Proud Tradition Promising Future

NEW PRAGUE AREA SCHOOLS

EARLY LEARNING

2026-2027

Parent Handbook

New Prague Area Schools Preschool Programs

Early Learning Supervisor

Heather Sanders 952-758-1671

Preschool Office

Sharon Rezac, Office Assistant
952-758-1674 Registration, Tuition, General Information

Central Education Campus-New Prague

Preschool Teachers

Lynette Galchutt 952-758-1758
Marci Muller 952-758-1761
Maggie Goldade 952-758-1737

ECSE Preschool Teachers

Tessa Berge 952-758-1750
Megan Schultz 952-758-1720
Crystal Stocker 952-758-1763
Jen Weichert 952-758-1722

Falcon Ridge Elementary-New Prague

Jodi Dolezal 952-758-1637
Michelle Trcka 952-758-1652

Raven Stream Elementary-New Prague

Maria Swanke 952-758-1522

Eagle View Elementary-Elko New Market

Preschool Teachers

Diane Barrier 952-758-6083
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Kris Palma 952-758-6053

ECSE Preschool Teacher

Linda Tefft 952-758-6086

Attendance Line

952-758-1670

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NEW PRAGUE AREA SCHOOLS

EQUITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT

New Prague Area Schools is dedicated to creating a culture where all students have an equal and inclusive opportunity to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. We will honor the uniqueness of each individual and embrace diverse backgrounds, values and viewpoints that will build an empowered school community while acknowledging our differences as strengths.

Early Learning

410 Central Avenue North, Suite 400

New Prague, MN 56071

952-758-1674

Dear Preschool Families,

Welcome to the New Prague Area Schools Preschool Program, where curiosity, creativity, and giggles are all part of the daily routine.

We are *so* excited to begin this brand-new school year with your little learner. Our classrooms are ready, our hearts are full, and we can't wait to watch your child grow, learn, make new friends, and maybe even discover a favorite book or two (or twenty)!

Here's what we believe: kids thrive when they feel safe, loved, and supported and that's exactly the kind of environment we've created. We know that every child is unique, and we're here to help them explore their world, ask big questions, and celebrate their successes (big and small) along the way.

We also believe the best learning happens when we work together with you, the ones who know your child best. So let's team together. We're excited to partner with you this year to support your child's growth socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually.

Please take a few moments to look through the Preschool Handbook. It's packed with helpful info to make the transition into preschool smooth and happy. Most of your questions will be answered there, but if anything's unclear or you just want to chat, give us a call at **952-758-1674** or connect with your child's teacher. We're here for you!

Thank you for trusting us with this exciting chapter in your child's journey. We're honored to be part of it and can't wait to make memories together.

Heather Sanders
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New Prague Area Schools
952-758-1671
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Early Learning Office Assistant
New Prague Area Schools
952-758-1674
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Our Philosophy

We believe that every child loves to learn. Our preschools provide a warm, caring, and positive place for learning.

We believe that every child is unique with special talents and abilities. Children are treated as an individual, building on their strengths.

We believe that every preschool child is growing socially and intellectually. Our preschools offer a curriculum, social and learning experiences that build a child's skills and readiness for school.

We believe parents are a key component to children's success in school and beyond. Our preschools encourage parents to be active participants in their child's schooling.

Arrival and Dismissal

1. **Preschool Drop-Off:** This varies from building to building and sometimes from classroom to classroom, so please get these details from your child's teacher at Open House on Aug 25th.
2. **Preschool-Pick-up:** Please be prompt for pick up. If your child attends WRAP or is a student who receives transportation, staff will get your child to the appropriate spot. At the CEC, all parents will need to park and enter the building to pick them up from the classroom. Some classes may be outside on the playground so there will be no need to enter the building. The teachers will provide more detailed information for pick up for Falcon Ridge, Raven Stream and Eagle View.
3. **Late Pick ups: An additional $10 will be added to your next month's tuition if your child is picked up 10 or more minutes late. Prompt pick-up is respectful and necessary.** Keep discussions with the teaching staff brief. If you have any questions/concerns, please email your teacher. Please respect the preparation time that teachers need before, between and after classes.
4. Any person authorized to pick up your child must be listed in your child's Eleyo account. Children will only be released to authorized people on your account.
5. **Absences:** If your child is going to be absent from school, please call our attendance line at 952- 758-1670. Please leave your child's name, preschool class, date of absence and reason for absence. If your child uses preschool transportation and will not be attending school, please use the Remind App on your phone and send a message. Students on IEP's should contact the bus garage at 952-758-1483 to notify them of your child's absence. Instructions for getting signed up on the Remind App will be sent to all transportation students.

Security: New Prague Area Schools utilizes a visitor registration system in all of our district schools. The visitor registration system allows us to track visitors, contractors, and volunteers in our buildings during school hours. Upon entering a district building, visitors will be asked to present a valid state issued ID, which will be scanned into the system. Once entry is approved, the visitor will be issued a badge that identifies the visitor, the date, and the purpose of his/her visit. It is important to note that the system only scans the visitor's name, date of birth and photo for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. Additional visitor data from the driver's license is not gathered, nor is the system connected to any other system

such as the Department of Motor Vehicles. Therefore, any other information on the ID is not scanned by the system and is not accessible to any of the users.

*If your child attends Falcon Ridge, Eagle View or Raven Stream, you will need to go to the main office and bring your state issued ID to be scanned into the system if you are volunteering in the classroom. Since pick up and drop off occurs outside the building, scanning is not necessary.

*If your child attends the Central Education Campus and you will be in the building between the hours of 7:00 am-4:00 pm on a regular schedule, you will need to bring your state issued ID to be scanned into the system at Meet the Teacher. After you have been scanned, you will receive a tag to attach it to your keychain. When you are entering the CEC, you will need to show your tag. If you forget or do not bring your tag, you will need to scan your state issued ID again for a temporary label for entry. The Central Education Campus is a large building that is used during the school day by community members. The preschool, ECFE and WRAP rooms are locked off, however, an extra level of security is in place with the use of the visitor registration system.

*If you have someone else who will be dropping off or picking up your child one day, please remind them to bring their state issued ID. Please allow for a little extra time the first time you need to scan your ID.

Tuition:

1. Tuition is due on the first of every month September-May.
2. **Teachers do not collect money for tuition.** Tuition should be mailed to Early Learning at 410 Central Ave. North, Suite 400, New Prague, MN 56071 or paid by credit card online (Eleyo). **Automatic withdrawal is very easy to set up. If you have not paid your September tuition on time, you will be required to set up autopay for the rest of the year.** Please call Sharon at the Early Learning office at 952-758-1674 if you have any questions regarding your tuition and autopay.
3. **A reminder notice and late fee of $5.00 will be sent after the 5th of every month if tuition is not paid.**
4. There are no tuition refunds for missed class days due to illness, school closings or vacations.
5. Monthly tuition is determined by dividing yearly preschool tuition by 9 months.

Attendance: Attendance affects your child's learning and social growth. Parents set an example. Never make school a choice for the child. Going to school is a parental decision. If you have difficulties with your child coming to school, please talk to your teacher. Habitual absenteeism may be

a reason for withdrawal. **For scholarship families-absenteeism can be a reason for loss of scholarship and/or withdrawal from class. We will not provide scholarships for students who do not attend class.** Withdrawals from school must be in writing **two weeks** prior to the last day of attendance. Tuition will be due until written notice is received.

Parent Volunteers: Parents can volunteer to help the teacher in the classroom and with at home projects. Volunteers will be allowed in our buildings on a case-by-case basis as educationally necessary.

Cubbies or lockers: Each child will have a cubby, locker, or hook to hand their coats and backpacks. It will be labeled with their name. Your child will have their own space during their class time, but the space is shared by other students during other class times. Nothing stays overnight.

Backpacks: Each child is asked to have a full-sized backpack. Art projects, papers and communication from the teacher are sent back and forth in the backpacks. It is important to check the backpacks every school day.

Toys: We ask that no personal toys be brought to school.

Scholastic book orders: Scholastic book orders will be available each month. Ordering information will be given to you. Scholastic books are inexpensive and a great way to build your home library. A bonus is that the classroom receives points for every book purchased which enables them to receive free books for their classroom library.

Toilet training: We prefer children to be fully trained but understand that some children are still in the process and have accidents. Should an accident happen, we will help your child clean him/herself up to the best of their ability. Pack an extra set of clothing, especially if you know your child has accidents. Most children are more comfortable in their own clothes. If your child is having difficulty with toilet training, we encourage you to call our Early Childhood Family Education office at 952-758-1674. Resources can be provided.

Classroom Giving Tree: From time to time, each classroom will post classroom needs. If you can help us by donating an item, it will be appreciated.

Curriculum and Assessment: Our classrooms are fun, busy places for learning and being with others. Our OWL curriculum focuses on literacy, language, and early math skills. Learning to be part of a group, be a good friend, and learn self-help skills are also an important emphasis. Our Second Step and Concepts of Kindness curriculum teaches and reinforces social-emotional skills every day. The SMART curriculum is used to help foster motor and brain development. Conscious Discipline concepts are also incorporated into the day. Size Matters Handwriting is used to help children develop the fine motor skills and vocabulary needed for prewriting. The curriculum is aligned with Minnesota Early Learning Standards and New Prague Area Schools Kindergarten Reading Program. We do assessments two times a year, so we know how best to support your child and move them forward in learning.

