

***Fremont-Mills
Community School
District***



**2023-2024
Early Childhood Center
Preschool Handbook**

Fremont-Mills Early Childhood Center

Preschool Handbook

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Fremont-Mills Community School District

1114 US Hwy 275 * PO Box 310

Tabor, Iowa 51653

Website: www.fremontmills.org

School Mascot: Knight

School Colors: Black and Gold

School Conference: Corner

School Motto: "Developing the Potential of All"

The following phone numbers will connect you with Fremont-Mills Community Schools:

712-629-2325 * 712-629-6265 * 712-629-6555

The fax number is 712-629-5155.

After calling any of these numbers, you will hear an automated message with directions. Some of the more frequently called extensions for preschool families are below.

Michelle Gillespie's Classroom: #152

Elementary Office: #100

Elementary Principal: #101

Kitchen: #310

Abby Bowden's Classroom: #154

Nurse's Office: #102

Superintendent: #206

Bus Barn: #404

FREMONT-MILLS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Fremont-Mills Community School District, in a partnership with families and communities, is to develop the potential of all students to become life-long learners and responsible citizens.

FREMONT-MILLS CORE BELIEFS

We believe all children/students can learn.

We believe all children learn better in an environment they perceive as safe and caring.

We believe the learning process is a shared responsibility of family, school, and community.

We believe a major key in developing student potential is a committed staff.

We believe school, community, and parents should provide opportunities for and encourage a diverse, well-rounded educational experience.

We believe the ability to adapt to new and changing situations is an essential learning and life skill.

FREMONT-MILLS PRESCHOOL PERSONNEL

ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent: David Gute
Elementary Principal: Allyson Forney
Secondary Principal: Kurt Hanna

Board Secretary/Business Manager: Katie VanMeter
Technology Coordinator: AEA

CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Preschool: Abby Bowden and Michelle Gillespie
Special Education: Abby Bowden, Michelle Gillespie, Hilary Miller
Title I Reading: Erika Mischke and Debra Wake

CLASSROOM PARAPROFESSIONAL STAFF

Katlin Crawford
Lisa Dodson
Summer Doty
Brenda McCollum
Cayla McCollum
Megan Neumann

BUILDING PERSONNEL

Secretary: Charlene Morgan
Nurse: Erika Mitchell
Teacher Librarian/Media Specialist: Debra Wake
Custodians: Director Dan Blackburn, Mike Forney, Erika Minikus, Cameron Pitcher
Cooks: Director Teresa Smith, Joyce Drescher, Val Greenfield, Cameron Pitcher, Mindy Raymond, Corinne Schoening
Bus/Van Drivers: Director Curtis Riley, Paul Bloedel, JC Chambers, Tamara Gordon, Tony Loudon, Ray Moreland, Randy Moyer

GREEN HILLS AREA EDUCATION AGENCY PERSONNEL

School-based Interventionist: Tonya Billingsley
Special Education Representative: Samantha Wilson
Early Access: Christy Watkins, Margaret Woodruff, and Jessica O'Dell
Early Childhood Consultant: Ami Leath
Speech/Language Pathologist: Tracey Lorang w/Mary Wilson
Occupational Therapist: Kelsey Owens
Physical Therapist: Patsy Schimmel
Audiologist and Audiometrist: Regina Mieska and Melanie Sifford
Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing: Mollie Frazier

OPENING STATEMENTS

Equal Educational Opportunity

The Fremont-Mills Community School District Board of Educators will not discriminate in its educational activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, socioeconomic status, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status. The board requires all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school district to subscribe to all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations pertaining to contract compliance and equal opportunity. The board is committed to the policy that no otherwise qualified person will be excluded from educational activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, socioeconomic status, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. Further, the board affirms the right of all students and staff to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm, and harassment.

Students who feel they have been discriminated against are encouraged to report it to the school district Affirmative Action Coordinator. The Affirmative Action Coordinator is Superintendent, Mr. David Gute and can be reached at 712-629-2325, ext. 206. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037, Kansas City, MO 64114, (816) 268-0550, or the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA, 50319-0146, (515) 281-5294.

The school district, in its educational program, has a process to assist students experiencing behavior and learning difficulties. The Knight Pride Team is responsible for this process and includes all students, Preschool – Grade 12. Representatives from the Green Hills Area Education Agency may also assist the school district in this process. Parents wanting access to this process should contact the building principal.

The district has designated Ms. Stefanie Shaw to be the homeless liaison. Please contact Ms. Shaw with questions and/or family concerns at sshaw@fmontabor.org.

Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policy

Harassment and bullying of students and employees are against federal, state and local policy, and are not tolerated by the board. The board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the board has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students by other students, by school employees, and by volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school or school district.

The board prohibits harassment, bullying, hazing, or any other victimization of students, based on any of the following actual or perceived traits or characteristics, including but not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual

orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status. Harassment against employees based upon the employee's race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age or disability is also prohibited.

This policy is in effect while students or employees are on property within the jurisdiction of the board; while in school-owned or school-operated vehicles; while attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school or school district.

