North Mahaska Elementary

4 YO PRESCHOOL



# NORTH MAHASKA PRESCHOOL

# PARENT HANDBOOK

# 2026-2027

# Welcome to North Mahaska!

## Preschool Philosophy

The North Mahaska Early Childhood Preschool Program is designed to provide a research-based curriculum that is intentionally planned, engaging, challenging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, and focused on positive outcomes for all children.

Our program supports children's growth and learning across all areas of development, including social-emotional, cognitive, physical, and language development, while also recognizing and responding to the needs of families. Through a carefully designed learning environment that includes nurturing adults, positive peer interactions, and meaningful learning experiences, children develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence needed for future success in school and life.

A variety of instructional approaches are used to maximize learning opportunities. These approaches range from teacher-directed to child-directed experiences and from structured to unstructured activities. Children learn best through active engagement with adults, peers, materials, and their environment. We recognize that learning is an interactive process and strive to meet the diverse needs of all learners by fostering understanding, respect, and appreciation for individual differences.

The preschool program is guided by ongoing formal and informal assessments that help teachers monitor each child's learning and development. Assessment information is gathered in partnership with families and with respect for the cultural backgrounds and experiences of each child. Results are used to make informed decisions about instruction, support individual student growth, and continuously improve the overall preschool program.

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a high-quality, developmentally appropriate preschool program that fosters the academic, social, emotional, physical, and language development of every child. We believe that all children are capable learners and that early learning experiences lay the foundation for future success. Through early identification, intervention, and instruction provided by highly qualified educators, we strive to meet the unique needs of each child and ensure that every learner has access to engaging, meaningful, and supportive educational opportunities.

## Program Goals

- To provide high-quality and age-appropriate curriculum, instruction, and assessment, which emphasize direct interaction with materials, with adults, and with other children.
- To emphasize early childhood literacy, cognitive development, physical skills, and social-emotional development.
- To involve children in setting meaningful and accessible learning goals, selecting and managing their learning, and assessing their learning.
- To employ a wide variety of instructional approaches to ensure that the learning levels and individual styles of children are accommodated.
- To maintain class sizes at the primary level to twenty or below.
- To increase parent involvement in our school and parent knowledge of age-appropriate learning.

## Curriculum Overview

North Mahaska Preschool is committed to providing a high-quality, evidence-based curriculum that supports the growth and development of every child. Research shows that a well-planned curriculum, implemented by qualified educators using developmentally appropriate practices, contributes significantly to positive outcomes for young learners. In alignment with federal and state expectations, our program utilizes research-based instructional practices and ongoing assessment to ensure curriculum effectiveness and continuous improvement.

The North Mahaska Preschool curriculum is designed to meet the developmental needs of young children while fostering growth in social-emotional, cognitive, physical, and language development. Instruction is aligned with the Iowa Early Learning Standards and incorporates assessment practices that monitor and support each child's progress.

North Mahaska Preschool utilizes Creative Curriculum as its foundational framework for teaching and learning. In addition, the program implements Fundations and Heggerty to support the development of early literacy, phonological awareness, and foundational language skills. Together, these research-based programs provide engaging, meaningful learning experiences that prepare children for future academic success.

---

# Program Information

## Eligibility Requirements

North Mahaska Community School District offers preschool through the Iowa Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP). Children are eligible to enroll if they are four years of age on or before September 15 of the school year in which they will attend preschool, as established by Iowa law.

## Enrollment Requirements

The following items must be completed and returned to North Mahaska Elementary School as part of the enrollment process:

**Required Forms and Documentation:**

- Health Form (physical examination record)
- Immunization Record signed by a physician or public health official
    - Iowa law requires that all students be properly immunized prior to entering preschool.
    - Medical and religious exemptions are permitted only with appropriate documentation provided prior to the first day of attendance.
- Student Information Sheet, Parental Emergency Medical Consent, and Release Forms
    - These forms provide essential contact and medical information to be used in the event of illness or injury.
    - It is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to ensure all emergency contact information remains current and to notify the school of any changes.
    - In the event of serious illness or injury, this authorization allows emergency medical treatment to be administered if a parent/guardian is not present. This consent remains in effect until formally revoked in writing.
- North Mahaska School District Enrollment Forms (completed online through the district website)

- Food and/or Medical Allergy Form (if applicable)
- Proof of Date of Birth
    - Please do not submit a copy or electronic image of the child's birth certificate, as Iowa law does not permit schools to retain copies of birth certificates.
    - Examples of Acceptable Proof:
        - Original or certified copy of the child's birth certificate (reviewed by school staff; no copies will be retained by the school)
        - Valid passport
        - Hospital birth record
        - Adoption record or court-issued document verifying the child's date of birth
    - **All documents are used solely for verification purposes and are returned to the parent/guardian after review when applicable.*

All required documentation must be completed and submitted before a child may begin attending preschool.

## Preschool Sessions

Preschool classes meet Monday through Thursday in either the morning session (8:15–11:20 AM) or the afternoon session (12:15–3:20 PM). There are no classes on Fridays. The number of enrolled students will determine the number of class sections offered.

Parents may request either the morning or afternoon preschool session; however, class sizes are limited to a maximum of 20 students per session. To ensure the safety, well-being, and quality care of all children, our program strictly adheres to state requirements regarding group sizes and supervision. We maintain a maximum ratio of 20 students to 2 adults (10:1) during all preschool sessions. This minimum ratio is maintained at all times, including during classroom instruction, indoor play, outdoor activities, and routine transitions. *Please note that a request for a particular session does not guarantee placement.

