

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **ALLIANCE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM ALLIANCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**616 Black Hills Ave, Alliance, NE 69301**

*(Physical Address)*

**1604 Sweetwater, Alliance, NE 69301**

*(Mailing address)*

**308-762-4425**

*"Success for All Students"*

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**The Alliance Early Childhood Program wants to ensure that children from categorically and economically diverse groups have access to research based, effective, developmentally appropriate, preschool programs with a strong emphasis on family participation.**


## **ALLIANCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT**

**To develop in all students the individual skills, the desire for knowledge, and the personal commitment essential for a successful future.**

## **PHILOSOPHY OF THE ALLIANCE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM**

**It is our philosophy that parents are the first and foremost teacher of their children. Our program provides support to parents using developmentally appropriate classroom activities that are designed to help children reach their fullest potential in all areas of development. Through a structured routine and with input from parents regarding their individual child, the program recognizes each child as an individual and strives to meet their individual needs.**

## Admission Procedure

- Parents complete an application form
- Fees to attend the Early Childhood Program are determined on a sliding fee scale using the free and reduced lunch forms. Fees for snack will also be determined at this time.
- Admission into the program is based on the number of students enrolled in each classroom, the needs of the student and the date of application. The maximum number of students in each classroom is:
  - Toddler Classroom: 8 students
  - Preschool Classroom: 20 students
  - Reference APS Board Policy: 502*
-  Our Toddler program is funded through the Sixpence Early Learning Fund. Children enrolled in the Toddler program must meet one of the following eligibility requirements:
  - a) Family qualifies for free or reduced lunch
  - b) Child was born premature or low birth weight
  - c) Child uses English as a second language
  - d) Parent is a teen parent or is working on completing a GED or High School Diploma
- A visit to the preschool for parents and their child is arranged prior to the first day of attendance.
- The Parent Handbook is reviewed with parents; registration forms are completed and a copy of the child's certified birth certificate, immunization record and physical form are obtained.
- Children are ineligible to attend the Early Childhood Program if:
  - a) Child is enrolled and attending another preschool
  - b) Child is receiving educational home visits through other early childhood programs
  - c) Child is eligible to attend Kindergarten
  - d) The only exception is for a child with a disability whose Individual Education Program (IEP) team determines that the child's needs cannot be met in kindergarten with appropriate supports and accommodations. If the child is of mandatory attendance age (age 6 by January 1 of the current school year) the child cannot be enrolled in the early childhood education program even if the child has an IEP

## **Session Times**

**8:05-11:05 Morning Session M-TH      Morning Session Lunch 11:05-11:35**

**12:30-3:30 Afternoon Session M-TH      Afternoon Session Lunch 12:00-12:30**

## **Late Start Times—2 hour late start**

**10:00 am -11:30 am for morning session**

**Regular times for afternoon session (listed above in session times)**

**Lunch served for both classes at regular lunch times (listed above in session times)**

## **½ Day Schedule**

**8:05-10:00 for Morning Session**

**10:30 – 12:30 for Afternoon Session**

**Lunch will NOT be served at the Early Childhood program when school is on a ½ day schedule**

## **School Calendar/School Closings**

The Early Childhood program generally follows the Alliance Public School calendar for vacations and in-services. In the case of bad weather, the Early Childhood Program follows the Alliance Public Schools when closing. Please listen to the radio, KCOW-1400 AM, for school closings. A school reach call will also be issued if school is cancelled due to weather or other events. If the Alliance Public Schools are not having school, the Alliance Early Childhood Program will also be closed.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 602, 905*

## **Fees**

- Fees are determined on a sliding fee scale through the free and reduced lunch form for those who qualify.
- 4 day per week program: \$130.00 Full pay / \$35 Reduced
- Snack Fee: \$6.00 per month (included in tuition, if paying tuition)
- Lunch: \$3.25 per day or same fee as children who attend elementary school  
40¢ per day for reduced lunch program

*Reference APS Board Policy: 802*

**A Parent Fee Contract** is negotiated with each parent at the time of registration. Receipts upon payment of fees are provided to parents for their financial records.

**Fees** are due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month, unless other arrangements are made. Checks should be made to the *Alliance Public Schools*.

## Staff

Liz Baker ..... Director of Special Education and Early Childhood  
Jennifer Lanik..... Early Childhood Special Education Teacher  
Jodi Welk..... Early Childhood Special Education Teacher  
Shawna Rischling..... Early Childhood Special Education Teacher  
Cara Wade..... Speech Pathologist  
Shay Knapp..... Occupational Therapist  
Box Butte General Hospital Therapist..... Physical Therapist  
Cheri Gasseling..... Secretary  
Ross Herstedt..... Bus Driver



## Parent Involvement

We recognize parents as their child’s most important teacher. Parental involvement in their child’s education is encouraged and welcomed. Parents are encouraged to visit school at any time.

