



Northwest Hills Preschool

Parent Handbook

2017-2018

Preschool Contact Information:

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Parent Handbook
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9334 Fort Street Omaha, NE 68134 (402) 572-8392

Our Philosophy, Purpose, and Curriculum

Thank you for enrolling your child at Northwest Hills Preschool. It is the philosophy of the preschool that early childhood should be a time of fun, warmth, security, exploration, and discovery. Preschool children are creative and receptive and our program strives to nurture these qualities in each student.

Our purpose is to provide a safe, wholesome environment based on Christian values, thereby encouraging the spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth and development of each child.

Northwest Hills Preschool will not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. Children do need to be toilet trained in order to be eligible for enrollment.

We plan for positive and consistent care of the children enrolled in our program. Our developmentally appropriate curriculum is planned within the framework of our philosophy and purpose. It includes Bible stories and activities, songs, finger-plays, creative art activities, dramatic play, science activities, and large and small muscle activities. Children will have exposure to shapes, colors, numbers, letters and letter sounds, and nature activities, along with celebrations of birthdays. We will also attend a field trip to the local park a couple of times each year.

General Information

Northwest Hills Preschool believes that parents are the first and primary teachers of their children. We strive to build a partnership between teachers and parents, as we believe communication between home and school to be essential. We have an open-door policy, meaning parents are welcome to come observe their child(ren) in the classroom, unannounced, at any time they choose.

There will be opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom throughout the school year (extra hands for projects and parties). Sign-up sheets will be made available in advance of such events. A background check is required prior to volunteering.

Northwest Hills Preschool is a ministry of the Northwest Hills Church. The teachers report to the director; who in turn reports to the senior pastor.

Northwest Hills Preschool is licensed by The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure. Their address is: P.O. Box 95007, Lincoln, NE 68509-5007. They can be contacted at 1-800-600-1289

Parents can request a conference at any time with a teacher and/or the director. Northwest Hills Preschool values parental input. Please feel free to conference with us regarding your child and general program ideas.

Program Demographics

Northwest Hills Preschool operation hours are 9:00am to 12:00pm Monday through Friday. Program capacity is 29 children ages three to five. The state requires one teacher per ten children for three year olds and one teacher per twelve children for four year olds. Northwest Hills Preschool has two teachers.

Arrival and Departure

Parents must walk their child into the building and see them into the classroom daily. Please enter using the northeast lower-level entrance. The director or lead teacher will check-in each child as they arrive. We will not allow a child to leave the building alone. Parents/guardians must come into the building and into the hallway to pick up their child from the classroom.

Although we will have the names of those authorized to pick up your child, please let them know that they will be required to show a picture I.D. for identification or we will not be allowed to release your child to them.

If you are going to be late picking up your child, please call the school to inform us. You can contact us at 402-572-8392. Children worry when they are not picked up on time. We greatly appreciate your punctuality in picking up your child.

Locked Door Policy

For the safety of our children and staff, Northwest Hills Preschool will keep all doors locked during the school day, with the exception of drop off and pick up hours.

Drop off times: 8:45am to 9:00 am

Pick up times: 11:55am to 12:15pm

If you arrive after these times, please use the church office door located in the upper area of the church. Ring the doorbell to be let in to the building.

Tuition Policy

A non-refundable \$25.00 registration fee and registration form is due to hold your child's spot at preschool. This fee is not applied toward tuition.

Tuition is due the first school day of each month, beginning September 5th with last payment on May 1st. **If payment is not received by the 15th of the month, you may be assessed a late fee of \$30**, unless other arrangements have been made with the director. Please note that continual lateness in paying tuition could result in suspension/termination of your child from preschool.

In setting fees for the year, we have taken holidays and vacations into account. Tuition is not prorated and, therefore, not refundable for absences, snow days or vacations.

Checks should be made payable to *Northwest Hills Preschool*. We will provide you with a written receipt each month. Electronic payments are acceptable, but must be received at the preschool by the first of the month. A fee of \$33.00 will be charged for any returned checks.

Tuition rates are as follows:

We suggest preschool for three, four and five year olds (who did not meet the state cutoff date). Our costs are below:

5-Day Program: Monday through Friday: \$1350 for the year, or 9 monthly payment of \$150 per month.