If enrollment requests exceed available space, the district will use the Preschool Enrollment Matrix as a guiding tool for placement decisions. Final determination of student placement in AM or PM sessions is made at the discretion of school staff and administration in order to ensure balanced and appropriate class sizes.

Preschool follows the North Mahaska School District calendar for holidays and Spring Break. Schedule adjustments will be made for teacher in-service days and early dismissal days as determined by the North Mahaska Elementary Principal in conjunction with the preschool staff. Parents will be notified in advance of any schedule changes.

## School Delays, Closures, and Early Dismissals

Should weather conditions or other emergency conditions make it impossible to hold school or cause a delay or early dismissal, an announcement will be made through the Student Information System (PowerSchool) powered by *School Messenger*. A text message will be sent to each parent/guardian listed for each student.

The school will also use the following media outlets to communicate weather or emergency-related cancellations, delays, or dismissals:

- KBOE (104.9) Oskaloosa
- WHO - Channel 5
- KCCI - Channel 8
- WHO - Channel 13
- Facebook

- nmwarhawks.org
- KMZM (740) Oskaloosa

Announcements will be made as early in the morning as possible.

If school is dismissed because of inclement weather after the school day has begun, parents are notified by the same means. The superintendent determines whether buses will follow the regular routes. If the buses do not follow the regular routes, they follow emergency routes, or the parents are responsible for picking up the students at the students' school.

Extracurricular activities or practices scheduled for the day or evening of a day when school is canceled or dismissed early are generally canceled and rescheduled. The Principal and/or Athletic Director may determine whether to hold extracurricular activities or practice.

***If school is delayed, AM Preschool will be cancelled for that day.**

## Transportation

Morning preschool students may be picked up from their homes along a regular bus route. At the end of the morning session, students may also be transported home by school bus or school vehicle.

Afternoon preschool students may be picked up from their homes by a school bus or school vehicle. At the conclusion of the afternoon session, students may be transported home via the regular bus route.

Preschool students who do not reside within the North Mahaska School District must be transported by their parent or guardian to and from designated North Mahaska pick-up and drop-off locations. Transportation to and from these sites is the responsibility of the family.

To ensure student safety, North Mahaska requires an adult to be present at all drop-off locations. The adult should present themselves and make visual contact with the driver. If a parent/adult is not at the drop-off location, the student will be transported back to the school, where the parents will be responsible for pick-up at the conclusion of the route.

For any questions regarding transportation, please contact:

**Bryan Kime, Transportation Coordinator**
**Email:** kimeb@nmwarhawks.org
**Phone:** (641)637-2864

# Family Partnerships

## Communication

Ongoing two-way communication between the preschool teacher and parents is an important part of preschool and one of the many ways we ensure success for your child. Here are some ways you can expect to communicate this year:

- Annual Home Visits
- Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Program Surveys

- Parent / Student Questionnaires
- Phone calls
- Newsletters
- Remind-App

We encourage you to reach out anytime you have any questions, concerns, or things to share about your child. Your child's teacher will be communicating with you throughout the year in efforts to:

- Provide opportunities for two-way communication about your child
- Share assessment results
- Provide information for academic support at home
- Obtain feedback in efforts to meet your child's needs at preschool

## Home Visits

As part of the Statewide Volunteer Preschool Program Grant, preschool staff are required to offer opportunities for home-based or family connection visits prior to the start of the school year. These visits are designed to help teaching staff get to know your child and family in a familiar, comfortable setting and to begin building a positive school-to-home relationship.

Preschool staff is excited to meet you and your child! Ideally, these visits take place before school begins and provide a meaningful way for staff to learn more about each child's interests, routines, and needs.

To support family preference and scheduling needs, families may choose from the following options:

- **Home Visit:** A preschool teacher will visit your home at a mutually agreed-upon time.
- **Alternative Community Location:** Families may select a neutral location in the community if that better meets their needs.

Families are encouraged to participate in one of these connection opportunities. If a family is unable or prefers not to participate in a home visit, an alternative option listed above will be arranged to ensure meaningful contact prior to the start of school.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

North Mahaska has established specific dates and times for Parent-Teacher Conferences each school year. Preschool conferences may be scheduled during these designated conference times; however, preschool staff may also arrange conferences on additional dates and times as needed to best meet the needs of students and families. Parents will be notified of conference scheduling details by their child's preschool teacher.

### 2026-2027 Conferences Dates

*Fall*

- November 2 - 4:00-8:00
- November 5 - 2:00-6:00 ***1:30 dismissal - NO PM Preschool***

*Spring*

- March 8 - 4:00-8:00
- March 11 - 2:00-6:00 ***1:30 dismissal - NO PM Preschool***

# Family Involvement

North Mahaska Preschool values families as a child's first and most important teachers. We believe that strong partnerships between home and school are essential to supporting each child's growth and success.

Families are encouraged to be active participants in their child's preschool experience through ongoing communication, classroom involvement opportunities, and participation in school activities and events. Teachers will provide regular updates on student learning and development and will work to maintain open, two-way communication with families throughout the school year.

Opportunities for family involvement may include, but are not limited to, classroom celebrations, volunteer activities, family engagement events, conferences, and take-home learning activities designed to support learning at home.

We welcome and value family input and encourage families to share information, questions, and concerns at any time. Working together, we can create a supportive and enriching early learning experience for every child.

## Visitors and Volunteers

Parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom during the school year. To ensure a positive and organized learning environment, families are asked to contact the preschool teacher or the elementary office prior to visiting. This allows the teacher to share relevant information about classroom activities so visitors can better understand what students are learning and observing during their visit.

Volunteers are always welcome in the preschool program. Teachers utilize volunteer support in a variety of meaningful ways and welcome the unique talents and contributions of families and community members. Parents or guardians who are interested in volunteering are encouraged to speak directly with their child's teacher to discuss how they may become involved.

We value family and community involvement. Parents, grandparents, community members, and approved student volunteers are encouraged to participate in classroom activities and events. *All volunteers must complete district volunteer requirements and sign in through the office upon arrival.*

**For the safety and security of students, all visitors must enter through the front office during the school day. Upon arrival, visitors will be issued a visitor badge and are required to check out at the office before leaving. All visitors should be prepared to present a government-issued photo identification upon entry.**

# Grievance Policy and Procedure (Preschool Parent Information)

North Mahaska Community Schools is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and respectful learning environment for all students and families. If you have a concern or complaint related to the preschool program, we encourage you to follow the steps below so that issues can be addressed fairly and efficiently.

## Step 1: Informal Discussion

Most concerns can be resolved quickly through open communication. Parents or guardians should first contact their child's teacher to discuss the concern. If needed, the elementary principal may also be contacted for further assistance.

### Step 2: Written Complaint

If the concern is not resolved through informal discussion, a formal written complaint may be submitted within fifteen (15) working days of the incident. The complaint should clearly describe the concern, include relevant dates, and state the requested resolution. Written complaints are submitted to the District Compliance Officer.

The Compliance Officer will review the concern, conduct a fair and impartial investigation, and provide a written response within fifteen (15) working days after receiving the complaint. A copy of the response will be shared with both the complainant and the appropriate staff or department involved.

### Step 3: Written Appeal

If the concern is still not resolved, the complainant may submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days after receiving the Compliance Officer's response. The appeal is reviewed by the Hearing Officer, who may hold a meeting or hearing to discuss the matter further. Parents or guardians may attend with their child if applicable.

A written decision will be provided within ten (10) working days of the appeal and shared with all relevant parties.

## *Additional Information*

Families and staff also have the right to contact external agencies at any time, including the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, or seek legal counsel.

## *District Contacts*

**Compliance Officer:** School Counselor – Nicole DeBoef
**Hearing Officer:** Superintendent – Tim Veiseth

North Mahaska Community Schools
New Sharon, Iowa 50207
641-637-4187 | Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

---

# Learning and Assessment

## Curriculum

North Mahaska Preschool uses a variety of research-based resources to support children's learning and development. The Iowa Early Learning Standards guide our instructional program and incorporate Creative Curriculum, Fundations, and Heggerty to provide engaging, developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Together, these resources help children build strong foundations in social-emotional development, language and literacy, mathematics, problem-solving, and school readiness skills through hands-on learning, play, and meaningful interactions.

### Creative Curriculum

Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based early childhood curriculum that promotes learning through hands-on exploration, play, and meaningful experiences. It supports children's development in language, literacy, mathematics, science, social-emotional skills, and physical development while encouraging curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving.

### Fundations

Fundations is a structured literacy program that introduces children to foundational reading and writing skills. Through engaging, multisensory activities, students learn letter names, letter sounds, handwriting, phonological awareness, and early spelling skills that build a strong foundation for reading success.

### Heggerty

Heggerty is a phonemic awareness curriculum designed to help children develop the listening and sound-manipulation skills needed for reading. Through daily interactive lessons, students practice identifying, blending, segmenting, and manipulating sounds in spoken words, which are critical skills for becoming successful readers.

### Iowa Early Learning Standards

The Iowa Early Learning Standards provide a framework for what young children should know and be able to do as they grow and learn. These standards guide instruction and learning experiences in areas such as social-emotional development, language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, physical well-being, and creative arts to help ensure children are prepared for future academic success.

## Assessment

Teachers continuously monitor and assess each child’s growth and development throughout the school year. Assessment tools may include Teaching Strategies GOLD®, Fundations, teacher-created checklists, classroom observations, work samples, and student portfolios. Information gathered through these assessments helps teachers plan instruction, monitor progress, and support each child’s individual learning needs.

## Sharing Progress with Families

Information about your child’s growth and development will be shared with families during parent-teacher conferences held throughout the school year. Assessment results from Teaching Strategies GOLD® and district assessments will be reviewed during these conferences, along with examples of your child’s learning and progress.

Teachers will discuss your child’s strengths, areas of growth, and ways families can support learning at home. Assessment information may also be used to compare your child’s progress to widely accepted developmental expectations for children of the same age.

Parents are encouraged to maintain ongoing communication with their child’s teacher and may request additional updates or conferences at any time.

# Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is an important part of a successful preschool experience. At North Mahaska Preschool, our goal is to ensure that every child is present and engaged in learning as much as possible. Preschool provides valuable opportunities for children to develop early academic skills, build relationships with classmates and teachers, establish routines, and practice important social-emotional skills. Even missing a single day of preschool can impact a child's learning and connection to the classroom community.

North Mahaska's preschool attendance policies align with all district attendance policies and comply with Iowa law. While some attendance requirements may seem more stringent than families typically expect for preschool-aged children, Iowa law requires that once a child is enrolled in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program, they become subject to compulsory attendance requirements and all applicable school attendance expectations.

The purpose of these policies is not to be punitive, but to support student success by encouraging consistent attendance and identifying concerns early when attendance becomes a barrier to learning. We recognize that illnesses, family emergencies, and other circumstances may occasionally prevent a child from attending school. We encourage families to communicate with the school whenever an absence occurs so we can work together to support your child's educational experience.