Your child’s development is constantly monitored through the use of checklists and developmental assessments. Results of these are shared with parents during conferences or home visits. Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice a year to discuss a child’s progress and development. Participation from parents is encouraged to ensure the best education is occurring for their child. Parents may also request a meeting or home visit at anytime to discuss their child’s progress.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 611, 1005*

## Advisory Board

The Early Childhood Program has an **Advisory Board** that holds quarterly meetings. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend and provide their input regarding policies, procedures and activities of the program.

## Monitoring Your Child’s Development

The Early Childhood Staff monitor your child’s development using an ongoing assessment tool designated by the Nebraska Department of Education. Through the utilization of an activity-based curriculum and assessment, children learn developmental skills appropriate for their age and/or individual needs. Progress is observed during play activities and small group instruction. The content of these assessments covers the areas of behavior and specific developmental skills considered essential to independent functioning and coping with environmental demands for young children between the ages of birth to six years. The six broad areas of development are Fine Motor, Gross Motor, Adaptive, Cognitive, Social – Communication and Social Skills. Scores are reported into the Nebraska Results Matter statewide record-keeping system. Annually, our program assessment results will be reported to the APS Board of Education.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 610, 611*

## **Newsletter**

A center-based newsletter is sent home once a month. School vacations, important dates, book orders and center-based activities are just some of the information in our newsletter. Newsletters are sent home approximately every two weeks from each classroom teacher. Important information regarding unit themes, field trips, vocabulary, finger plays and songs are included. Parents can help reinforce the unit at home by practicing some of the finger plays and reading books related to the subject being taught in the unit.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 1005*



## **Snacks/Lunches**

Nutritious snacks and lunches are provided at the Early Childhood Program each day. Milk is served with snack and lunch. Children are exposed to a variety of food textures and tastes through the program. A snack calendar is sent home with each classroom's newsletter. Lunch is prepared by the Alliance Public Schools and the menu is the same as the rest of the district. Menus are posted on the APS school channel on TV, the newspaper and the APS website.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 802*

*Non-Discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. "In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."*

*Reference APS Board Policy: 103*

## **Initial Entry Into the Program**

All children will be required to have a physical from a physician prior to entry. The cost of the physical is the responsibility of the parents. A copy of your child's certified birth certificate and immunizations is also needed. Parents may sign a waiver indicating why they do not wish to obtain a physical or immunizations.

## **Immunizations**

All 50 states and the District of Columbia have immunization requirements for children entering school. In Nebraska, children can't attend classes in public or private school until the school has written proof of their immunization status. To attend school, children in Nebraska are required to be immunized against the following diseases:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
- Polio
- Measles, mumps, and rubella
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Haemophilus Influenzae type b (Hib)

Each school in Nebraska is required to keep the immunization history of the students enrolled on file. Parents or guardians must present one of the following documents to the school to verify immunization status:

- An immunization record showing that the child is protected by age-appropriate immunizations.
- A statement signed by a physician that the required immunization would be injurious to the student or members of the student's family or household.
- An affidavit signed by a legally authorized representative stating that the immunization conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious denomination of which the student is a member.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 502*

### **Recommended immunizations for children ages 2-5 years**

4 doses of DTaP, DTP, or DT vaccine,

3 doses of Polio vaccine,

3 doses of Hib vaccine or 1 dose of Hib given at or after 15 months of age,

3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine,

1 dose of MMR or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age,

1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age.

Or written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted.

4 doses of pneumococcal or 1 dose of pneumococcal given on or after 15 months of age

## **Medical Release**

The Medical Release form enables school personnel to take reasonable action to provide immediate emergency medical help if a child becomes injured and requires immediate assistance. All efforts to notify the parent immediately will be made. A medical history is obtained upon entry into the program and appropriate health plans are completed as needed especially if a child has any chronic health problems such as diabetes, allergies, asthma, heart conditions, arthritis, etc.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 508*

State regulation requires that schools implement an emergency treatment plan called a protocol. This protocol is intended for all students and staff. If a student has asthma/allergies, an individualized action (care) plan should be in place.

In the event of an asthma/anaphylactic occurrence, the individualized care plan will be followed first. If the student has not responded to the treatments and/or medication(s) listed on the care plan, and is having what appears to be life-threatening breathing problems, the steps of the protocol will be followed.

Trained staff will implement the protocol. Anytime a student who has not been diagnosed by a physician has life-threatening asthma/anaphylactic symptoms, the protocol will be followed.

### **Steps of the Protocol**

#### ***When a life-threatening asthma attack or systemic reaction (anaphylaxis) is recognized.***

1. **CALL 911**
2. Summon school nurse if available. If not, summon designated trained, non-medical staff to implement emergency protocol
3. Check airway patency, breathing, respiratory rate, and pulse
4. Administer medications (EpiPen and albuterol) per standing order
5. Determine cause as quickly as possible
6. Monitor vital signs (pulse, respiration, etc.)
7. Contact parents immediately and physician as soon as possible
8. Any individual treated for symptoms with epinephrine at school will be transferred to medical facility

The parent or guardian of a student of minority age may sign a waiver requesting that their student not receive emergency treatment under this protocol.



### **Emergency Numbers**

It is important that current telephone numbers are on file at the Early Childhood Program. Home, cell phone and work numbers of parents/guardians, childcare providers and three (3) people in Alliance that we can contact in case we cannot reach the parent/guardian need to be provided.

### **Illness**

See APS Parent/Student Handbook regarding illness.

### **Absences**



It shall be the responsibility of the parent to notify the student's attendance center as soon as the parent knows the student will not be attending school on that day. Please call the Early Childhood Center at 762-4425 if your child will be absent. If calling before or after school hours, feel free to leave a message on the answering machine. The Director may request evidence or written verification of the student's reason for absence. Student absences approved by the Director shall be excused absences. Excused absences other than documented illness shall count as days in attendance for purposes of addressing excessive absenteeism.

Examples of excused absences would be illness, death in the family, personal medical, dental, optometric or chiropractic appointment, observance of a religious holiday, spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family who is an active duty member of the military or other reasons that are within the discretion of the director and, based on the factors of the student's circumstances, are deemed to be considered as an excused absence.

While it is not mandatory that your child be enrolled in school due to his/her age, it is important that your child attends regularly to achieve the maximum benefits of the educational program at the Early Childhood Center.

**Once a child has accumulated 10 unexcused absences per semester, the Alliance Public Schools will assume that parents no longer wish to have their child enrolled in the Early Childhood Program and their child will lose their eligibility to attend our program.**

*The APS Board Policy 503 is listed below for more information on Excessive Absenteeism:*

*Excessive Absenteeism. Students who accumulate five (5) **unexcused absences** in a quarter shall be deemed to have "excessive absences." Such absences shall be determined on a per day basis for elementary students and on a per class basis for secondary students. When a student has excessive absences, the following procedures shall be implemented:*

- a. Verbal or written communication by school officials with the person or persons who have legal or actual charge or control of any child; and*
- b. One or more meetings between the school (a school attendance officer, a school administrator or his or her designee, and/or a social worker), the child's parent or guardian, and the child, when appropriate, to address the barriers to attendance. The result of the meeting or meetings shall be to develop a collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance. The plan shall consider, but not be limited to:
  - (i) Illness related to physical or behavioral health of the child.*
  - (ii) Educational counseling;*
  - (iii) Educational evaluation;*
  - (iv) Referral to community agencies for economic services;*
  - (v) Family or individual counseling; and*
  - (vi) Assisting the family in working with other community services.**

*If the parent/guardian refuses to participate in such meeting, the principal*

*shall place documentation of such refusal in the child's attendance records.  
Reporting Excessive Absenteeism to the County Attorney.*

*The school may report to the county attorney of the county in which the person resides when the school has documented the efforts to address excessive absences, the collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance has not been successful, and the student has **accumulated more than twenty (20) absences per year**. The school shall notify the child's family in writing prior to referring the child to the county attorney. Illness that makes attendance impossible or impracticable shall not be the basis for referral to the county attorney. A report to the county attorney may also be made when a student otherwise accrues excessive absences as herein defined.*

## **Medications**

Students may be required to take medication during the school day. Medications shall be administered by the school nurse, a registered medication aide or other school staff members meeting the minimum competency standards for the Medication Aide Act. The district shall establish procedures which may allow students to self-administer medications for diabetes, asthma and anaphylaxis.

### **Medication Administration at School**

Medication will not be administered without written authorization that is signed and dated from the parent. The medication must be in the original container, which is labeled by the pharmacy or the manufacturer with the name of the child, name of the medication, the time of day, which it is to be given, the dosage and duration.

Medication will be kept in a secure area.

Written authorization will also be obtained when the parent/guardian requests student co-administration of medication for conditions other than self-managed diabetes, asthma or anaphylaxis when competency is demonstrated. When administration of the medication requires ongoing professional judgment, the licensed health personnel will develop an individual health plan with the student and the student's parent/guardian.

A written record of the administration of medication procedure must be kept for each child receiving any medication. It will include: the date; student's name; prescriber or person authorizing the medication and its dosage; the medication administrator's name, signature and title; the time given; route given and any unusual circumstances, actions or omissions.

Administration of medication records shall be kept confidential.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 508*



## **Transportation**

The transportation release form enables the center to transport your child to and from activities such as field trips with the parent's permission. Parents will be notified in advance of scheduled traveling and may revoke their permission at any time.

## **Bus Rules**

Children who qualify for special education qualify for transportation to and from preschool.

The following are district rules for the bus and are provided to ensure the safety of your child during transport.

- Pick-up and delivery must be at a location established in advance with the school. This location must be within the school district city limits and cannot change from day to day.
- Delivery will be made to a parent or into the hands of a responsible, predestinated adult who has been authorized in writing to receive the child.
- The responsible adult must show their presence at the time of pick-up and at the time of delivery.
- Loose articles must be placed in a backpack or bag.
- Eating and drinking on the bus is not permitted.
- Complaints need to be reported to the Special Education Office at 762-4331 or the Early Childhood Center at 762-4425.

**If your child will not be attending school and will not need to ride the bus, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the preschool at least ½ hour prior to the designated pick-up time so that we can notify the bus driver to avoid unnecessary stops.**

The bus driver's cell phone number is 763-9117.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 801*

## **Photo Release**

The photo release form enables the center to photograph individual or groups of children, videotape or post class photos on the school website. These are used for educational purposes and/or promotion of the center's activities and program. Parents may revoke their consent at any time.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 507*



## **Clothing for School**

It is important to dress your child appropriately for school and for existing weather conditions. The children do go outside every day, so please

dress them accordingly, providing gloves, hats, coats and boots when necessary.

The children engage in messy activities such as cooking, painting, playing in the sand and water, so it is important that they are dressed in clothing which allows them to participate in these activities. The center takes precautions to provide paint shirts for messy activities, but this is not a guarantee that your child's clothing will not get dirty. A child's clothes will be changed if they have had a toilet accident or have bled on them from an injury. You may send an extra pair of clothes in their backpack or may leave extra clothes at school in case of an accident. The soiled clothes will be bagged and sent home.

When staff at the center is assisting an individual with body fluid secretions on themselves or on their clothing, the staff member assisting is required to wear gloves.

Parents are required to provide diapers and wipes for children who are not toilet trained.

### **Label Possessions**

Please write your child's name on their possessions including but not limited to coats, backpacks, mittens, hats, etc. Children will be provided with a cubbie and coat hook for their possessions. The center is not responsible for lost items.

### **Bringing Toys, Pets & Special Items to School**

Please obtain permission from your child's teacher prior to bringing something special to school such as a pet, toys, etc.

### **Special Education Information**

Developmental Evaluations are provided at no cost to residents of the Alliance Public Schools who have questions regarding their child's development. These services are available for children age birth to 21 years of age. Verification for services according to Nebraska Rule 51 is determined through a comprehensive Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MDT). A variety of evaluation tools are utilized to determine if a child meets Rule 51 verification guidelines. If a child verifies for services, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for children age 3 to 21 years of age is written with the parents and providers outlining specific goals to meet the child's needs. Services to meet those needs are also decided upon at the IEP meeting. For children age birth to 3 years of age, an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is written with the parents and providers. A service coordinator assists the family through the IFSP process for children age birth to three years and informs the family of services available outside of the school services.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 612*

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Thematic Units**

Thematic units are designed using a storybook theme with activities to enhance a child's learning in all areas of development. Units are usually two weeks in length and contain tasks which encourage a child's development in the areas of cognitive, language, fine motor, gross motor, social and emotional and self-help skills.

### **Cognitive Development**

Cognitive Development is the growth of thinking skills. It involves your child's knowledge about the world. It includes the mental activities of thinking, remembering, and solving problems. From experiences with people, objects, and events, your child learns that people make events happen, objects can be acted upon, and people and objects still exist when you can't see them. Through curiosity and search for understanding, your child will come to organize ideas about the world into concepts. Understanding and using concepts such as location, time, numbers and colors prepare your child for school.

### **Language Development**

Children learn words and their meanings, how to combine words to make understandable sentences and how to use words and sentences to communicate with other people. Speech development is the sound pattern of language and is made up of combinations of sounds which form words. The development of speech requires the growth and motor control of the child's lips, jaw, teeth, tongue, the child's ability to hear and distinguish speech sounds and the child's cognitive development, having ideas to talk about.

### **Motor Skills**

Motor skills involve the development of large and small muscles. Gross motor skills, using large muscles, include crawling, walking, running, skipping and climbing. Fine motor skills, using small muscles, includes manipulating small objects, writing, stringing beads, putting pegs in a pegboard and using eating utensils.

### **Social/Emotional Skills**

These skills involve a child's interactions with others. Young children gain an understanding of their feelings and learn appropriate ways to deal with other people's feelings through exposure to social situations both with their peers and other adults. Children gain self-confidence and the ability to handle various social situations when given opportunities to interact in a variety of social settings that enhances their self-esteem.

## **Self-Help Skills**

Self-help skills include skills that involve taking care of personal needs such as eating, dressing, toileting and bathing. Development of these skills helps a child to gain independence and self-confidence.

## **Child Abuse/Neglect Adult & Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline 1-800-652-1999**

### **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REGULATION**

Any school employee shall make an oral report by telephone to the local law enforcement authorities or the Department of Health and Human Services when that employee has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which reasonably would result in abuse or neglect.

"Child abuse" is defined as knowingly, intentionally or negligently causing or permitting a minor child to be:

1. Placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health;
2. Cruelly confined or cruelly punished;
3. Deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care;
4. Left unattended in a motor vehicle if such minor child is six years of age or younger;
5. Placed in a situation to be sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging, or forcing such minor child to solicit for or engage in prostitution, debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography, films, or depictions; or
6. Placed in a situation to be sexually abused as defined in Neb. Statutes 28-319 or 28-320.01.

Any person making such a report as required by law will be immune from any civil or criminal liability, except for in the case of making maliciously false statements. Failure to make such a required report, or knowingly releasing confidential information other than as permitted by law will result in a Class III misdemeanor.

It is not the responsibility of employees to prove that a child has been abused or neglected.

Employees should not take it upon themselves to investigate the case or contact the family of the child. The Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for investigating the incident of alleged abuse.

More information on Child Abuse/Neglect can be found on the Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services website: <http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/cha/abuse.htm>  
*Reference APS Board Policy: 403*

## **Procedure for Complaints/Conflicts**

Constructive criticism of the school is welcome when it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program and to equip the school to perform its task more effectively. The Alliance Public School Board trust its employees and desires to support their actions in such a manner that employees are freed from unnecessary, spiteful or negative criticism and complaints. It is also recognized that opinions differ concerning appropriateness of instructional materials. Occasionally an individual or group may find instructional materials used in the schools in conflict with their views. The channel for handling complaints involving staff is as follows:

Step One: Conference: Have a scheduled conference with the staff person involved in the complaint matter. If the complaint is towards the classroom paraprofessional, schedule the conference with the classroom teacher.

Step Two: Appeal to Director: If the matter is still unresolved at Step 1, a written review appeal should be made within five days to the director of the Early Childhood Program

Step Three: Appeal to the Superintendent: If the matter is still unresolved at Step 2, a written review appeal should be made within five days to the superintendent of schools.

Step Four: Appeal to the Board of Education: If the matter is still unresolved at Step 3, a written review appeal should be made within five days to the Board of Education of the Alliance Public Schools.

Conditions:

- a. All information to be considered at each appeal step must be in written form.
- b. All appeal decisions shall be expedited as quickly as possible. A decision at any level should be rendered within 5 days.

*Reference APS Board Policy: 403, 1005*

### **Notice of Nondiscrimination**

*It is the policy of the Alliance Public Schools to not discriminate on the basis of gender, national origin, race, creed, color, age, marital status, religion or disability in its education programs, administration, policies, employment or other district programs. If you feel you are the recipient of illegal discrimination, please notify the Superintendent's office at 762-5475.*

*Reference APS Board Policy: 103*

### **Confidentiality Statement**

*Student records or files maintained by the district are strictly confidential under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (34 CFR 300). Records may not be released without written consent except to the following:*

- a. District personnel who have a legitimate educational interest
- b. Auditing officials of the United States Government. Auditing officials of the state education authorities, when necessary in connection with the audit and evaluation of federally or state supported educational programs. The collecting of such data shall not permit personal identification of students or their parents.
- c. Courts, in compliance with judicial order or subpoena, provided that the parents of the students are notified of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance.

*Name and Address of the Office that administers FERPA is:*

*Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Dept. of Education  
400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-4605*

*Reference APS Board Policy: 507*