Jurisdictional and Behavioral Expectations Statement

This handbook is an extension of board policy and is a reflection of the goals and objectives of the school board. The board, administration, and employees expect students to conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity and with respect and consideration for the rights of others. The school reserves and retains the right to modify, eliminate, or establish school district policies, rules, regulations, and student handbook provisions as circumstances warrant, including those contained in this handbook. Students or parents with questions or concerns may contact school administrators for information about the current enforcement of policies, rules, regulations, or student handbooks of the school district.

Public Conduct on School Premises

The board expects that students, employees, and visitors will treat each other with respect, engage in responsible behavior, exercise self-discipline and model fairness, equity and respect. Individuals violating this policy will be subject to discipline. Students will be disciplined consistent with the student conduct policies. Employees will be disciplined consistent with employee discipline policies and laws. Others will be subject to discipline according to this policy.

Individuals are permitted to attend school sponsored or approved activities or visit school premises only as guests of the school district, and, as a condition, they must comply with the school district's rules and policies. Individuals will not be allowed to interfere with or disrupt the education program or activity. Visitors, like the participants, are expected to display mature, responsible behavior. The failure of individuals to do so is not only disruptive but embarrassing to the students, the school district, and the entire community.

To protect the rights of students to participate in the education program or activities without fear of interference or disruption and to permit the school officials, employees, and activity sponsors and officials to perform their duties without interference or disruption, the following provisions are in effect:

- Abusive, verbal or physical conduct of individuals directed at students, school officials, employees, officials, and activity sponsors of sponsored or approved activities or at other individuals will not be tolerated.

- Verbal or physical conduct of individuals that interferes with the performance of students, school officials, employees, officials and activity sponsors of sponsored or approved activities will not be tolerated.
- The use of vulgar, obscene or demeaning expression directed at students, school officials, employees, officials and activity sponsors of sponsored or approved activities will not be tolerated.
- If an individual becomes physically or verbally abusive, uses vulgar, obscene or demeaning expression, or in any way interrupts an activity, the individual may be removed from the event by the individual in charge of the event. Law enforcement may be contacted for assistance.
- Individuals removed from school premises have the ability to follow the board's chain of command and complaint policies should they choose to do so. The exclusion is in effect should the individual choose to appeal the decision of the superintendent. The term "individual" as used in the policy also includes students and employees. If an individual has been notified of exclusion and thereafter tries to enter a school building or attends a sponsored or approved activity, the individual will be advised that his/her attendance will result in prosecution. The school district may obtain a court order for permanent exclusion from the school building or from future school sponsored or approved activities.

Definitions

In this handbook, the word "parent" also means "guardian" unless otherwise stated. An administrator's title, such as superintendent or principal, also means that individual's designee unless otherwise stated. The term "school grounds" includes the school district facilities, school district property, property within the jurisdiction of the school district or school district premises, school-owned or school-operated buses or vehicles and chartered buses. The term "school facilities" includes school district buildings and vehicles. The term "school activities" means all school activities in which students are involved, whether they are school-sponsored or school-approved, whether they are an event or an activity, or whether they are held on or off school grounds.

PRESCHOOL WELCOME (QPPS 10.1)

The Fremont-Mills Community Preschool Program has been in existence since the fall of 1999. In 2010, the Fremont-Mills School District was awarded the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant. The program's goal is to provide a high quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. The preschool provides a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected, and cared for. This is an opportunity for all three- and four-year-old children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build readiness skills. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and teachers' instructional practices. This program also serves children on Individualized Education Plans (IEP) that are transitioning from Early Access Services into the public school system. The preschool program received on-site verification in March 2012 of meeting all Iowa

Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS), administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The preschool program continues to receive certification every year from the Iowa Department of Education by meeting state reporting requirements for IQPPS. The preschool program also received 5-Star ratings in 2012 and 2015 through the Quality Rating Scale (QRS) administered by the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS).

PRESCHOOL MISSION, CORE BELIEFS, AND GOALS (QPPS 10.1)

Preschool Mission

The mission of the Fremont-Mills Community School District, in partnership with families and communities, is to develop the potential of all students to become life-long learners and responsible citizens.

Preschool Core Beliefs

Each child is a unique individual and will be valued and appreciated as such.
Student learning is the most important element of our 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.
Leaders never lose sight of best practice.
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.

Preschool Goals for Children

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

Preschool 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 to read and write.
Families will advocate for their children.

PRESCHOOL HOURS AND TUITION

Programs	Days of Week with Hours of Day	Monthly Tuition
Three-year-olds	Tuesdays/Thursdays 8:15am - 11:15am	\$50 *If enrolled in Fremont-Mills Early Childhood Daycare with a current contract (not drop-in), there is no charge for preschool
Four-year-olds	Mondays: 9:45am - 3:15pm Wednesdays/Fridays: 8:15am - 3:15pm	No Charge
Lunch Cost for Preschool		\$2.75/meal

Four-year old classes meet four days a week. Monday sessions run 9:45am – 3:15pm and Wednesday/Friday sessions run 8:15am - 3:15pm. Three-year old classes meet two days a week, from 8:15am to 11:15am. Preschool students will begin school the Tuesday after Labor Day and dismiss for summer break a few days prior to the K-12 dismissal date.

Inclement Weather

In the event that Fremont-Mills Community Schools must be closed due to inclement weather, school patrons will be notified through the school district's app. You might also be notified by mass texting and emailing (must request this service), local TV stations, and radio stations. If there is a late start for the district, there will be a late start for four-year-olds on Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays and NO PRESCHOOL for three-year-olds on Tuesdays/Thursdays. The childcare center will remain open on most "snow days" except when weather causes dangerous driving situations for staff and families.