The following attendance policies apply to all students enrolled in the North Mahaska Preschool Program.

## Attendance Policy

***See also School Board Board Policy(ies) 501.09 & 501.09R1***
Daily, punctual attendance is an integral part of the learning experience and is required of all students to receive the maximum benefit of the educational program. The habit of good attendance established early is one that helps a person be successful throughout his or her lifetime. More and more, employers, colleges, and vocational schools expect good attendance and are checking attendance records for absences and tardies. They are aware that good and prompt attendance indicates dependability in a prospective student and/or employee.

The education that goes on in the classroom builds from day to day, and as a result, absences always cause some disruption in the educational progress of the absent student. Absent students may not understand what the teachers are currently presenting, and may also become discouraged with the double burden of keeping current and making up missed work. Attendance is a shared responsibility that requires cooperation and communication among students, parents, and the school.

**Acceptable reasons for a student's absence from school are limited to the following:**

- **Illness** - *Students may be required to submit a doctor's statement if absences from an illness exceed 3 consecutive days.*
- **Death of immediate family member**
- **Serious illness in immediate family**
- **Medical, vision, or dental appointments** *(students are required to provide a doctor's statement)*
- **Court appearances** *(documentation is required)*
- **Participation in school sponsored events** *(These are excused only with prior approval from the principal's office and Make-Up Work form completed and signed by all scheduled teachers.)*
- **Religious Observances**
- **Family members being deployed or returning from military deployment**

- **Legal appointments** *(documentation is required)*
- **Family vacations** *(These are excused only with 48 notice to the elementary office. It is important that you notify not only your child's teacher, but the office as well as that is where attendance is recorded.)*

**The following absences are to be avoided:**

- **Personal outings** *(shopping, haircuts, tanning appointments, manicure/pedicure appointments, hunting or trapping, lunch with family/relatives, concerts, non-school related music lessons [piano, voice, instrumental, etc.], etc.)*
- **Childcare, babysitting siblings/relatives** (unexcused)
- **Tired or oversleeping** (unexcused)
- **Missing rides or not making plans for transportation** (unexcused)

**General Statements regarding Attendance**

- If a student is absent for any reason not listed above, they will be considered unexcused unless prior arrangements have been made with the principal's office.
- **Any student who will be absent should have his/her guardian call the office (641-637-4041) by 8:30am.** If notification is not received, the office will attempt to contact the guardian(s).
- **All absences must be reported to the Elementary School office by 9:30am to be considered excused.** Failure to receive such information shall cause the student to be considered unexcused/truant.

Students are expected to be in class and to make attendance a top priority. Only through attendance and class participation do students achieve the benefits of the education program. Participating in class discussion, developing an appreciation for the views and abilities of other students, and forming the habit of regular attendance are legitimate class objectives. Learning lost due to an absence can never be replaced. Regular attendance and being well prepared for class helps students in school as well as prepares students for adulthood.

Truancy is the failure to attend school for the minimum number of days established in the school calendar by the board. Truancy is the act of being absent without a reasonable excuse. Truancy will not be tolerated by the board.

When a student has been chronically absent from school, then the student's parent will be contacted regarding the student's attendance. The classroom teacher, principal, At-Risk Coordinator, school counselor, Attendance Administrative Assistant, or SRO may initiate contact via telephone, email, home visit, or letter.

When a student's progress has been "significantly delayed" due to absences, school administration may notify the student and parent and initiate appropriate sanctions.

A student who is absent from school nine (9) non-school related days per semester is considered to have **"chronic absenteeism"** and runs the risk of experiencing significant delays in their learning.

*See **Chronic Absenteeism Response** below.

# Chronic Absenteeism

When a student has been chronically absent from school, the student's parent will be contacted regarding the student's attendance. A classroom teacher, principal, school counselor, at-risk coordinator, or attendance liaison may initiate contact via telephone, email, or letter.

## Chronic Absenteeism Response

The following timeline represents the school's response to total excessive absences per semester:

- After the 6th absence - a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian from the AAA to determine cause and present awareness.
- After the 10th absence - a letter will be sent via email or US Postal Service to a student's parent/guardian & meeting time set to problem-solve attendance barriers.
- After the 15th absence - Referral to SRO; truancy proceedings may commence.

### Truancy Laws of the State of Iowa

1. A "Truant" is defined as a child who has reached the age of six and is under the age of sixteen by September 15, who fails to attend school without a reasonable excuse for being absent.
2. A parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian of a child who is of compulsory attendance age is responsible for the child attending school.
3. The school board may appoint a person as a truancy officer to enforce the truancy laws within the school district.
4. The truancy officer has the authority to take any truant child into custody and deliver them to school.
5. If the school's efforts to get a child back to school are unsuccessful, the school is required to turn the case over to the county attorney for mediation or prosecution.
6. A person who violates an agreement reached through mediation or who refuses to participate in mediation is, upon conviction, guilty of a misdemeanor and can be punished by imprisonment or a fine. The court can also order the person to perform unpaid community services instead of any fine or imprisonment.
7. A child who does not attend a public school, an accredited non-public school, competent private instruction, an alternative school, adult education classes, or who is not employed at least twenty hours per week is not entitled to a motor vehicle operator's license until the person is 18 years of age. A person under the age of 18 years of age who has been issued a motor vehicle license, and who does not attend school is required to surrender their driver's license to the department of transportation, and may be issued a temporary restricted license.

