

# Preschool Family Handbook

## George-Little Rock Preschool

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### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the George-Little Rock Preschool is to provide a quality education for lifelong learning.

### **Purpose**

Philosophy: We believe that

- \* All people can learn and succeed
- \* Every person is a valued participant in the life-long learning process
- \* Application of knowledge enhances learning
- \* The basic moral attitudes of the community will be reflected in our educational program
- \* All people must learn to adapt to change
- \* Quality education is the foundation of a productive society
- \* Education plays a vital role in developing a well-rounded individual
- \* Education must take place in a safe environment
- \* High expectations are a must

### **Board Policy**

All GLR board policies are available on the school website and in the District Office.

### **General Information**

#### **Calendar:**

The preschool will observe the George-Little Rock Community School District's academic calendar.

#### **Hours of Operation:**

The George-Little Rock preschools will be open at George from 8:15 – 11:15 a.m. and in Little Rock from 12:15 – 3:15 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday of each week during the academic school year.

#### **Emergency Closing and Late Starts:**

- \* If the George-Little Rock CSD cancels school before the school day begins, the preschool will also be closed on that day.
- \* In case of early closings, the preschool will also close, and students will be transported home in the usual format.
- \* If the George-Little Rock CSD has a late start, the preschool will also begin at the designated late start time unless otherwise notified and will dismiss at their usual time.
- \* Announcements are generally made on:
  - a. KIWA Radio (1550)
  - b. KQAD Radio (101.5)
  - c. KELO Television (Channel 11)
  - d. JMC is the service that you can register to receive school announcements and cancellations via text message or email. If you would like to register, contact the school office.

#### **Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies:**

Emergency plans for fire and tornado are written and posted by each main classroom door. Emergency plan procedures are practiced monthly. Additional drills like evacuation and lock-down will also be practiced.

**Lost or Abducted Child:**

In the event, that staff is unable to locate a child, or the child is thought to be abducted from school, the following procedures will be followed:

- \* Lyon County Sheriff's Office will be contacted.
- \* A cursory or initial search will be conducted.
- \* The parents will be contacted.
- \* A thorough search of the school and grounds will be conducted.

**Medical Emergency:**

In the event of a medical emergency, the George-Little Rock CSD's staff is authorized to obtain emergency medical and dental care even if the staff is unable to contact parents/guardians. During an emergency, the staff is authorized to contact the listed emergency contacts on the child's release information.

**Attendance Records:**

Regular attendance by students is essential for students to obtain the maximum opportunities for the education program. Parents and students alike are encouraged to ensure an absence from school is a necessary absence. Students who arrive late to school or who leave early from school should be signed in or out of the office.

**Parent Teacher Conferences:**

Family members are provided information, either verbally or in writing, about their child's development and learning on at least a quarterly basis. Teachers, families, NW AEA consultants and relevant specialists have regular opportunities to participate in two-way communication conferences to discuss each child's progress, accomplishments, and difficulties in the classroom and at home. This is also an opportunity for families and teachers to plan learning activities together.

**Discipline:**

The staff will provide positive guidance to children at preschool. This includes conflict resolution strategies, setting well-defined limits, and using logical and natural consequences.

**Suspension or Expulsion:**

Appropriate classroom behavior allows teachers to communicate more effectively with students. Improper student conduct causes material and substantial disruption to the school environment, interferes with the rights of others, or presents a threat to the health and safety of students, employees, and visitors on school premises. Students will conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity and with respect and consideration for the rights of others while at school, in school vehicles, or engaged in school activities. Misconduct may result in suspension or expulsion from school. The suspension is defined as the removal of the student from the classroom either in-school or out-of-school. The suspension is the decision of the building administrator or designee. Expulsion is defined as the removal of a student from the school environment for a violation of school board policy. Only the GLR Board of Education can expel a student.

**Parent Participation:**

Parents are invited to observe and participate in the classroom at any time, including field trips, classroom celebrations, and other activities. Parents will be provided information about preschool activities in the newsletter and on GOLD online.

**Child's Possessions:**

School supplies will be provided to students. Weather appropriate clothing is required.

**Smoking:**

Smoking shall not be allowed in any school area or facility vehicle. The school grounds are also posted as smoke-free.

**Observation of Holidays:**

Holidays, celebrations, and other activities may be observed at school and will be communicated through the weekly newsletter.

**Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting:**

All employees of the George-Little Rock CSD are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect, as required by Iowa law.

