschool program involves direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The district has written school board policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. All teaching staff complete “Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse” at least every five years and within six months of employment.

### **Volunteers**

Please contact the teacher or center director if you would like to be a school volunteer. If a volunteer works more than 40 hours per month with children, he/she will also need to provide a current health assessment, not more than one year old.

### **STAFF**

**QPPS 10.15 - 10.20**

#### **General Information**

The Maquoketa Community School district has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and a current health assessment. Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, health-assessment records,

documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a secure location.

**Health Assessment**

The preschool program maintains current health information from documented health assessments for all paid preschool staff and for all volunteers who work more than 40 hours per month and have contact with children. A current health assessment (not more than one-year-old) is received by the program before an employee starts work or before a volunteer has contact with children. The health assessment is updated every two years.

**Staff development activities**

**QPPS 6.6, 10.15**

Professional development will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program. Providers include the Maquoketa School District, Child Care Resource and Referral, Clinton/Jackson County Empowerment, and Mississippi Bend AEA. Staff are expected to attend all staff trainings and meetings throughout the year. Professional development training including special education practices and strategies are held throughout the school year.

**Questions about the Maquoketa Community School District Preschool Programs can be directed to Program Director, Sherri Walker, via email at [swalker@maquoketaschools.org](mailto:swalker@maquoketaschools.org) or at 652-5157.**