ENROLLMENT

Eligibility

Children must be three or four years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year. Prior to participating in 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. A lead screening is required by the Fremont-Mills School District for all preschool students, and a dental screening is highly encouraged.

Pre-registration will begin in the spring of each year at the Fremont-Mills Annual Spring Roundup. Families attending Spring Roundup will be given attendance priority, including out-of-district families, if it is such that there are ample preschool slots available following Roundup. If there are not ample preschool slots, then a waiting list will be created following Spring Roundup. Students residing within the Fremont-Mills School District receive priority over students residing out of the district. Registration is not finalized until the first part of August when Fall Registration is held for the entire school district. The guidelines concerning the prioritization of preschool students are as follows:

First Priority: Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Second Priority: Students who are four and five years old.

Third Priority: Students who are three years old.

Overarching Priority: Students who reside in the Fremont-Mills School District.

Enrollment materials are available from the elementary office. Registration will be ongoing until all spaces are filled. The district has two licensed teachers, teaching in classrooms right next to each other, and classroom space will be shared between teachers and students. The district reserves the right to assign students to either classroom teacher. Parent requests for teachers will not be needed.

Teacher/Student Ratio (QPPS 10.4)

Age Range	Preschool Ratio
3-year-olds	1:8
4-year-olds	1:10

Our preschool classrooms maintain a ratio of 1 adult to 8 three-year-old children and 1 adult to 10 four-year-old children at all times. Additional staff may be provided based on the individual needs of children. Classroom student numbers will not exceed 16 for three-year-olds and not exceed 20 for four-year-olds.

Attendance

Students who are enrolled for classes at Fremont-Mills Preschool are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Please call the elementary office with the reason for an absence no later than 8:30am. For safety's sake, if a student is absent without notification, the office or preschool staff may attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

Suggested Clothing Attire

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. Families will be asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of a toileting accident, spill of any sort, or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Inclusion (QPPS 9.10)

The preschool program includes 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 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.

Toilet Learning (QPPS 5.5)

Preschool staff will assist the parents in helping with toilet training for children enrolled in the preschool programs. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the program makes sure that the following procedures are in place:

- a. For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper has an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit.
- b. Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.

Staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces:

- c. At least every two hours when children are awake
- d. And when children awaken.
- e. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
- f. Staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
- g. Each changing area is separated by a partial wall or at least three feet from other areas that children use and is used exclusively for one designated group of children.
- h. At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child when being changed on an elevated surface.

In the changing area, staff

- i. Post changing procedures and
- j. Follow changing procedures.
- k. These procedures are used to evaluate teaching staff who change diapers.
- l. Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
- m. Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can).

- n. Containers are kept closed and are not accessible to children.
- o. Staff members whose primary function is preparing food do not change diapers until their food preparation duties are completed for the day.

Children's Records (QPPS 4.1, 5.1)

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including AEA and school employees, who have a legitimate educational interest, are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular office hours. Parents may also file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they feel their rights regarding their child's records have been violated. For a complete copy of the school district's policy on student records or the procedure for filing a complaint, contact the elementary principal.

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.

Nurturing Families as Advocates for their Children (QPPS 7.5, 7.6, 10.15)

Open and honest communication between families and the early childhood staff 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 high quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern directly with your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for assistance from the elementary principal.

As part of our program assessment, we offer each family the opportunity to provide written input which will help us evaluate our program. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program. If at any time you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the elementary principal who is the program administrator for the preschool. If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the superintendent of Fremont-Mills Community Schools.

STAFF

General Information (QPPS 10.11, 10.12)

The Fremont-Mills School District has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, benefits, resignation, termination, and grievance procedures. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring.

Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references, and a current health assessment.

Who Works In the Preschool

Program Administrator (QPPS 10.2, 10.3) Allyson Forney

The elementary principal is designated as the program administrator supervising the early childhood programs. The principal meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Teachers (QPPS 6.2) Abby Bowden, Michelle Gillespie

A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an Early Childhood Special Education endorsement is assigned to a preschool classroom.

Teacher Paraprofessionals (QPPS 6.3) Katlin Crawford, Lisa Dodson, Summer Doty, Cayla McCollum, Megan Neumann

Classroom paraprofessionals are present in the preschool classroom as needed for teacher/student ratio. They carry out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The paraprofessionals will have specialized training in early childhood education.

School Nurse (QPPS 5.1, 10.8) Erika Mitchell

The preschool programs will have the assistance of the school nurse. The certified RN is available part time. She maintains student health records by updating them quarterly, and attends to the health needs of the students while at school. She is available for parent consultation when necessary.

Support Staff (QPPS 8.2)

Green Hills Area Education Agency's personnel provides resources and assistance to the preschool teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include the following: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, behavior consultant, occupational therapist, physical therapist, school psychologist, and others.

Volunteers (QPPS 10.11)

Parents, grandparents, friends, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. 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. 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. People interested in volunteering should contact the preschool staff or elementary principal.

Orientation (QPPS 6.1)

Employees must know their role and duties. New staff will be required to participate in an initial orientation program that introduces them to fundamental aspects of the program operation including:

- Program mission, philosophy, and goals
- Program policies and procedures
- Expectations for ethical conduct
- Health, safety, and emergency procedures
- Child abuse and neglect reporting procedures
- Individual needs of children

- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria
- Program curriculum
- Daily activities and routines of the program
- Regulatory requirements

Follow-up training expands on the initial orientations. The employee's immediate supervisor should provide the new employee with a review of the employee's responsibilities and duties. The school business manager will explain payroll procedures, employee benefit programs and accompanying forms to the employee. Regular employees ineligible for the school district's group health plan will be given information regarding where they can obtain healthcare or healthcare insurance.

Ethics and Confidentiality (QPPS 4.1, 6.1)

Staff members 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 regarding any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

All staff will receive training on ethics and confidentiality on the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct as part of their orientation. Each staff member will sign a Statement of Commitment to document their willingness to hold close the values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood education.

Staffing Patterns and Schedule (QPPS 4.6, 4.7, 10.4, 10.13)

The preschool program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our program follows requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 with four-year-olds and 1:8 with three-year-olds at all times. The program administrator will maintain lists of current substitutes for preschool teachers and classroom paraprofessionals in case of an absence.

Staff are provided space and time away from children during the day. Should staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff are provided breaks of at least 15 minutes in each four-hour period. In addition, staff may request temporary relief when they are unable to perform their duties. Every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, the preschool staff has an extended planning time. The preschool team meets multiple times each week to discuss and review student observations and anecdotal notes to enable them to plan for instruction.

Professional Development Activities (QPPS 6.4, 6.5, 8.4, 10.11)

Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. All teaching staff continuously strengthen their leadership skills and relationships with others and work to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community, and beyond. Teaching staff are encouraged to participate in informal and formal ways in local, state, or regional public-awareness activities. They may join an early childhood group or organization, attend meetings, or share information with others both at and outside the program.

Teaching staff will be informed of professional development activities provided by Child Care Resource and Referral, local Early Childhood Iowa Areas, and the Green Hills Area Education Agency. Staff members are expected to attend required training and meetings throughout the year. Training will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program and community.

Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan (QPPS 6.6, 10.14)

All staff are evaluated at least annually by the elementary principal. Staff also evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflections and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. From this, they develop an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and use it to inform their continuous professional development.

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND ADULT/CHILD INTERACTION

Curriculum (QPPS 1.7, Standard 2)

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. The preschool staff use this framework to organize lessons and activities by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually modified as needed to align with the Iowa Early Learning Standards and to make learning fun and exciting.

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

The preschool program uses research and evidence based curricula which are designed for preschool aged children. More specifically, the four-year-old program uses *Connect For Learning* (C4L) which is a research-based, interdisciplinary, holistic, playful curriculum designed around learning trajectories. It focuses on four main domains of learning (social-emotional, literacy, math, and science). Furthermore, the C4L curriculum aligns with our *MyTeachingStrategies GOLD* online assessment tool, so

physical, language, and cognitive areas are also very much a part of the curriculum. Both the three- and four-year-old programs also use and incorporate the *Handwriting Without Tears Curriculum* into their classroom learning. The three-year old program primarily uses *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* as the curriculum basis for its program. Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning. It addresses all areas of early learning including social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, math, and science. Other research based curricula, such as *Read It Again*, specific phonological awareness based curricula, or specific social skills curricula will also be used, depending on the needs of the students and desired outcomes.

Child Assessment (QPPS Standard 4, 7.3, 7.6, 8.2)

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

Guiding Principles: It is the school district's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet.

Children are assessed in a variety of ways:

- Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- *IGDIs* assessments are given to the children in the four-year-old program in the fall, winter, and spring each year to monitor the growth of early literacy skills.
- Teachers use the *MyTeachingStrategies GOLD* online assessment tool to assess and report student progress in all developmental areas (social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and math) in the fall, winter, and spring each 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.

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 through the GOLD assessment tool and/or verbal or written communication with the teacher.

The information from the above is used in the following ways:

- 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 require additional assessment.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent/Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. In addition, *MyTeachingStrategies* Individual Child Report will be shared with parents at the end of the year. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information on the assessments given, the teacher feels there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, the teacher 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 Fremont-Mills Knight Pride Team which includes staff from the Green Hills Area Education Agency as an early intervention process. This team engages in problem identification, plans interventions, provides support, and makes outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance. The Fremont-Mills Knight Pride Team is available and functional for all students and teachers in the building.
- A request made to Green Hills AEA for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing can be made. The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

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

Program Assessment (QPPS 7.5, 10.15)

The Fremont-Mills Community Preschool implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS). In the spring of 2012, the Fremont-Mills Preschool Program received on-site verification of meeting all IQPPS standards. Administrators, families, staff, and other routinely participating adults are involved annually in a program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. The annual evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. As part of our annual program assessment, we seek input from families to evaluate our program through a questionnaire. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program. The staff members use this information to plan professional development and program quality-improvement activities as well as to improve operations and policies.

Child Guidance and Discipline (QPPS Standard 1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6)

Staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, and 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. Staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property, and learn to be responsible for their actions. Staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn-taking.

Challenging Behavior

Staff members are trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful when dealing with student behaviors. The staff anticipates and takes steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors, staff promotes 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.

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, 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. Staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

Permissible Methods of Discipline:

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting/scratching/hitting), staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Prohibited Practices

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

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

Supervision Policy (QPPS 3.7, 9.2, 9.7)

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 frequently on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, etc.). Indoor and outdoor spaces will be zoned by teaching staff with special attention given to areas where injury could occur.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Arrival Procedures (QPPS 10.9)

Buses (which 4-year-olds are allowed to ride) will drop students off in the Lied Parking Lot, which is located behind the school.

Parents with preschool-age children may drop students off at the north entrance of the early childhood center and are welcome to escort their child into the building to the preschool classroom.

Students can enter the building after 8:05am and proceed directly to their classrooms.

Dismissal Procedures (QPPS 10.9)

At dismissal for the 3-year-old programs, we ask that parents park in the parking lot north of the early childhood center. Preschool teachers will have a dismissal routine where children are either outside waiting for parents (weather permitting) or waiting in the north hallway just inside the north doors of the early childhood center. Children will be dismissed upon parent arrival.

At dismissal for the 4-year-old programs, buses will park in the Lied Parking Lot to load students at the end of each day.

Parents will pick up children OF ALL AGES in front of the school building. Parents will enter through the west entrance from Highway 275. Parents MUST YIELD to school buses at all times.

Students will only be allowed to enter through the passenger side of the vehicle (as opposed to the driver's side). If a parent is parked in a parking stall, the parent will need to physically meet his/her child at the parent pickup area. For safety reasons, preschool

and elementary students will not cross the driveway unless escorted by a parent/guardian.

****If at any time (arrival or dismissal) a parent needs to enter the building, please park your car in a designated parking spot and do not leave your vehicle alongside any sidewalk area, including the sidewalks directly in front of the Elementary and High School buildings. The only exception to this relates to handicapped parking needs. There are multiple parking spaces to the south, west, and north of the building.**

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization found on the Preschool Dismissal Form will be allowed to pick up a child from school. If changes need to be made, please contact the teacher or elementary office. With parental permission, changes can be made.

No child will be permitted to leave school grounds without an adult. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be permitted on the premises of the Fremont-Mills Community Schools.

Transportation (QPPS 10.9)

For children who are four years old, bus transportation is provided. If a family needs bus transportation, paperwork is completed at registration or home visits and shared with the transportation department. Parents or legal guardians are asked to keep their information current by reporting changes to the preschool teacher or elementary school secretary.

For children on an Individualized Education Plan, the district may provide specialized transportation to and from preschool at no charge. In addition, the school may provide parent-paid transportation via a school van to a home daycare program at the conclusion of the three-year-old preschool program each day. There is an additional charge for this van transportation.

Daily Routine (QPPS Standard 2, 3.1, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12)

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities:

- Large and Small Group Activities
- Learning Center Activities: *Art Center, Science Center, Writing Center, Manipulative Center, Reading Center, Block Center, Dramatic Play Center, Technology Center, Music Center, Sensory Center*
- Story Time
- Rest Time
- Music/Movement Activities
- Individual Activities
- Outdoor Activities / Large Motor Activities
- Snack Time

Throughout the day, each time children transition from one location to another, the teacher will be responsible for counting the number of children whenever leaving one area and when arriving at another to confirm the safe whereabouts of each and every child at all times.

Outside Play and Learning (QPPS 5.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 10.5)

Fremont-Mills Preschoolers have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits, provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. We use the Child Care Weather Watch Guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa and DHS to determine if the wind chill factor or heat index is safe for outdoor play. In cases when going outside is not an option, children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor play.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside, it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. When it is cold outside, he/she needs a warm coat, mittens or gloves, and a hat (labeled with your child's name). When it is snowing or snow is on the ground, your child needs snow pants and snow boots in addition to cold weather gear. For the warmer days, dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in-between days, dressing your child in layers is a practical idea. It is expected that all students will go outside unless there is a doctor's note indicating the reason why the child cannot engage in outside play.

There are a few areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. However, we encourage you to send a hat or other clothing for your child to wear as protection from the sun. Upon request, sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied to your child's exposed skin with written parental permission to do so and the product is provided. The same procedure applies for insect repellent (containing DEET) and will be applied no more than once a day to protect your child from insect bites when the public health authorities recommend its use.

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

Objects From Home

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for students, we ask that your child does not bring toys from home. If your child brings an "attachment" item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy weapons (such as guns or swords) to school. The school will not assume responsibility for lost, broken, or stolen valuables.

Weapon Policy (QPPS 10.5)

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or a look-alike weapon on any

school premises, in any school vehicle or any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any school building or other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. "Look-alike weapon" means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon.

Rest Time (QPPS 10.5)

Rest time is part of the full-day preschool routine and is a required component under the Department of Human Services regulations: "A supervised nap or quiet time for all children under the age of six not enrolled in kindergarten who are present at the center for five or more hours is required." All students are expected to rest quietly while those needing it are encouraged to sleep. Items needed for rest time include a blanket and any appropriate toy or stuffed animal. These items are kept in plastic bags in child cubbies throughout the year. Preschool staff will launder these on a weekly basis.