### *Truancy Procedure*

The following timeline represents the school's policy and response to total truancy/unexcused absences:

- After the 5th unexcused absence - a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian from the At-Risk Coordinator and/or Principal.
- After the 10th unexcused absence - a letter will be sent via US Postal Service to a student's parent/guardian & meeting time set to establish academic probation & attendance contract
- After the 14th unexcused absence - legal action will commence.
    - Certified letter sent to parent/guardian
    - Truancy case turned over the Mahaska County Attorney's office

# Arrival and Dismissal

## Arrival Procedures

Student arrival procedures are in place to ensure safety and a smooth start to the school day.

### A.M. Preschool

- Students should **not be dropped off before 7:45 a.m.**, as the building is not staffed for supervision prior to that time.
- All students may enter the building beginning at **7:45 a.m.** and will report to the gym.

- Students will be dismissed from the gym at **8:00 a.m** to go to classrooms.
- Students arriving after **8:15 a.m.** must report to the office before going to class.
- Parents dropping students off should use the elementary circle drive.
    - Drop-offs should take no more than a minute. If you need more time, please use the visitor parking.
    - Do not leave vehicles unattended in the drop-off area. If you need to walk your child to school, please use the visitor parking.

### P.M. Preschool

- Students should **not be dropped off before 12:00 p.m.** for the afternoon preschool session
- Students will wait in the elementary office until preschool staff pick them up.
- Preschool staff will transition students to the classroom at **12:10 p.m.**
- Students arriving after **12:15 p.m.** must report to the office before going to class.

### Bus Riders for Both A.M. & P.M. Sessions

Those students who use school transportation will follow the same routine as students who are dropped off. A.M. students will wait in the gym, while P.M. students will wait in the elementary office.

## Dismissal Procedures

To help ensure a safe and smooth dismissal process, families are asked to follow the procedures outlined below.

### A.M. Preschool

The morning preschool session ends at **11:20 a.m.**

- Parents or guardians picking up their child may enter the school and wait in the **elementary vestibule**.
- Preschool staff will escort students from the classroom to their parent or guardians.
- Students who ride the bus will be accompanied by preschool staff and safely escorted to their assigned bus.

### P.M. Preschool

The afternoon preschool session ends at **3:20 p.m.**

- Parent pick-up takes place through the school's **Driveline** process beginning at **3:15 p.m.** Please refer to the Driveline section of this handbook for additional information and procedures.
- Students riding the bus will be escorted by preschool staff to their assigned bus at approximately **3:20 p.m.**
- Afternoon buses typically depart from the school at approximately **3:30 p.m.**

## After School Transportation Changes

Parents must notify the elementary office if their child needs to go somewhere other than their usual after-school destination. Bus stops will only be changed from the regular destination with prior permission from the Superintendent. Do not leave a message for the teacher or staff and assume it will be received before the end of the day, as they are busy with students and may not check voicemail or email in time. It is

the parent's responsibility to confirm that the message has been received (as verified by a returned email or voice message). The safest way to ensure effective communication is to call the elementary office before 2:45 PM.

## After School Pick Up - Driveline

Driveline is a dispatch software that enables staff to enter family ID numbers into an app, notifying classrooms and the elementary office that a student's ride has arrived. Families will receive their ID cards at the Elementary open house. Each family will receive four cards. The cards will be distributed by the teacher of the oldest child. ID cards should be shown to attendants as vehicles are staged in the pick-up area. All elementary students in the same family will share the same ID number.

*To enhance the safety and security protocols for both students and staff, we kindly request that individuals picking up students adhere to the following guidelines:*

- **Lane Usage:** The road south of the school will be designated for picking up students. We ask that the north lane, which is closest to the school building, remain clear and unobstructed until 3:05. This will allow the lane to remain open for early parent pick-up and emergency vehicle access for as long as possible.
- **Arrival Time:** We kindly ask drivers to schedule their arrival at the school no earlier than 2:45 PM.
- **Emergency Access:** It is imperative to maintain accessibility to the fire lane located in the circular drive at all times. This is not only a school requirement but also a legal obligation. The fire lane must remain unobstructed to ensure immediate access for emergency vehicles, should the need arise.
- **Northern Lane Accessibility:** The northernmost lane must also be kept open for as long as possible. This is primarily to facilitate swift access for responding emergency vehicles in case of unforeseen emergencies. We must prioritize the safety and well-being of all members of our school community.
- **Riding with Older Siblings:** Students riding with older siblings should walk to the elementary office. The older sibling should drive to the elementary circle drive to pick up all elementary students. To ensure safety and security, no elementary students will be allowed to be picked up by parents or siblings in the north parking lot.




Your cooperation in adhering to these guidelines is greatly appreciated. These measures have been put in place to ensure the utmost safety for everyone on school grounds. Thank you for your understanding and support as we work together to create a secure environment for our students and staff.

# Health and Safety

## Student Health

A licensed school nurse is scheduled each day from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm.
The following procedures will be followed regarding student health management:

- Students who become ill or are injured should be sent to the nurse. Basic first aid will be given, but no medicine (prescription or over-the-counter medications) can be given without parental consent.

North Mahaska Community School District complies with the United States Government and OSHA standards for potential transmission of bloodborne pathogens (Hepatitis B and AIDS-HIV). Only trained staff members will participate in cleaning up blood or dealing with injuries involving blood.

For any questions about student health policies and procedures, please contact our school nurse:

Jil VanUtrecht
vanutrechtji@nmwarhawks.org

## Medication Policy - Board Policy 507.2

Some students may need prescription and nonprescription medication to participate in their educational program.

Medication shall be administered when the student's parent or guardian (hereafter "parent") provides a signed and dated written statement requesting medication administration and the medication is in the original, labeled container, either as dispensed or in the manufacturer's container. When administration of the medication requires ongoing professional health judgment, an individual health plan shall be developed by the licensed health personnel with the student and the student's parent.

Students who have demonstrated competence in administering their own medications may self-administer their medication. A written statement by the student's parent shall be on file requesting co-administration of medication when competence has been demonstrated.

By law, students with asthma or other airway constriction diseases may self -administer their medication upon approval of their parents and prescribing physician, regardless of competency.

The following procedures will be followed concerning medication administration:

- Students bringing medications to school must take them to the office upon arriving at school. ***NO medications (prescription or over-the-counter) should be stored in student lockers or remain in student possession.*** A note signed by the parent with the correct information (instructions, dosage, etc.) must accompany the medication.
- Medication should be in the original bottle with the dosage prescribed by the physician.

## Student Illness or Injury at School

A student who becomes ill or is injured at school must notify his or her teacher or another employee as soon as possible. In the case of a serious illness or injury, the school shall attempt to notify the parents according to the information on the emergency form. If the student is too ill to remain in school, the student is released to the student's parents or sitter if parents can't be notified, or another person approved by the parents. The student may return to school after they have been fever free for 24 hours.

While the school district is not responsible for treating medical emergencies, employees may administer emergency or minor first aid if possible. The school contacts emergency medical personnel if necessary and attempts to notify the parents where the student has been transported for treatment.

We respectfully ask that this process is followed. Students should report to the nurse if they are feeling ill or are injured. Students should work with the school nurse to communicate with their parents and/or guardians.

### Student Illness Guidelines

School policy requires a child to stay home if he/she:

- Has a fever of 100.0° or higher
- Has been vomiting or has diarrhea
- Has symptoms that keep your child from participating in school or may present a disruption to the learning environment, such as:
    - Very tired or lack of appetite
    - Cough that he or she cannot control, sneezing often
    - Headache, body aches, or earache
    - Sore throat - a slight sore throat is ok for school, but a severe sore throat could be strep throat, even if there is no fever. Other signs of strep throat are headache and upset stomach. A special test administered at a doctor's office or clinic is needed to know if it is strep.

### 24-Hour Rule

- **Fever** - Keep your child home until his/her fever has been gone *without* the use of medicine for 24 hours. Colds can be contagious for at least 48 hours. Returning to school too soon may slow recovery and spread sickness to others.
- **Vomiting or Diarrhea** - Keep your child home for 24 hours after the *last* time he/she vomited or had diarrhea.
- **Antibiotics** - Keep your child home until 24 hours *after the first dose* of antibiotics for any sickness, such as an ear infection or strep throat.

## Head Lice Procedures

The goal of North Mahaska CSD is to promote academic success and keep students in the classroom as long as medically safe. Both the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advocate against whole classroom screening and exclusion for nits or live lice. As head lice are not a risk for carrying communicable disease, are primarily spread through direct head to head contact, and only live 18-24 hours off a host, the subsequent steps will be followed:

- Students suspicious of having head lice will be sent to the office for evaluation by the school nurse or designee.
- A thorough inspection for live lice and nits will be completed.
- If live lice are noted, the parent/guardian will be notified that day by telephone, email, or by having a note sent home with the child at the end of the school day stating that prompt, proper treatment of this condition is in the best interest of the child and their classmates.
- The parent/guardian will be provided with information on the biology of head lice.
- The parent/guardian will be instructed to inspect other household members for live lice.
- The parent/guardian will be instructed in methods for elimination of infestation focusing on inspection for live (crawling) lice and manual removal (combing).
- The parent/guardian will be instructed to continue daily combing until no live lice are discovered (approximately 2 weeks).
- The parent/guardian will be instructed to launder bedding, towels, and recently worn clothing.
- The parent/guardian will be instructed in the use of pediculicides if they choose to use them as an adjunct to manual removal.
- The student may be reinspected for live lice by the school nurse or designee.
- Students will not be excluded from school due to head lice infestations.

**Note: Individual class notification of head lice is no longer necessary because parents should assume that lice are present where children are, and should screen their children weekly.*

## Dietary Needs

For children with special health care needs, food allergies, or specific nutrition requirements, the child's health care provider should submit an individualized care plan developed in collaboration with the child's family and any specialists involved in their care. Families are asked to clearly communicate any dietary needs or restrictions to preschool staff and the school nurse to ensure appropriate support is in place. Children with food allergies will be protected from exposure to the identified allergen(s). With parent or guardian permission, allergy information will be clearly posted in food preparation areas and in relevant areas of the facility to serve as a visual reminder for all staff who interact with the child throughout the day.

When a child with a disability has special feeding needs, staff will maintain a daily record of the type and amount of food consumed and share this information with the child's family.

## Toileting Procedures

For children who are not yet consistently toilet-trained, the program follows the procedures below to ensure health, safety, and sanitation:

Children who require cloth diapers must wear diapers with an absorbent inner lining fully covered by a waterproof outer layer designed to prevent leakage of urine or feces. Both the diaper and outer covering are changed together as a single unit.

Cloth diapers and any clothing soiled by urine or feces are placed immediately into a plastic bag. Items are not rinsed or handled more than necessary and are sent home the same day for laundering.

Staff regularly check children for signs of wet or soiled diapers or pull-ups:

- At least every two hours while children are awake
- Upon children waking from nap or rest time
  Diapers are changed promptly when wet or soiled.