**Enrollment**

Enrollment is open to any child who turns 4 by September 15 of the current school year. Twenty (20) students are allowed in each preschool room. Enrollment forms include:

- \* Enrollment agreement form
- \* Intake sheet
- \* Physical exam
- \* Immunization records
- \* Policy and procedure forms
- \* Parent schedule
- \* Participation release
- \* Photo release
- \* Field trip consent form

**Guidelines:**

- A session of Preschool will be held at both the George and Little Rock sites if there are at least six children in each session.
- The parents will have the opportunity to bring their child to either the George or Little Rock Preschool site to help keep the class sizes equal.
- Once a class size reaches 20 students, we will give the remaining families a chance to enroll their student in the preschool class with the fewer number of students, as long as it makes sense geographically. (ie: if one of the last students enrolled is on the opposite side of the district, they will be given the opportunity to enroll at the site closest to their residence.)
- Transportation will be provided to and from license daycare centers when there is Preschool at both sites.
- Transportation will be provided to and from a student's license daycare center or residence when there is Preschool at only one site.

**Financial Responsibilities:**

Four-year-old preschool is provided free of charge to any child who is four years old by September 15 of the current school year.

### **Curriculum**

**Essential Characteristics:**

The George-Little Rock Preschool provide programs that are age and interest appropriate for all children. Staff utilizes Creative Curriculum to meet the needs of students:

Our mission is to provide a nurturing, safe environment to support learning for families and students. Our focus is on age appropriateness, individual appropriateness, and social appropriateness. The physical environment is safe, healthy, and provides a variety of activities, toys, centers, and materials so students can become actively involved.

Staff and assistants have specialized training in early childhood development and appropriate programming. A language translator will be provided if needed.

Curriculum goals and objectives guide staff's ongoing assessment of children's progress, allowing them to individualize learning for each child. The curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is structured, flexible, and responsive to students' needs. The schedule provides time and support for transitions, indoor and outdoor activities, and quiet and active time.

**Field Trips:**

Field trips will be planned from time to time to augment student learning. The trips may be walking trips or may require transportation to destinations. A field trip consent form is included in the enrollment form, and field trip permission slips may also be sent for trips off campus. Additional information regarding field trips will be sent in the weekly newsletter.

**Supervision:**

Children will be supervised at all times. Teaching staff supervises children primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible, as long as teachers frequently check on children who are out of sight (e.g., those who can toilet independently).

### Assessment

**Identifying Children's Interests and Needs:**

Staff observes children for strengths, interests, and needs on an ongoing basis to determine individual curriculum planning. Teaching teams will meet to interpret and use assessment results to align curriculum and teaching practices to the interests and needs of individual students. Families are an integral part of the educational planning process and encouraged to contribute to the assessment of the child's growth and development. Teachers will communicate student's strengths and weaknesses to families.

**Family Involvement:**

The George-Little Rock Preschools strive to focus on relationships between staff and families. We strive to nurture a culture of respect and trust.

**Family Communication:**

- \* A home visit is completed before the beginning of preschool each fall.
- \* The preschools welcome parents/guardians at any time.
- \* Information may be emailed or posted on the website daily.
- \* Folders are sent home each Friday to share student work and activities.
- \* Weekly newsletters are sent to parents in the Friday Folder.
- \* Monthly calendars are sent home.
- \* Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled two times each year.
- \*

**Confidentiality:**

All information regarding children and families of the George-Little Rock Preschools is regarded as confidential. Requests for release of information to other agencies will be honored only if made in writing and with the permission of the parent.

### Health

**Sick Child:**

If students are going to be absent from school due to illness, please contact the school offices. If students run a temperature, they are to stay home from school. For a specific list of communicable diseases, symptoms, and recommendations, log on to:  
<https://idph.iowa.gov/CADE/reportable-diseases>

**Cleaning and Sanitation:**

One of the most critical steps in reducing the spread of infectious diseases is cleaning and sanitizing surfaces that could possibly pose a risk. Household bleach with water is recommended and may be used to clean preschool surfaces.

**Administration of Medication:**

Staff administers both prescription and over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent/guardian has given the school written permission. The child's record includes instructions from a licensed health care provider. Any staff that administers medication has specific training. A written medication administration record shall be on file including:

- \* Student's name
- \* Date
- \* Prescriber or person authorizing the administration
- \* Medication
- \* Medication dose
- \* Administration time
- \* Administration method
- \* Any unusual circumstances, actions or omissions

Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation of the dose. All medication is kept in a locked container.

**Accident and Incident Reporting:**

Accidents or incidents resulting in injury to a child shall be reported on the day of the incident, in writing. Parents will be notified of these incidents. A copy of the report will be kept in the office.

**First Aid:**

Teachers and associates who work in the preschool are certified in Pediatric First Aid and CPR. First aid kits are maintained in the preschool classrooms. An inventory is completed on the first aid kits each month. First aid kits are also taken out to recess and on all preschool outings.

**Staff Training:**

All staff shall be oriented to and demonstrate knowledge of infant and child CPR and Pediatric First Aid, including the management of a blocked airway and rescue breathing, child abuse detection, prevention and reporting, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), recognizing and responding to infectious illnesses, and handling ill children appropriately.