Communication:

1. Please contact your child's teacher with any questions or concerns you have about school. Phone calls, emails, and notes are welcome. Please let us know if any family information changes (address changes, telephone numbers, and emergency contact information.)
2. Teachers communicate with parents using a monthly newsletter, calendar, email blasts, notes, Seesaw, Kaymbu (COR Advantage Assessment tool) app and phone calls.
3. During your child's scheduled class time, the teacher will not be checking email or voicemail. In emergency situations only, call the main office at 952-758-1674. Talk to your teacher before or after school or leave a voicemail message.

Conferences:

1. Conferences will be held **Oct 14-15 in the fall and March 16-17 in the spring** for children. All children will receive a COR Advantage Portfolio indicating learning progression. **Preschool classes will not be held during the week of Oct 13th, but they are provided March 18-20th following the spring conferences.**
2. Parents can request to meet anytime with the teacher or talk about progress being made. Teachers may also request a parent teacher conference when there are concerns.

Clothing:

1. Children should be dressed for active/messy play every class day. Shoes are required. Tennis shoes are preferred. **Flip flops are highly discouraged.**
2. Consider your child's toileting needs when dressing them. It helps to have clothing so that they can be as independent as possible.
3. Having an extra set of clothes in their backpack can be helpful in emergencies. The classroom does have some extra clothing, but your child may be more comfortable wearing their own clothes.
4. **Your child should be prepared to play outside (fall, winter, spring) each class day. Be sure that they have coats, hats, mittens, boots, and snow pants during the winter months.**

Mandated Reporters: All Early Childhood Staff are mandated reporters for child neglect or abuse.

Fire Drills/Lockdown: Students participate in fire and lock down drills.

Health Guidelines: It is a priority for us to provide a safe and healthy environment for your child. Please help us keep all our children in the best of health.

Below are the guidelines on keeping your child(ren) home from school due to illness:

1. If the student has had a fever of 100 degrees or more in the past 24 hours.
2. If the student has had diarrhea or has vomited, he/she should stay home until 24 hours after the last episode.
3. If the student has any rash that may be disease related, or the cause is unknown. Check with your health care provider before sending him/her to school.
4. If the student has open/draining skin sores or inflamed/draining eyes or ears. The student should stay home until seen by your healthcare provider.

5. If the student is prescribed antibiotics, they should take them for 24 hours before returning to school.
6. For more information, you can go to the district health website at https://www.npaschools.org/apps/pages/health-services or contact Lindsay Pape, Director of Health Services at 952-758-1760.

If your child develops any of these symptoms while in attendance, you will be notified and asked to pick up your child. It is important for us to have all appropriate phone numbers and emergency contacts. If any of these numbers change during the school year, please notify the staff.

Medications: Any student requiring medication during school hours must have an authorization to administer medication completed by the physician (for health services to administer the medication during the school day.) Please contact Lindsay Jabas, Director of Health Services, for further information at 952-758-1760.

Minor accidents: All minor accidents that occur at school will be treated by a teacher with soap, water, ice, and bandage, as needed. The teacher will inform the parents as to what happened.

Severe illnesses or accidents: Parents/guardians will be notified immediately of major illnesses or accidents. If we are unable to reach the parent/guardian, health services staff or their designee will make the determination if 911 should be classed. A staff person will accompany your child to the appropriate medical facility and will stay with him or her until an authorized person arrives.

Food and snacks: A breakfast and lunch is provided for full day. Breakfast is provided for morning classes. . We ask that each student bring a labeled water bottle.

Lunch: Children that attend full day programming will receive free lunch or you may pack a cold lunch.

Allergies: Parents must update all allergies in the Infinite Campus portal.

Immunizations: All children attending preschool must be current with their immunizations or have a notarized conscientious objection form completed. This information will be collected in Infinite Campus.

Birthdays: We do **not allow food treats for your child's birthday.** Some students have dietary restrictions and food allergies. We will celebrate the day by singing and recognizing your child in a special way. If your child's birthday does not fall during the school year, a ½ birthday will be celebrated.

Weather cancellation policy: In the event of bad weather, it may be necessary to cancel, delay, or end classes early. Any District 721 cancellations or changes will be on local radio KCHK (95.5 FM, 1350 AM) or local TV stations. You can also call the District 721 Weather Hotline at 952-758-1780. You can also sign up through the Campus Portal to receive updates. Information can be found on our

district website at www.npaschools.org. (Top of the page, click on Parents). **School cancellations will not specifically say New Prague Area Preschools.** Your child's teacher will contact you on blended learning days.

1. If school is closed all day, all preschool classes are canceled.
2. If school has a delayed start, there are no morning preschool classes. Afternoon classes will be held. The full day preschool class will start 2 hours late.
3. If school closes early, listen to the stations listed above, or call the weather hotline for closing time. We will notify you if we are unable to continue class to the end time and you need to pick up your child early.

Early Childhood Developmental Screening: All children that attend our preschool program need to be screened within the first 90 days of the first day of school. All children must complete their Early Childhood Developmental Screening before they enter kindergarten. Children should be screened after they turn 3 years old.
Screening is a quick check of your child's overall development. It does not indicate kindergarten readiness. If your child has not been screened, go to https://npaschools.ce.eleyo.com/search?redirected_yet=true&sf[category]=156 You can pick a date and time that works in your schedule. It is quick and easy.

Photos and Videos: We like to take pictures and videos throughout the year of classroom activities. These are used for instruction, evaluation, and program promotion. Children's names are never shared. You can choose to give us permission or not during your Infinite Campus registration.

Nature Based Preschool Additional Guidelines

What is a Nature Based Preschool?

A nature-based preschool brings Environmental Education (EE) into Early Childhood Education to create meaningful outdoor experiences that are developmentally appropriate.

Within Minnesota, Early Childhood Education focuses on several important developmental domains: Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy Development, Creativity and the Arts, Cognitive Development, and Physical and Motor Development. The outdoor environment naturally provides authentic and engaging learning opportunities to support children's development in each of these areas. Through teaching and learning outside, we are also able to address the primary goal of EE, which is to change people's actions or behavior towards the environment through awareness, knowledge, attitude, and skills.

Our goal is for your child to leave preschool ready for a smooth transition into kindergarten. We utilize the Minnesota Department of Education's Early Learning Indicators as well as target skills and concepts identified by our COR assessment to guide our goals and objectives for the school year.

Teaching children to wonder, explore, and discover. Our outdoor experiences will open the children's eyes to a whole new way of exploring the great outdoors. Throughout the year children will experience first-hand the wonders and mysteries of nature. From watching a butterfly emerge from a chrysalis, to tasting the snowflakes, to anxiously waiting for the first signs of spring, children will learn to appreciate the natural world around them. Be prepared to have many "Why do you think…" conversations and requests to go for nature hikes. Remember, you don't need to have all the answers,

only willingness to wonder aloud with your child and seek out the answers through your own discoveries.

Air Quality

Teachers and admin will be thoughtful about students with air quality sensitivities (such as asthma) anytime AQI exceeds 100. Per PCA guidance, outdoor activities should be modified to "take longer breaks and do less intense activities" when AQI is in the 151-200 range (Unhealthy). Outdoor activity should be canceled when AQI exceeds 200 (Very Unhealthy). If that were to happen, we would utilize our classroom that day.

Current air quality | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (state.mn.us)

Air quality and outdoor activity guidance for schools (state.mn.us)

Heat

If a heat advisory is issued, all outdoor activities must be closely monitored, and the duration of physical activities will be shortened. Schedule in short breaks every 15 minutes and ensure students always have easy access to water and shade. When a heat warning is issued, we will learn primarily indoors. There are many variables for when heat advisories and warnings are issued (temperature/humidity/time of year/region/length of event), so teachers and admin will watch for the actual advisories and warnings rather than simply monitoring temperature.

Severe Weather

In the event of a severe weather warning, outdoor activities will be stopped immediately, and students will be moved to shelter. This includes, but is not limited to severe thunderstorms, tornados, blizzards, and winter storms. No outdoor activities will continue until the warning has expired.

Cold Weather for Special Events

Teachers and admin will follow the National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart and make arrangements for programs to follow the guidelines. If the program time exceeds the recommended time outside and cannot be adapted to occur primarily inside, the program should be canceled or rescheduled. If the program moves forward, staff should use the Windchill Chart to build in regular breaks to move inside or to a heat source to warm up. For example, if the chart says frostbite can occur in 30 minutes, warm-up breaks should be taken at least every 30 minutes. Outdoor programs will typically be canceled or significantly adapted when there is a Wind Chill Advisory or Warning. The Twin Cities National Weather Service Forecast Office uses -25 F windchills as the threshold for issuing a Wind Chill Advisory and -35F wind chills for a Wind Chill Warning.