Diapering and toileting changes are completed only in the designated changing areas and never in other parts of the facility. Each changing area is:

- Separated by a partial wall or located at least three feet away from other child-use spaces
- Used exclusively for one designated group of children

At all times, staff maintain direct physical supervision, keeping a hand on the child when changing them on an elevated surface.

In the changing area, staff will:

- Follow posted diaper-changing procedures at all times
- Use these procedures as part of ongoing staff evaluation and training
- Ensure changing surfaces are used only for diapering and are never used for storage or placed items, especially food-related items
- Use covered, hands-free, lidded containers (such as step cans) for soiled diapers and materials; containers must remain closed and inaccessible to children

- Complete diapering duties before food preparation duties when staff have dual roles
- Wash hands thoroughly after each diaper change or after handling soiled clothing

These procedures are in place to maintain a clean, safe, and healthy environment for all children and staff.

# Cleaning and Sanitation

Cleaning and sanitation of work and eating surfaces, as well as toys, are completed on a regular basis by preschool staff and more frequently as needed. An appropriately mixed bleach and water solution is used for sanitizing. Tabletops are cleaned before any activity involving food.

Staff wear gloves when preparing all snack foods.

A North Mahaska custodian regularly sanitizes high-touch areas such as doorknobs, sinks, and toilets to help prevent the spread of germs.

# School Safety

## Emergency Drills

Periodically, the school holds emergency fire and tornado drills. At the beginning of each semester, teachers notify students of the procedures to follow in the event of a drill. Emergency procedures and proper exit areas are posted in all rooms.

Students are expected to remain quiet and orderly during a drill or an emergency. Students who pull the fire alarm or call in false alarms, in addition to being disciplined under the school district's policies, rules and regulations, may be reported to law enforcement officials.

The safety and well-being of the students is very important to the staff of the school district. Everyone in the school needs to conduct themselves carefully and with concern for their own safety. We encourage students to notify teachers or administration of risks of injury or harm to themselves or others. Students should always be courteous when passing in the hallways with no running or yelling. Students should obey pedestrian and bicycle safety rules.

The school complies with the state’s requirement for an emergency operations plan. North Mahaska CSD has an Emergency Operation Plan in place and will, as required, hold an annual intruder drill. This drill may be with staff, a tabletop discussion, or involve students (as appropriate).

## School Resource Officer (SRO)

Our School Resource Officer is a certified law enforcement officer who works in partnership with the school to promote a safe and supportive learning environment. The SRO may assist with safety education, emergency preparedness, and behavior concerns when appropriate. See the Behavior Response Matrix for more detailed information regarding the SRO's role in student discipline.

## Smoke-Free Campus

By state law, tobacco use is prohibited on any school grounds, in any school facility, in any school vehicle, or at any public school activity. This includes smoking in private cars or vehicles parked on school property or at any outdoor school-sponsored activities, such as football games or golf meets. Designated smoking areas are not allowed.

## Security Cameras

North Mahaska Community School District utilizes security cameras to ensure a certain level of safety and security. Cameras are operational 24 hours a day both inside the building and in parking and outdoor area(s) surrounding the building as well as on most buses. Camera footage can be used to assist in confirming suspected rule/policy infractions. The North Mahaska Community School District reserves the right to use this footage for legal/criminal evidence if such a need does arise.

A security system is in use, requiring all main entrances to the school to be locked and controlled by an intercom and video system. Anyone who wishes to enter the building must use the main entrance door on the south side of the building. Our staff will have the authority to grant access to visitors from the office. All doors will remain locked until dismissal. For security purposes, we ask that parents wait outside until students are dismissed.

# Daily Preschool Life

## Snacks

Each day, your preschooler will be provided with a snack. Below are examples of snacks that may be served. All snacks will be modified as needed to accommodate student food allergies.

Fresh fruit or vegetables
Crackers
Muffins
Cereal Bars
Granola/Nutri-grain Bars
Rice Krispie Treats
Yogurt
100% Juice
Trail Mix
Cheeze-its
Cookies
Pretzels
Dried Fruit
Cottage Cheese
Applesauce or mixed fruit cups
Milk

## Birthday Treats

Bringing birthday treats is an exciting way for many students to celebrate, but it is not required. To help keep students with food allergies and intolerances safe, any treats sent for birthday celebrations must be either unopened, commercially prepared items with a complete ingredient label or fresh fruits and vegetables.
If there are known peanut allergies in the classroom, treats containing peanuts or peanut products will not be permitted. The preschool teacher will work closely with the school nurse to review student allergy information and reduce the risk of potential exposure for all students.

## Outdoor Recess

Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Preschool students go outside daily throughout the year, weather permitting. Outdoor play will be moved indoors when the “feels like” temperature is 20°F or below.

## Dress Code & Extra Clothing

The preschool program follows the North Mahaska dress code expectations. Families are asked to ensure students are dressed in clothing that is appropriate for school activities, allows for active play, and is suitable for both indoor and outdoor learning. Clothing should be comfortable, safe for movement, and free from inappropriate or distracting images or messages. Please be aware that racing-style shirts or similar apparel may include tobacco or alcohol branding, which is not appropriate for the school setting.

In addition, please send an extra set of clothing in a gallon-size Ziploc bag to be kept in your child's backpack at all times. This should include a shirt, pants, socks, and underwear when applicable. In the event of spills, accidents, or other needs for a clothing change, staff will assist your child in changing into the provided spare clothing as needed. This helps ensure your child remains comfortable and able to participate fully in the school day.

## Field Trips

On occasion, the preschool classes will attend field trips to support learning.  North Mahaska School transportation will be used to transport students to and from field trips.  Parents are encouraged to attend field trips.  Any volunteer attending field trips with the preschool will need to complete an NM Parent/Adult Volunteer form and background check and return it to the preschool or elementary school office before volunteering.

### Transportation To and From Field Trips

Students are generally required to use school-provided transportation for all school-sponsored activities. If a student needs an alternative transportation arrangement, prior approval from school administration is required.

Parents who attend a field trip or activity as a chaperone or guest may sign their child out directly with the staff member supervising the student. Students will only be released to their parent or legal guardian unless the school has received written permission in advance from the parent or guardian on the day of the activity. Students will not be permitted to leave with friends or other family members without prior written approval. Please plan ahead if you anticipate needing alternative transportation for your child.

# Additional Policies & Procedures

## Fees and Supplies

There is no fee to attend the North Mahaska Preschool Program. All materials and supplies needed for instruction are provided by the program. The only items families are asked to provide are a backpack and appropriate PE shoes.

## School Cancellations/Delays/Early-Dismissals

Should weather conditions or other emergency conditions make it impossible to hold school or cause a delay or early dismissal, an announcement will be made through the Student Information System

(PowerSchool) powered by *School Messenger*. A text message will be sent to each parent/guardian listed for each student.

The school will also use the following media outlets to communicate weather or emergency-related cancellations, delays, or dismissals:

- KBOE (104.9) Oskaloosa
- WHO - Channel 5
- KCCI - Channel 8
- WHO - Channel 13
- Facebook
- nmwarhawks.org
- KMZM (740) Oskaloosa

Announcements will be made as early in the morning as possible.

If school is dismissed because of inclement weather after the school day has begun, parents are notified by the same means. The superintendent determines whether buses will follow the regular routes. If the buses do not follow the regular routes, they follow emergency routes or the parents are responsible for picking up the students at the students' school.

Extracurricular activities or practices scheduled for the day or evening of a day when school is canceled or dismissed early are generally canceled and rescheduled. The Principal and/or Athletic Director may determine whether to hold extracurricular activities or practice.

***If school is delayed, AM Preschool will be cancelled for that day.***

## School/Student Photographs

Student photographs are taken each fall, typically in early September, with an additional opportunity for spring photographs offered in early March. Information about picture days will be shared with families in advance. Purchasing photographs is optional.

In addition to scheduled picture days, candid photographs may be taken throughout the school year for use in the elementary yearbook and to celebrate student learning and activities. These photographs may also be used on the school's website, social media platforms, or in other school publications.

If you do not wish for your child's photograph to be used publicly, please indicate your preference during registration or contact the elementary office at any time.

# Preschool Disciplinary Procedures, Suspension, & Expulsion

Our preschool program focuses on proactive behavior supports, positive relationship-building, and creating a safe environment to support social-emotional development. Exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspension or expulsion, are utilized only as a last resort when there is a severe safety concern that cannot be reduced or eliminated through reasonable modifications. When evaluating student behavior and determining appropriate responses, the preschool will follow the NM elementary discipline matrix when developmentally appropriate and appropriate to the context of the situation.

For all disciplinary actions, including any potential temporary removals, families are guaranteed procedural protections, including appropriate notice and the opportunity to be heard. For children with disabilities or suspected disabilities, additional protections under IDEA and Section 504 are strictly maintained to ensure appropriate behavioral supports and least restrictive placements. Our goal remains continuous partnership with families to address underlying behavioral or developmental needs, minimizing programming disruptions and ensuring equitable support for all students.

# Contact Information

## School Contact Information

Elementary Phone - 641-637-4041
School Website - www.nmwarhawks.org

### Preschool Staff

Samantha McKeag - mckeags@nmwarhawks.org - Lead Teacher
Julie VanUtrecht - Classroom Paraeducator
Sara Lamb - SPED Paraeducator
Marcy Grandia - SPED Paraeducator

### Administration

Amber Goemaat - goemaata@nmwarhawks.org - PK-6 Principal
Carrie Kral - kralc@nmwarhawks.org - PK-12 SPED Director
Tim Veiseth - veisetht@nmwarhawks.org - Superintendent

### School Nurse

Jil VanUtrecht - vanutrechtji@nmwarhawks.org

### Transportation Coordinator

Bryan Kime - kimeb@nmwarhawks.org

### Office Staff

Angie Jedlicka - jedlickaangie@nmwarhawks.org - Elementary Secretary
Kim Hudson - hudsonk@nmwarhawks.org - Attendance Liaison

## Non-Discrimination Notice

The District and the Board will not discriminate on the basis of age (except for permitting/prohibiting students to engage in certain activities), race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status (in programs), gender, socioeconomic status (in programs), creed, or genetic information (in employment) in admission or access to, or treatment in, its programs and activities and in employment practices, pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other applicable state and federal laws.

The District has adopted grievance procedures for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to sex discrimination pursuant to Title IX, please contact Roger Gay, Title IX Coordinator, PO Box 89 2163 135th St, New Sharon, Iowa 50207, 641-637-4187, gayr@nmwarhawks.org, or the U.S. Department of Education (attn. Assistant Secretary, Office for Civil Rights; 400 Maryland Avenue

Southwest, Washington, DC 20202; 800-421-3481; OCR@ed.gov). If you have questions or a grievance related to any other provision of this policy, please contact Nicole DeBoef, Equity Coordinator, PO Box 89, 2163 135th St, New Sharon, Iowa 50207, 641-637-4041.