Snacks/Lunch/Food and Nutrition (QPPS 1.3, 5.9 - 5.17, 10.5)

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 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 not required to eat any or all the food offered; however, children are encouraged to try different types of food. Staff will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. In addition, the school district does not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior.

Snacks are served daily at a regularly scheduled time, at least two hours apart but not more than three hours apart, keeping in mind the preschool lunch schedule. Two food groups will be represented at each snack time as outlined in USDA guidelines. The center serves a wide variety of nutritional snacks and encourages children to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered. Snack possibilities are posted near the classrooms.

Lunch is served to the 4-year-old class each day. Students may choose to eat the district-provided lunch or bring their own from home. There is a refrigerator and microwave available in the preschool kitchen upon request to store and prepare food. Students are given approximately a 30-minute scheduled lunchtime.

All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Snacks brought from home (birthday celebrations, classroom parties, etc.) must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Clean, sanitary drinking water (city water source) is available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and will provide parents with that information.

High risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served to children younger than four years. These include hotdogs (whole or sliced into rounds), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Birthdays and Birthday Treats (QPPS 5.10)

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Teachers will work with families to ensure that birthday treats brought from home meet the allergy-free policy, which is located in the Health and Safety Section of this handbook. Those who have summer birthdays are welcome to choose a school day to celebrate with their class.

Parental cooperation and courtesy is respectfully requested when sending party invitations to school for distribution. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school. Too often, the students who are not included become upset, and it is not our intention to be the cause of such feelings.

Animals and Pets

If you, as a parent or legal guardian, want to bring your family pet to share with your child's classroom, you are welcome with permission from the preschool staff. The preschool teacher ensures that the animal does not create an unsafe or unsanitary condition. The animal would appear to be in good health and suitable for contact with children. The teacher ensures 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.

Visitors

Visitors are always welcome in the preschool classrooms. As a safety feature, all visitors, including parents, will enter through the front west doors of the elementary building and are required to sign in at the front office.

Field Trips (QPPS 1.1, 9.12, 10.4)

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. The Fremont-Mills Community School District's buses are used for these field trips. Plans for field trips will be communicated with parents well in advance of any trip. A parent or legal guardian must sign an informed consent form for allowing their child to attend the field trip. Adult family members may be asked to volunteer to attend field trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios. A notice posting the dates, time of departure, time of return, and the destination location will be given at least 48 hours before the field trip. Each child will be assigned to an adult for every part of the trip.

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 may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a parent chaperone or staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Communication (QPPS 1.1, 7.1, 7.4)

Fremont-Mills staff members value time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the families' expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for your child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the early childhood staff or administration at any time.

Program staff use a variety of formal and informal strategies (including conversations) to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure; their preferred means of child-rearing practices; and information families wish to share about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Program staff members communicate with families on at least a weekly basis, regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being and development of their children.

Teachers work in partnership with families, establishing and maintaining regular, ongoing, two-way communication. The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes, daily folders, informal conversations, social media, phone calls, emails, and/or texts. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Staff will inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being.

Family Participation (QPPS 7.2)

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

1. Encourage your child to look forward to his/her experiences at the FM Preschool.
2. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities;
3. Keep the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child, allowing the teacher to be more responsive to your child's needs;
4. Check your child's backpack and folder each day;
5. Read the material sent home with your child;
6. Return all forms, questionnaires, and other paperwork promptly;
7. Attend family meetings;
8. Attend Preschool Parent/Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring semesters;
9. Participate in field trip activities;
10. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as the following: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, preparing visuals, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken;
11. Share any of your families' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs;
12. 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, running errands, taking photos, setting up before an event or cleaning afterwards;
13. Volunteer to be a PTO member or an Early Childhood Advisory Committee member.

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

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

Home Visits (QPPS 2.2, 7.1)

Home visits are made prior to the start of the school year. This is an opportunity for the preschool staff to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child's needs. It also allows your child to become familiar and comfortable with his/her teacher and have any questions you may have answered. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the staff, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the staff understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you would like addressed. Parents are encouraged to

share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with preschool staff or the administrator.

Parent /Teacher Conferences (QPPS 1.1, 4.9, 7.3, 7.5)

The preschool program will have formal parent 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 Events (QPPS 7.2, 7.6)

Family events are planned throughout the year to provide opportunities for you and your family to participate in activities together. Activities may include back to school nights, classroom holiday parties, unit culminating events, and educational programs. The Fremont-Mills PTO often hosts family activities such as the annual Halloween Bash, family dances, and other family fun events.

Early Childhood Advisory Committee (QPPS 7.2)

Fremont-Mills Elementary has an Early Childhood Advisory Committee, a sub-group of the School Improvement Advisory Committee, composed of parents, school staff, and community members. This group meets up to four times a year to provide input and feedback on services for preschool and elementary age children. Please let the preschool teacher or elementary principal know if you are interested in being part of the Early Childhood Advisory Committee.

Preschool/Kindergarten Roundup (QPPS 7.6, 7.7)

Roundup is held each spring for incoming preschoolers and incoming kindergarten students. All students entering kindergarten (must be 5 years old by September 15) and all students returning to or entering preschool (must be 3 or 4 years old by September 15) are invited to attend roundup. Detailed information is sent out each spring.

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program. 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

General Health and Safety Guidelines (QPPS 5.2, 9.8, 9.11, 10.5, 10.10)

The Fremont-Mills Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and safeguarding 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 Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies, and pediatric authorities in the field.

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- Under the supervision of the teachers, 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 follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and safety procedures.
- All teaching staff complete “Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens” annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training and satisfactory completion of Pediatric CPR is always present with each class of children.

The early childhood staff will complete the following indoor and outdoor safety checklist on a regular basis:

- All safety plugs and electrical outlets covered, heat/AC, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of childrens’ reach and stored properly
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including the playground
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of environment (spills, sand, etc.)
- Serious problems will be reported to the elementary office and custodial staff
- 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

Health and Safety Records (QPPS 5.1, 10.8)

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse’s office and/or with child files located in the classroom. Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records, the child’s parent or legal guardian, and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health Records will include the following:

- a. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
- b. 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;
- c. Current emergency contact information for each child that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;
- d. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;

- e. 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);
- f. The program must follow the requirements for exclusions related to immunizations established by the Iowa Department of Public Health [IAC 641-7.3]

Physical and Immunizations (QPPS 5.1)

Before a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations.

- Physical Exam: Each child must have on file a current physical examination report signed by the doctor. The date of the physical exam shall be no more than 12 months prior to the first day of attendance and updated annually.
- Immunization Records: Each child must have on file a current immunization record. Fremont-Mills Preschool must follow the requirements for enrollment related to immunizations established by the Iowa Department of Public Health [IAC 641-7].
- Lead Screening/Dental Screening: A lead screening is also required by the Fremont-Mills School District for all preschool students, and a dental screening is highly encouraged for preschoolers. Please note the dental screening is required for kindergarten enrollment.

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.

Allergens

Parents must notify school personnel of their child's existing allergies and complete required district forms regarding allergies and reactions. Medical authorities must verify the allergies, specify foods to be omitted from the student's diet if applicable and include acceptable substitutions. In addition, it is the obligation of the student's parent or guardian to ensure that the information in the student's file is kept up-to-date with student health plans and accurate medication.

The Fremont-Mills Community School District, including the Fremont-Mills Early Childhood Center strives to be a nut-free facility. As a public school building, Fremont-Mills cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment for students nor an allergen-free area in our school. However, we ask parents and guardians in our school community for cooperation and support to make our school as safe as is reasonably possible in this regard. Due to the number of children allergic to airborne allergens we solicit parental support for the following:

***When sending snacks to school for classroom events, DO NOT send nuts, products containing nuts, or food items processed in a facility that may contain peanut dust. Additionally, it is requested NO HOMEMADE FOOD ITEMS be**

brought to the building for snacks, including class parties and birthday treats. Please send only prepackaged items that have been checked and are free of allergens that may cause anaphylactic reactions. Parents and teachers will sign a form indicating the pre-packaged item is allergen-free (to the best of their knowledge) prior to serving the snack.

Also, while we cannot mandate or dictate what students bring in their “sack lunch” from home, we do request that parents/students consider food items that are free of peanuts and peanut dust. It should be stressed that minute amounts of certain foods like peanut when ingested, touched or inhaled, can be life threatening. Allergens such as peanut/tree nut and natural rubber latex can be airborne, therefore triggering an anaphylactic reaction just by inhaling the allergen. Children have had skin reactions just from simply contacting residual peanut butter on tables wiped clean of visible material. Therefore, protection of the anaphylactic child requires the school to exercise reasonable control over all food products, not only those directly consumed by the anaphylactic student. Because we cannot guarantee sack lunches are “peanut free”, students bringing sack lunches from home will sit away from any student that has an allergy to nuts.

Medical/Dental Emergencies & Notification of Accidents/Incidents (QPPS 5.2, 5.3)

Should the incident of a serious injury or illness requiring medical or dental care take place, a staff member certified in pediatric first aid training will provide first aid and immediately notify a supervisor and/or call 911 for conditions requiring immediate medical attention. A parent or legal guardian will also be immediately contacted. In the event that the parent or legal guardian cannot be reached, the person listed under the emergency contact will be contacted. A staff member will accompany the child and remain with the child until the parent or legal guardian assumes responsibility for the child.

All staff will have immediate access to a telephone that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the Fire Department and Police Department 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.

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during his/her time at preschool, the preschool staff will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water, and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any major incident or injury will be documented on an “Accident Report” form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 school hours of the incident.

First Aid Kit (QPPS 9.12)

Fully equipped first-aid kits are readily available and maintained for each group of children. Staff take at least one kit to the outdoor and indoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children (QPPS 10.5)

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. In order to prevent the spread of disease, please keep your child home from school if he or she displays any of the following symptoms within a 24 hour period:

- Fever greater than 100 degrees F
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge
- Sore throat
- Cold sores or lesions
- Chicken Pox

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

- Fever free for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medicine)
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage
- Cold sores or lesions shows signs of healing (scabbed over)

When a child develops signs of an illness and is not feeling well enough to participate comfortably in activities during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other persons authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. If an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children, or if a child's condition is suspected to be contagious and requires exclusion as identified by public health authorities, then the child is made comfortable in a location where she or he is supervised by a familiar caregiver. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until she or he can be picked up by the family, the child is located where new individuals will not be exposed.

Reporting Communicable Diseases (QPPS 5.3)

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

Medication Policies and Procedures (QPPS 5.8)

Policy: The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited

to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

Safeguards are used with all medications for children:

- a. Staff administer both prescription and over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent or legal guardian has given the program written permission.
- b. The child's record includes instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended the medication for that child.
- c. Any administrator or teaching staff who administers medication has (a) specific training and (b) a written performance evaluation updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the six right practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. (6) The person giving the medication signs documentation of items (1) through (5) above. Teaching staff who are required to administer special medical procedures have demonstrated to a health professional that they are competent in the procedures and are guided in writing about how to perform the procedure by the prescribing health care provider.
- d. Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it.
- e. All medications are kept in a locked container.

Hand Washing Practices (QPPS 5.6)

Frequent hand washing is key to preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task. Children wash either independently or with staff assistance.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- on arrival for the day;
- after diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants);
- after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit);

- before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry);
- after playing in water that is shared by two or more people;
- after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals

Adults also wash their hands:

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

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

- Using liquid soap and running water;
- Rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including back of hand, 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 option supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any situation listed above.

- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- Staff do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material.
- In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.
- Hand hygiene with an alcohol-based sanitizer with 60% - 95% alcohol is an alternative to traditional hand-washing (for children over 24 months and adults) with soap and water when visible soiling is not present.

Standard Precautions (QPPS 5.19)

Fremont-Mills Preschool helps control the spread of infections by practicing proper hygiene and universal precautions. Children and staff wash their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap before meals, after toileting, before and after administering first aid, and throughout the day as required. Dishes and eating surfaces are sanitized daily. Toys are sanitized weekly. Floors, kitchen, and bathrooms are cleaned daily and throughout the day as required. The following procedures for standard precautions are used and include the following:

- a. Surfaces that may come in contact with potentially infectious body fluids must be disposable or made of a material that can be sanitized.
- b. Staff use barriers and techniques that minimize contact of mucous membranes or of openings in skin with potentially infectious body fluids and reduce the spread of infectious disease.
- c. When spills of body fluids occur, staff clean them up immediately with detergent followed by water rinsing.
- d. After cleaning, staff sanitize nonporous surfaces by using the procedure for sanitizing designated changing surfaces described in the Cleaning and Sanitation

Frequency Table.

- e. Staff clean rugs and carpeting by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent-disinfectant, and shampooing or steam cleaning.
- f. Staff dispose of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie that is placed in a closed container.

Water Activities (QPPS 5.7, 9.14, 10.5)

At various times of the year, there is a water table in the classroom for children to engage in learning activities through play. During water play, children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious disease. 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. Preschool children do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

Cleaning and Sanitization (QPPS 5.18, 5.19, 10.5)

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. Routine cleaning will follow the QPPS Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table.

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. When a spill of body fluid occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately. All toys and surfaces will be disinfected according to the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion is either to be washed by hand using water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized, and air dried or washed and dried in a mechanical dishwasher before it can be used by another child.

Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure to the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Nontoxic substances will be used whenever possible. Staff are trained yearly prior to the start of the school year with regards to cleaning and sanitization needs.

Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Evacuation (QPPS 10.10)

Emergency procedure plans are in place and available upon request from the program administrators. A "Crisis Management Procedures" booklet that describes multiple situations and procedures to follow is posted in each classroom near each telephone. The procedures designate an appropriate person to assume authority and take action in

an emergency when the administrator is not on site. The procedures include the following:

- a. Plans that designate how and when to either shelter in place or evacuate and that specify a location for the evacuation;
- b. Plans for handling lost or missing children, security threats, utility failure, and natural disasters;
- c. Arrangements for emergency transport and escort from the program; and,
- d. Monthly practice of evacuation procedures with yearly practice of other emergency procedures.

Fire Safety (QPPS 9.13, 10.10)

Fully working fire extinguishers, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are installed in each classroom and are tagged and serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly, and a written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available.

Protection from Hazards/Environmental Health (QPPS 9.11, 10.5)

Program staff protect children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping or slipping.

The early childhood center periodically undergoes testing for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, and other hazards that could impact children's health. Documentation is on file. The program has written procedures to protect children and adults from these environmental hazards, according to Public Health requirements. Custodial staff maintain the building's heating, cooling, and ventilation systems in compliance with national standards for facility use by children.

Smoke Free Facility (QPPS 9.15, 10.5)

In compliance with the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act of 2008, Fremont-Mills school buildings and grounds are entirely smoke free. A "No Smoking" sign meeting the law's requirements is posted at the main entrances to the school building to inform people they are entering a non-smoking place. Smoking is not allowed on the school grounds, within sight of any children, or in the presence of any children.

Child Protection Policies (QPPS 6.1, 10.6, 10.7, 10.12)

The health and well being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An applicant or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the Fremont-Mills School District involving direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must submit to a background check. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The program has written school board policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures 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 three years and within six months of employment.

The school district does not tolerate employees physically abusing, sexually abusing, or harassing students. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, legal guardians, teacher, principal, or another employee. The Iowa Department of Education has established a two-step procedure for investigating allegations of physical or sexual abuse of students by employees. That procedure requires the school district to designate an independent investigator to look into the allegations. The school district has designated Allyson Forney, Elementary Principal, as the Level I Investigator.