3-Day Program: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: \$900 for the year, or 9 monthly payment of \$100 per month.

Voluntary Withdrawal

If a child is withdrawn by the parents prior to the end of the school year, tuition for the current month is required. If a child is withdrawn in the middle of a month, full payment for the month is required.

Confidentiality

Information contained in a child's record shall be privileged and confidential. Parents shall have access, upon request to the director, to their child's record at reasonable times. A written log shall be included in a child's record indicating any time a child's record has been released.

Health and Wellness

At Northwest Hills Preschool we do our best to safeguard your child by keeping a clean environment and conforming to the Board of Health guidelines with regards to hand-washing and disinfecting the classroom.

Absences: Please call the school when your child is going to be absent or if he/she becomes ill after leaving school. We appreciate knowing about illnesses that could impact other children.

Illnesses: **Your child should not come to school if he/she:**

- Had a fever over 100 in the past 24 hours
- Has had diarrhea, vomiting, within past 24 hours
- Has been on an antibiotic less than 24 hours
- Has suspected or confirmed throat or sinus infections
- Has head lice, open lesions in the mouth or on the body, impetigo, pink eye or scabies
- Any child who does not feel well and is in need of comfort.

A child with a minor cold may attend school as long as he/she is comfortable, not coughing excessively, and nasal discharge is **clear**, and is able to actively participate in preschool activities.

If your child becomes sick at school, the parents will be called first. In the event the parent(s) cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts whom the parent has indicated on their form. If we are unable to reach anyone, the child shall rest in the room apart from the other children and repeated calls will be made until someone is reached.

We must have emergency contacts on file. If any of your contact information changes throughout the year, please let us know immediately.

Notification of Communicable Diseases

Parents and Guardians will be notified by the director of any reportable communicable diseases on the day that the director is informed of the illness. All parents of enrolled students will be notified and a notice will be placed on the parent board. Specific students will not be named in the instance of a communicable disease.

Administration of Medication

Northwest Hills Preschool will only administer medications if the required dosage is due during the time the child is at school and under the following conditions:

- The administration of non-prescription and prescription medications for a child will only occur with the written consent of the parent.
- Medications will only be administered based on the given directions on the original medication container.
- All medications must be in their original packaging with the child's name, directions for administration, the dosage, number of doses per day, and number of days the medication has been prescribed.
- Medication will be administered by the director. In the director's absence, a staff member, determined by the director, may administer medication.
- Doctoral consent must be submitted to the director for as needed medication (epipen, inhaler, nebulizer, etc.)
- Doctoral consent must be submitted to the director for any medications given in an unusual route (nose, ear, armpit, etc.)

Extra or expired medications will be returned to parent or disposed of. Northwest Hills Preschool will keep a written record of all administered medications. Medications will be locked and stored out of reach of children, under proper conditions for sanitation, preservations, security, and safety.

Snack Policy

Northwest Hills Preschool is required to provide a snack time. We will provide an appropriate snack for the children. Snacks include at least one serving from one of the four basic food groups and meets nutritional standards set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The preschool will post a menu on the Parent Information Board outside of the classroom. With the exception of a birthday celebration or other special class occasion, please do not send your child to school with food from home. This includes arriving to school with candy or gum. On occasion, we may ask families to provide an item for snack. Often times the children will "make" their own snack. This provides a great opportunity to explore math and strengthen fine motor skills. We instill self-help skills during snack time as well. Children will pour their own drink and help to serve the snack. We will be serving water more often than juice to impart healthy eating habits with the children.

Birthdays

Each child's birthday is celebrated in the classroom. Their special day is recognized on or the school day closest to the child's birthday. Your child may bring a special **store bought** treat to class to celebrate the occasion, however, **PLEASE check with the classroom teachers regarding potential airborne food allergies of other children before bringing treats into the classroom.** In May, a special "un-birthday" day will be held for those children who celebrate their birthdays during the summer months.

Holidays and Other Celebrations

Northwest Hills Preschool recognizes all Christian holidays in the classroom. In addition, we hold special programs throughout the year such as a Pumpkin/Fall party, Christmas Program, Valentine's party, Mother's Day, Father's Day and Graduation. Northwest Hills Church does not celebrate Halloween.

School Appropriate Clothing

Clothing your child wears to school needs to be comfortable. If your child wears dresses, please have her wear leggings or heavy tights in the colder weather, as we will go outside whenever possible. Please write your child's name on the tags of all outerwear. Outerwear includes boots, hats, gloves, and winter coats.

Please do not send your child to school in their "good" clothes as preschoolers will get messy and, while our paints are water soluble, you may have difficulty removing the entire stain.

Tennis shoes are the best shoes for preschool. In the winter months, if your child wears snow boots to school, please be sure to provide a pair of shoes to wear in the classroom. This will help keep our carpet and their feet dry.

Please do not send your child to school in flip-flops, crocs or any sandal-type shoe that is open-toed or open-heeled. Please, no high-heeled shoes. They are not conducive to running or jumping and therefore do not allow your child to participate in many preschool activities.

Extra Clothing: Please provide one extra set of weather appropriate clothes for your child including: pants, shirt, underwear, socks. Please label each article of clothing with your child's name and place them in a plastic bag (a gallon-sized Ziploc works well). We will keep the clothing at school in case of a spill or accident. Reminders will be sent each season to update the clothing!

Toys from Home

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home to school.

There will be designated Show & Tell days when children will be allowed to bring special items. It can be difficult for children to share their special items from home for children at this age which can create conflicts. If a child brings a toy to school, he/she will be asked to give it to their parent/caregiver to take home. If the parent has already left, the teacher will store the item until departure time.

Everyday School Supplies

We ask that your child bring a **backpack** to school each day. It is helpful on days where there is something going home with them such as an art project, monthly calendar, newsletter, special notices, etc. Please check your child's backpack each day after school for these notices and items. Remember to bring in a complete change of clothes labeled and in a gallon Ziploc bag to replace worn ones.

Transportation

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to arrange transportation to and from preschool.

School Cancellations

If Omaha Public Schools have a delayed opening or are cancelled due to inclement weather, Northwest Hills Preschool will be closed. Information about weather related school closings can be seen on the television news channels 3, 6, 7, or 42 – look for “Omaha Public Schools” or “OPS”. There will *not* be any make up days for these cancelled classes.

Communication from School to Home

- **Activity Calendars** are coordinated with our weekly curriculum. We recommend that you post it in an obvious place at home so your child will be able to participate in that day's activity.
- **Monthly Newsletters** will inform you about the current month's curriculum, upcoming events, important dates, reminders, and other preschool information.
- **Memos from the Director** will be sent to inform you of other events, reminders, etc. that were not in the monthly newsletter.
- **The Parent Information Board** is located in the hallway just outside the classroom door. This board will display the monthly calendar and other special notices. Please take a look at this board daily!

Child Behavior Expectations and Discipline Procedures

It is our belief that children can be influenced by their surroundings. If the environment is not developmentally appropriate, children can become frustrated. To alleviate this we will provide a developmentally appropriate program with plenty of opportunities for the children to make their own choices. However, conflicts will arise and teachers will respond in a positive, appropriate manner. Teachers will use behavior management techniques such as setting reasonable and positive expectations, offering choices, and providing children an opportunity to verbalize their feelings, which encourages children to develop self-control through understanding. There are times in which the child is incapable of responding to these techniques, and will need extra time to gain their self control. During these times, the teacher will direct the child to a quiet place within the classroom for some time away from their peers to give the child the opportunity to calm down. This time away will take place within the teacher's view and will not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age.

Parents will be notified of any behavior management concerns and will be asked to work along with the teachers in helping the child with inappropriate behaviors.

Northwest Hills Preschool will never use spanking, slapping, pinching, punching, shaking or other physical forms of punishment. Nor will we deny food, force naps, or use negative, abusive, threatening or derogatory language with the children in our care.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

All staff members are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect, and shall immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Health and Human Services. Northwest Hills Preschool will cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect.

Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-652-1999

Family Helpline: 1-888-866-8660

Playground Safety

Safety is of utmost importance at Northwest Hills Preschool. We have three rules when we are outside: Walk on the play structure, wait your turn, and watch where you are going. When kids follow these rules, outside play can be fun and explorative! Children will participate in other outdoor activities as well.

Parental Involvement

At Northwest Hills Preschool, it is our pleasure to welcome families as partners in their children's education. It is vital that we work together to create the best possible education for our children and that includes you. We put on special events throughout the year in which we invite families to participate. We also encourage home discussions and practice of school learning (socially and academically). There are volunteer opportunities and other ways of partnering with us.

Volunteer Opportunities

Throughout the year, we need parent help with various activities and tasks. If you are interested in helping out, just ask the teachers for the current year's information packet and opportunities. All volunteers must pass a background check and state registry check before helping out. Some opportunities include: reading with students, helping with crafts, preparing materials for projects or centers, putting parties together, etc.

Monthly Church Services

Each month (usually the first Wednesday) a short church service is conducted for the children in the Sanctuary. This includes songs, prayers, and a short message. Prayers are said on a regular basis during the preschool day and Christian values are instilled in the children.

Quarterly Parties

Each quarter during the school year, we will host a party for families to join us in celebration of our students. Parties include: Harvest Party, Christmas Party, Valentine's Party, Mother's Day, Father's Day and End of Year/Graduation. We encourage as many members to participate as possible, but are always available to act as family if your schedule prohibits you from joining in.

- Harvest Party**

As we do not celebrate Halloween, this party acts as a replacement. We have fun with Fall and Farm activities and sing a little song for your enjoyment. We provide activities that the families are encouraged to participate in.

- Christmas Party**

Since we are a Christian program, there is always time to celebrate Jesus through crafts, music and food. The kids enjoy singing and acting on the stage for families and then celebrating with you in food and fun.

- Valentine's Party**

Before the party, teachers help pass out cards and treats to each student, then families get to join together for an activity and candy. A class list will be provided and each student should receive a Valentine.

- End of School Year Picnic**

During the last few weeks of school we will have a family picnic at a nearby park. Children will be dropped off at preschool and walk to the park (about 2 blocks away.) Families may bring a sack lunch and join us at the park.

- Graduation**

It is our joy to celebrate the end of a school year for our preschoolers. This party takes place in our sanctuary with caps, gowns and diplomas. The party is on the last day of school in May and is designed as a celebration of all of our accomplishments throughout the year.

Suspension Policy

It is our sincere desire to do everything that we can to avoid suspension and/or termination.

A child may be suspended/terminated from the program for the following reasons:

1. Northwest Hills Preschool is unable to meet the needs of the child due to the cost of inclusion or if the Northwest Hills Preschool is incapable of servicing the child.
2. Child is a behavioral danger to the other children or teachers in the program.
3. Parent or guardian does not follow policies and procedures of the preschool.
4. Parent or guardian does not provide required current immunization/medical documentation for their child.
5. Non-payment of tuition (defined as tuition/fees are more than 30 days late) unless arrangements have been made with the Director.
6. Parent or guardian is uncooperative.
7. Parent or guardian slanders someone else's child enrolled in the preschool.

In the event of the child being a behavioral danger to the other children or teachers, the following process will be performed:

1. The teacher will inform the director of the problem.
2. Parents or guardians will meet with the director and teacher to attempt to resolve the issue.
3. Parents or guardians will receive written and verbal notice of all director and teacher decisions and procedures.

Termination Policy

A child may be terminated from the program for the following reasons:

1. Northwest Hills Preschool is unable to meet the needs of the child due to the cost of inclusion, or Northwest Hills Preschool is incapable of servicing the child.
2. Parent or guardian is uncooperative.
3. Child is a behavioral danger to the other children or teachers in the program.
4. Parent or guardian does not follow policies and procedures of the preschool.
5. Non-payment of tuition (defined as tuition/fees are more than 30 days late) unless arrangements have been made with the Director.
6. Parent or guardian slanders someone else's child enrolled in the preschool.
7. Parent or guardian does not provide required immunization documentation **within one month of the start of school**.

In the event of the child being a behavioral danger to the other children or teachers, the child must go through the suspension process outlined above before being terminated. If any other of the above situations exists the following process will be followed:

1. Follow suspension procedures.
2. Parents or guardians will receive written and verbal notice as to all director and teacher decisions and procedures.

3. If the child should be terminated from the program, the parents will be provided with referrals and the child will be helped to understand.

Referral Services Policy

In the event that the program staff feel that an assessment for additional services would benefit the child, such as social, mental health, educational, and medical services, including but not limited to dental check-up, vision or hearing screening, Northwest Hills Preschool shall provide to the parent a written statement including the reason for recommending a referral for additional services, a brief summary of the teacher's observations related to the referral, and any efforts the program may have made to accommodate the child's needs.

The director will offer assistance to the child's parents in making the referral and shall have written parental consent before any referral is made. The director shall maintain a written record of any referrals, including the parent conference and results.

Progress Reports & Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled in October and March during the hours of 9am – 1 pm. There will be no preschool class on the day of conferences. Concerns about a child may arise throughout the school year to warrant additional conferences. Parents can schedule time with the director and teacher at any time; or the director may request a conference with the parent.

Required Paperwork

All child information and permission forms must be completed before school begins. Immunization Records will be updated at the beginning of the school year and children must have current records submitted prior to the beginning of school each year. Without these forms, your child will not be able to attend Preschool.

First Aid and CPR

Our teachers are certified in CPR and First Aid. If your child were to need emergency care due to an injury or condition that requires more than first aid treatment, we will contact a parent or guardian responsible for the child. In the event of a life-threatening emergency 9-1-1 will be called first; the parent(s) next. If a child's parent(s) cannot be reached, their emergency contacts will be called. If no one can be reached, the director shall assume responsibility for the child.

Our Guarantee to You

At Northwest Hills Preschool we work with children because we **love** children. Our goal is to foster self-esteem and encourage children to love learning. We want them to be the best that they can be. We will treat each child respectfully and provide a safe, caring, developmentally appropriate environment. Staff will inform parents as soon as possible about concerns, behavior matters, and other important observations. We want to help each child to succeed.

Our Staff

Northwest Hills Preschool prides itself on our dedication to creating a fun, supportive exploratory classroom experience. Our staff are either certified teachers or have over 1500 hours of classroom experience. Each year, we participate in at least six hours of continuing education workshops and experiences and are constantly seeking new and innovative ways to make your child's preschool experience great.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation from the school building (due to fire, natural disaster, loss of power, heat, or water, or other emergency), the following procedures shall be followed:

- Staff will calmly gather and count the children and leave from the closest, safest exit.
- Staff will bring student information clipboard, first aid kit and other medical supplies needed by specific children.
- Staff will take children to the Milton R. Abrahams Public Library 5111 North 90th Street Omaha, NE 68134 (402)444-6284
 - Walk or drive Fort Street to 90th street, cross Fort Street then 90th street to access road that takes you to library doors. Approximately 0.6 miles from Northwest Hills Preschool.
- Upon arrival at Milton R. Abrahams Public Library, staff will begin the reunification process.

Reunification Process

Upon safe arrival at Milton R. Abrahams Public Library, teachers and director will begin calling parents and guardians to notify of evacuation and current location of children. Primary parents or guardians will be contacted at each number listed until teachers or directors speak directly with a parent. If no parent is available, emergency contacts will be called.

If we are unable to contact parents via telephone or if we are unable to go to our designated evacuation place, we will notify first responders and parents of the location change.

Fire Emergencies

In the instance of a fire in the Northwest Hills building, students will be evacuated to a safe distance behind or in front of the building.

Fire Drills will occur once a month for the entire school year and will be recorded for school files. Before drills, teachers will review fire safety and expectations with students.

- Calmly walk with the class and teachers to the closest door outside
- Follow all teacher directions quickly and quietly
- Go to previously discussed safe spot in the field behind the building or far corner of parking lot if all lower level doors are blocked.
- Stay with teachers and classmates until it is safe to go back inside the building
- Follow Emergency Preparedness plan if unable to return to school building.

Staff members will evacuate with parent contact clipboard, first aid kit and other individual student medical supplies.

Tornado Emergencies

In the instance of tornado activity in the Northwest Hills Preschool vicinity, students and staff evacuate to tornado shelter in room 19 located across the hall from regular preschool rooms. Teachers will bring parent contact clipboard, first aid kit and other individual medical supplies to tornado shelter.

Tornado drills occur once in the Fall and once in the Spring and will be recorded for school files. Before drills, teachers will review tornado safety and expectations with students.

- Calmly follow the teachers' directions.
- Walk quickly and quietly to room 19 with teachers and the rest of the class.
- Sit against the far wall with arms over the child's neck.

In the instance that the building is unsafe, we will follow our Emergency Preparedness and Reunification Plans.