**Outdoor Play:**

Children of all ages have daily opportunities for outdoor play (when weather, air quality, and environmental safety conditions do not pose a health risk). When outdoor play is not an option because of conditions, similar indoor activities will be provided.

To protect against cold, heat, sun, and insects, children may be required to wear appropriate weather clothing like snow pants, boots, hats, and mittens, or may be required to play in the shade.

**Diapering and Toileting Procedures:**

It is strongly encouraged to have children toilet trained before entering preschool, but for children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the preschool ensures that:

Staff uses disposable diapers or pull-ups only unless a medical reason prevents the use (health provider document required).

- For children who need a cloth diaper, 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 outer covering will be changed as a unit.
- Cloth diapers and clothing that has been soiled by feces or urine are placed in a plastic

- bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
- Staff will check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every two hours.
- Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
- Staff changes children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
- Each changing area is separated by a partial wall or is located at least three feet from other areas children use.
- For preschool children, it is preferable to change the child's diaper with child in standing position. A child will never be unattended during a diaper/pull up change.
- In the changing area, staff post and follow changing procedures.
- Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly and is hands free to open.
- Containers are kept closed and not accessible to children.

**Hand Washing Policies and Procedures:**

Hand washing is periodically taught and monitored at preschool. Students may be assisted if need be. Adults and students will do frequent hand washing to reduce the transmission of diseases to themselves and others.

**Water Play:**

Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious disease. No child should drink the water. Children with sores on their hands should not play in the water. Freshwater will be used.

**Snacks:**

Snacks will be provided to the preschool students. Snacks will be prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines.

**Lunch:**

We do not participate in the CACFP program; therefore, we do not serve meals because hours of service are from 8:15 – 11:15 am (George) and 12:15 – 3:15 pm (Little Rock)

**Oral Health Policies:**

A dental check is recommended before beginning preschool and required prior to the start of kindergarten.

**Animal and Pet Policy:**

Live animals will not be allowed in the classroom except under special circumstances and only for an educational purpose. All interactions between children and animals must be respectful, and staff must instruct children on safe behavior.

**Biting Policy:**

Even in the best child care center, periodic outbreaks of biting occur among infants, toddlers and sometimes preschoolers and occasionally older children. This is an unavoidable consequence of grouping young children together. When it happens, it can be scary and very frustrating for children, parents, and teachers. Understanding the reason for biting is the first step to changing a child's behavior. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, simple sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration, and stress. Childcare group situations are difficult: dealing with others constantly around, sharing attention and toys, and too much or too little stimulation are all very difficult for children. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their



teachers. When biting breaks out, a high-quality childcare program immediately takes action, not to blame the biters but to change the environment and help children improve their behavior.

It is essential that the caregivers remain calm and in control of their emotions when biting occurs. Staff should not show anger or frustration towards the child. The caregiver should calmly respond to the child, letting them know that biting is not ok. In addition, the following steps will be taken.

1. The teacher will remove the child from the situation and focus caring attention on the child who was bitten.
2. Encourage the biter to help take care of the child that was bitten (hold an ice pack, comfort the child).
3. The caregiver should talk to the child who bit (if able to communicate) and talk about different strategies that the child can use next time (give them appropriate words-if able) instead of biting. This should be done in a short, simple way.

It is crucial to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Staff needs to work with parents to gather information about the child's behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of some triggers would be: communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills. Below are some examples of how the teacher will begin this assessment.

1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns. The teacher will use the Center Action Plan for documentation and ask the following questions:
  - Was the space too crowded
  - Were there too few toys
  - Was there too little to do or too much waiting
  - Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times, other than when he/she was biting
2. The teacher will change the environment, routines or activities if necessary
3. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate manners, including using words, if they are capable of them.
4. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
5. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.
6. The teacher, parent, and administration will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and to measure the outcome of these changes.

**Iowa Nondiscrimination Statement** – “It is the policy of George-Little Rock Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, marital status, socioeconomic status, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code section 216.7 and 216.9. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have any questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by George-Little Rock Community School District, please contact Reid Geerdes, Equity Coordinator, George-Little Rock Community School, 500 E. Indiana Ave., George, IA 51237; phone number 712-475-3311, email: [rgeerdes@george-littlerock.org](mailto:rgeerdes@george-littlerock.org). Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th St., Des Moines, IA 50319- 1004; phone number 515-281-4121, 800-457-4416; website: <https://icrc.iowa.gov>.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 1(866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact the USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 1(800)877- 8339 or 1(800)845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Parents of students who attend a public-school district receiving Title I funds have the right to inquire and receive information about the qualifications of their child's teachers. Should a child be taught by a non-highly qualified teacher for a period of four or more consecutive weeks, parents will be notified.

**END OF PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK**