

# Cornell Elementary Preschool



Saydel Community School District

## **Student Handbook**

**2024-2025**

*Safe*

*Proud*

*Respected*

*Happy*

*Included*

## **Preschool Policies and Procedures**

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August 2024

Dear Cornell Preschool families:

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year. This handbook is designed as your guide to preschool with information regarding your child's daily activities, what your child will be learning, along with expectations, school guidelines and safety information.

We believe strongly in parent involvement in the preschool program and our staff looks forward to partnering with you to make your child's first experiences in school successful! We encourage communication between home and school through phone calls, emails and notes to help us as your child transitions from home to school. We will also hold fall and spring conferences to discuss your child's growth and progress. Finally, plan on weekly preschool updates that will be emailed to you.

At the preschool level much of our learning is through play. Teacher directed activities follow a developmentally appropriate curriculum using age appropriate materials. While our "work" looks like "play" we are helping the children develop the skills and positive learning attitudes for school, so that they are prepared and ready for kindergarten. Regular attendance is critical to ensure your child's success in preschool and readiness for kindergarten. We understand that all children are occasionally ill, however we value your help in working with us to ensure your child's regular attendance.

This handbook provides you with information describing the preschool program, guidelines and procedures the school must follow to meet quality standards, and district guidelines. The Iowa Department of Education has developed the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS) and criteria as best practice and evaluation for district preschool programs. The relevant standard and criteria are notated throughout the handbook. Please take the time to review the handbook content.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the program and your child's daily activities or learning, please contact us at Cornell (244-8173).

Sincerely,

*Katie Despotovich*

Preschool Coordinator

# Saydel Community School District Preschool

## Program Guide and Procedures

### **I. MISSION, VISION AND BELIEFS**    QPPS 10.1

#### **Mission**

The mission of the Saydel Community School District is to serve the unique learning needs of each and every student.

#### **Vision**

The Saydel Community School District will be a district having an uncompromising commitment to quality education and having high expectations for student achievement. It will be a district:

- *Providing the courses of study, environment and resources for students to acquire the knowledge and skills to become responsible and productive citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*
- *Preparing students to graduate, pursue further education or successfully enter the work force.*
- *Enabling students to take ownership of their future.*

#### **Beliefs**

- Each student is an important and worthwhile individual possessing a sense of curiosity, creativity and a natural desire to learn.
- Educating children is a complex process that requires the support and involvement of the student, parents, school personnel and community. All students are capable of mastering the skills and essential competencies identified by the district when provided sufficient time and instruction that is authentic, relevant, engaging and challenging.
- All students have a right to a safe, comfortable and positive learning environment.
- The guaranteed curriculum and instructional program provide all students with the opportunity to continue their education at the post-secondary level and/or successfully enter the work force.

### **II. WELCOME TO SAYDEL COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL**

QPPS 10.1

Cornell's preschool program follows the district mission, vision and beliefs to guide the preschool program goals at an appropriate developmental level for three and four year olds. Our primary goal is to provide a positive beginning school experience that will help ALL children develop the skills necessary for school success when they start kindergarten. Success is defined individually for each child, and the focus in our program is on promoting individual growth and progress.

Saydel Community School has a history of offering preschool for three and four year olds. The preschool provides a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new learning and skill development. Children feel safe, respected, and cared for in our preschool setting. We provide an opportunity for all children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build their readiness skills. The preschool program has adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices.

### **III. ENROLLMENT**

#### **Preschool Eligibility**

Eligibility Children who are four years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year are eligible to attend for free through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Grant.

Children who qualify for an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) for Special Education services with goals beyond speech only are eligible at the date of their third birthday. We do provide tuition-based enrollment for general education three year olds, though spots are very limited. Students who are five years of age prior to September 15 of the current school year are not eligible for preschool programming with Saydel Schools but are eligible for the kindergarten program.

A four-year old student without an IEP may enroll in the Universal Preschool instructional program of more than one school district. Only the district in which the student attends first during the day/week may count the student as a SWVPP student to receive funding. The parent must notify the Saydel Schools preschool director and registrar if the student will be enrolled in another Universal Preschool program. A second district or its community partner could allow the student to attend its preschool program the same as it allows other students not eligible for SWVPP if space allows, but the funding for participation in this program must be on a parent-paid tuition basis and must not exclude other eligible students' participation in a single session. Once the child is enrolled in a program, compulsory attendance applies. Both districts are required to take and report attendance. Based on local attendance policies, either (or both) districts may not allow the child to continue participation.

#### **Hours/Fees**

Classes meet four days per week according to the schedule below for morning and afternoon sessions. Children attend on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Students do not attend on Fridays. This allows for parent meetings and home visits, planning time for the teaching staff, and collaboration with the AEA team.

#### **The preschool follows the Saydel Community School calendar.**

3 yr. old AM session: 8:30 – 11:30	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
3 yr. old PM session: 12:30- 3:30	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
4 yr. old AM session: 8:30 – 11:30	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
4 yr. old PM session : 12:30 - 3:30	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

#### **Four-year-old students attend free under Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program funds.**

**Tuition is \$140.00 per month for the three-year-old program. Payment is due on the first day of the month September-May. Please make checks payable to Saydel Community School District and note preschool on check or pay using the link provided in automatic monthly emails you will receive from PowerSchools. If a payment is delinquent, you will be notified by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. If arrangements are not made by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month, the child will be dropped from the program.**

**To apply for free or reduced tuition benefits, please reach out to Cornell’s front office secretaries for an application. The reduced tuition rate for the benefit is set at \$70 per month.**

Tuition does not change regardless of school breaks or if canceled due to inclement weather.

### **Additional Enrollment Information**

QPPS 5.1, 10.10

All children need to be current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. **Health records shall be provided to the school nurse on or before the student’s first day of preschool.** Health records should include dates of service and immunizations. Preschool health requirements are established to insure that the program meets the Department of Education requirements. Additional information specific to Health is in this handbook under the **Health and Safety** section, or see the *Student and Family Handbook* for additional information, or contact the school nurse to address questions unique to your child.

### **Equal Educational Opportunity** (reference board policies 102 and 102.1) *Student and Family Handbook*

It is the policy of Saydel Community Schools to not discriminate in its educational activities on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or marital status.

It is also the policy of this district that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties and responsibilities of each individual as a member of pluralistic society.

Inquiries regarding compliance with the Title IX, Title VI, Section 504 or ADA may be directed to Saydel Equity Coordinator, in care of the Saydel District Office, 5740 NE 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Des Moines, IA 50313; or to the Director of the region VII Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Education, Kansas City, Missouri or the Chicago Office for Civil Rights within the United States Department of Education in Chicago, Illinois.

## **IV. OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

A Child’s Day

### **Who Works In the Preschool**

#### **Program Administrator**

QPPS 10.2

Katie Despotovich, Saydel Director of Special Education and Preschool Coordinator, is the program administrator supervising the preschool staff and program. The principal meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, and Iowa’s Department of Education requirements.

#### **Teacher**

QPPS 6.3

All teachers employed by the Saydel Community Schools are licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and the preschool teachers also hold the appropriate early childhood endorsements.

#### **Teacher associates**

QPPS 6.4

Teacher associates in the classroom carry out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher assistant will have specialized training in early childhood education.

#### **School Nurse**

QPPS 10.10

The preschool will have the assistance of the school nurse. She maintains student health records by updating them as needed based on current information given to her, and attends to the health needs of the students while they are at school. She is available for parent consultation when necessary.

#### **Support Staff**

Heartland AEA 11 support staff provides resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist or others. Teachers and Heartland staff work in collaboration with families to meet individual children's needs.

#### **Daily Activities**

QPPS 2.2, 2.7

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal.

Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Teachers plan a daily schedule consistent with the Creative Curriculum in order to provide your child with opportunities for the following types of activities every day

<b>Activity</b>	<b>What it might look like</b>
Whole Group	Teacher directed: Greetings, calendar, circle time with songs and fingerplays, story time and preschool learning (fine motor, literacy, math, science, social studies, etc.)
Small Group	Teacher directed: Small group of children focusing on specific skill development or creative arts project
Center Choice Time	Child directed: Children self select learning centers to play and explore materials. This provides an opportunity to develop social skills, play skills and other developmental domains within natural play settings. Some interest centers you might see: Pretend (housekeeping/grocery store, puppets, etc.), Science/exploration, Art, Table activities (puzzles, small building materials, games), Building area (blocks, people, cars), Computers, Sensory table (sand, water, etc.), Library/Listening center.

Individual Activities	Child directed: All children will have an opportunity for alone or individual play time as they need it. This may occur during center time with table activities or at the library/listening center. Social play is encouraged, however teaching staff are sensitive and provide for individual children's needs.
Outdoor Activities	Child or teacher directed: Children are provided daily time for outdoor play weather permitting. Outdoor equipment for play is provided, for example, climbing, running, balls, jump rope, and other materials such as chalk or bubbles, painting outdoors, etc.
Snack time	Teacher directed: Children have a snack. This time reinforces good hygiene through hand washing, snack preparation: setting up the table, table manners; provides opportunities for conversation with peers and adults.
Other routine activities	Arrival, attendance, bathroom, hand washing, clean up, etc. are examples of routines and transitions that are part of our daily routine. These help children develop self-help skills and independence as we work on school readiness for kindergarten.

## **Curriculum**

QPPS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

The mission of the Saydel Community School District is to serve the unique learning needs of each and every student. Our preschool program's philosophy uses our district's mission statement to meet the needs of our youngest learners.

At Cornell Preschool Program, we believe that children learn best through meaningful experiences that are appropriately based on their developmental level. Creative Curriculum allows children to learn through play and in fact, is structured to focus on children's play with the teacher acting as a facilitator for learning. It is individually based to focus on the child's skill level and then the teacher matches her interactions to the child, scaffolding their learning.

Creative Curriculum is based on child development theory so that it is appropriate for young children whose developmental levels may vary widely. The curriculum focuses on the whole child and not just one area of development. This allows us to address all domains of child development while we build a foundation for formal school learning. RULER curriculum also facilitates social-emotional development. In addition, we use Handwriting without Tears for writing instruction that is based on children's fine motor skill development and San Francisco Math to develop the necessary mathematical skills.

We use Creative Curriculum as our framework that allows us to focus on each child and all areas of their development. The curriculum provides the flexibility to design whole group, small group and individual activities to meet the needs of all children. As teaching staff interact with children, the teachers and associates use their knowledge of the child's current developmental level and/or identified needs, to plan activities and play experiences to promote learning. Studies build on



common interests for young children and allow them to learn through hands on experiences and exploration of materials and the environment.

The goal is to provide learning opportunities that take children from their starting point and promote their development and growth. The approach promoted by Creative Curriculum (studies, learning centers, active learning through play) allows for individualization, a range of materials and activities for all children regardless of their developmental level. This allows our programs to meet the needs of all children and promote learning in a fun way.

It is also the policy of this district that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties and responsibilities of each individual as a member of pluralistic society.

### **Inclusion**

QPPS 9.10, 10.4

The preschool program provides for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to meet the needs of all children. To facilitate this we follow recommended staff to child ratios based on children's ages as well as those necessitated through individual plans. Staff members are aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that an inclusive preschool program will enrich the learning experience for teachers, students, all children and their families.

As an inclusive program, the preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

### **Child Assessment**

QPPS 4.1, 4.2

#### **Guiding principles**

It is the school district's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. Assessment information will be used for planning experiences and to guide instruction for children. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development.

Assessment information will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and available only to staff involved in serving the preschool program and also to parents.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

QPPS 4.14, 7.3, 7.5

- Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- Teaching Strategies GOLD online assessment is used to assess children according to developmental objectives that are aligned to Creative Curriculum and Iowa Early Learning Standards. GOLD is based on developmental domains (social-emotional, physical, cognitive, language, as well as literacy, math, science, social studies, and technology).

- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data, and child work samples collected on an on-going basis.
- Family input is valued in our program. Families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Families can share information at any time. Scheduled times for families and teachers to meet include home visits at the beginning of the year, and during conferences. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences or as needed for individual students and their families. The preschool teacher will communicate through a weekly preschool update regarding children's activities, including topics of study. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time. Information is also updated on the school's website on a regular basis.

If, through observation or information on Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System, the teacher feels that there is a concern related to a developmental delay or other special need, the teacher will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- The teacher requests assistance through a grade level meeting as an early intervention process. This team engages in problem identification, plan interventions, provide support, and make outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance. The AEA team is available and functional for all students and teachers in the building.
- A request made to Heartland Area Education Agency for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing.

QPPS 4.12, 7.4

Developmental screening and/or referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated will be facilitated through the teacher with Heartland AEA 11's assistance. If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

### **Program Standards**

Saydel Community Preschool implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. The Department of Education conducts a site visit to verify that the district and teaching staff are meeting these standards. This verification process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, in accordance with the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. The preschool program uses the Iowa Department of Education's report to assist in our plan for professional development and program quality improvement activities as well as to improve operations and policies. The Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards may be viewed on the Iowa Department of Education website:

[http://www.educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=681&Itemid=1571](http://www.educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=681&Itemid=1571)

### **Classroom Safety and Environmental Checks**

QPPS 9.2, 9.11, 9.12

Teachers regularly check the classroom and areas of the building accessible to preschoolers to ensure a safe environment. The following items are routinely checked:

- All safety plugs and electric outlets, covered heat/AC, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children reach and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of the environment - spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems will be reported to custodial/school staff so that the appropriate personnel can address the problem.
- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

Teachers and associates supervise children primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently).

### **Child Guidance and Discipline**

QPPS 1.11

Teaching staff instruct and guide children so they learn the expected behaviors in our school through the use of positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems. Appropriate behavior is encouraged through the use of consistent, clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to develop self-regulation and appropriate social behaviors. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property, and learn to be responsible for their actions. During the preschool years this is a teaching and learning process.

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. Social interaction and getting along in groups is an important part of the preschool experience.

### **Snacks/Foods and Nutrition**

QPPS 5.12 through 5.21

Meals are provided without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Child care participants who are members of FIP or food assistance households or who are Head Start participants are automatically eligible to receive free meals. Adult care participants who are members of food assistance households or who are SSI or Medicaid participants are automatically eligible to receive free meal benefits. Meals are available at no separate charge to enrolled children.

Children are served a snack at a regularly scheduled time. Two food groups will be represented at each snack time as outlined in USDA guidelines. A written snack menu is posted in the classroom and on the district website [www.saydel.k12.ia.us](http://www.saydel.k12.ia.us).

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, contact the school nurse regarding procedures and documentation needed to develop an individualized care

plan. The school nurse will work with the districts nutrition department to ensure that children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food.

High-risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served. For children younger than four years these include any foods that are larger than what can be swallowed whole, such as; hotdogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat.

For birthdays or special occasions treats that are commercially pre-packaged or non-food items are permissible to share with classmates. Please contact your child's teachers for appropriate suggestions or see the *Student and Family Handbook*.

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 Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, 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.

**Iowa Non-Discrimination Notice:** It is the policy of this CNP provider not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code section 216.7 and 216.9. If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by this CNP Provider, please contact the 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; web site: <http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/index.html>.

### **Outside Play and Learning**

QPPS 5.5, 5.6

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. When it is cold outside he/she needs a warm coat, mittens or gloves and a hat (labeled with your child's name). For the warmer days dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in-between days dressing your child in layers is a practical idea. If needed, sunscreen should be applied at home. If your child has special health care needs related to outdoor conditions, please contact the school nurse.

### **Clothing**

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are

profane, immoral, illegal, or disruptive in nature. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an “accident” or messy play. This should be kept in your child’s backpack, as we are unable to store them at school. Please clearly label the clothing with your child’s name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

### Independent Toileting

QPPS 5.5

Restroom facilities are available for the students as needed. Occasional accidents happen and are not a problem. Toilet learning is an important time in a child’s development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place:

1. Diapering is only done in the designated diaper area, i.e., the bathroom adjacent to the classroom with a diaper-changing table. Food handling is not permitted in this diapering area.
2. Staff follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standard 5, Criteria 7:
  - a. Clothes that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering;
  - b. Staff checks children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces every two hours. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled;
  - c. Staff changes children’s diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility;
  - d. At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface;
  - e. Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding;
  - f. Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container is clearly labeled to show its intended use; and,
  - g. Diapering and gloving posters are posted in the changing area showing procedures with visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program administrator to evaluate teaching staff that change diapers.
3. Soiled diapers and clothing are removed without contaminating any surface not already in contact with stool or urine.
  - a. Fold the soiled surface of the diaper inward;
  - b. Put soiled disposable diapers in a covered, plastic-lined, hands-free covered can. If reusable cloth diapers are used, put the soiled cloth diaper and its content (without emptying or rinsing) in a plastic bag or into a plastic-lined, hands-free covered can and given to parents/guardians.
  - c. Put soiled clothes in a plastic-lined, hands-free plastic bag;
  - d. If gloves were used remove them using the proper plastic-lined, hands-free covered can;
  - e. Whether or not gloves were used, use a disposable antibacterial wipe or alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean the surfaces of the caregiver/teacher’s hands and an application to clean the child’s hands, and put the wipes, if used, into the plastic-lined, hands-free covered can. Allow sanitized hands to dry completely before proceeding;

- f. Check for spills under the child. If there is any, use the paper that extends under the child's feet to fold over the soiled area so a fresh, unsoiled paper surface is now under the child's buttocks.
4. Potty chairs are not used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
5. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

### **Objects from Home**

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you limit toys brought from home. If your child brings an "attachment" item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack or cubby. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

### **Birthdays**

QPPS 5.13

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. The school can also provide your child's class a snack for a small fee. Please contact the classroom teacher if this is something you are interested in. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Invitations to parties outside of school will not be distributed at school.

## **V. COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES**

QPPS 1.1; .1-7.7

The program promotes communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Teaching staff will communicate with families weekly. Staff will use these notes to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other topics that affect the child's development and well-being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs - email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

### **Open Door Policy**

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. As a safety feature, all parents and visitors will need to check in using the district security measures in the main office. Visitors are asked not to bring babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt classroom sessions. All parents and guardians are asked to notify the teacher 24 hours prior to a visit. If you are volunteering in the classroom working with students or helping on a field trip, then you will need to fill out the application for volunteers which is on our district website and complete a background check prior to volunteering. You will receive confirmation that you have been approved in our Ident-A-Kid background check system as a volunteer.

### **Arrival and Departure of Children**

QPPS 10.11

To ensure the safety of children and visitors to Cornell, the following procedures will be used for drop off and pick up of preschool children.

**Drop off:** Parents will need to park in the south parking lot. An adult will escort children to the south entrance by the pod classrooms. Teaching staff will open the doors at 8:30 for the morning session and 12:30 for the afternoon session (all doors to the building are locked for safety purposes except for the main entrance).

**Pick up:** Teaching staff and children will be at the south entrance by the pod doors for pick up at 11:30 for the morning session and 3:30 for the afternoon session. Children will need to be escorted to their car.

Please hold your child's hand when you drop off your child to a member of the teaching staff to decrease the possibility of an accident. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult. Other than parents or legal guardian, only persons with prior written authorization (Parent Consent Form) will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them. Individual child needs regarding drop off or pick off that may warrant other arrangements should be discussed with your child's teacher and other school personnel as needed.

In the interest of students' safety, parents/guardians/authorized individuals are requested to report directly to the office when picking their child up early. Likewise, when a student returns to the building following an absence during the school day, the adult should stop in the office to check in the child. When picking up your child from school, please arrive at the designated dismissal location and on time.

If your child rides the school bus to school, teaching staff will go to each bus as it arrives to greet and assist the student off the bus. At dismissal, teaching staff accompany each student to the bus and assist the student onto the bus.

### **Transportation**

Cornell's Preschool Program only provides transportation for eligible students with an IEP. The facility will use a plan based on a functional assessment of the child's needs related to transportation. This plan will address special equipment, staffing and care in the vehicle during transport. Any accommodations indicated in the child's IEP will be implemented as described.

### **Field Trips**

QPPS 9.12

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. Saydel Community School District transportation is used for these field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip well in advance.

Adult family members who are asked to volunteer to go on these trips to increase supervision and adult/child ratios should complete a volunteer form and background check prior to the field trip. The district may deny participation in the field trip due to the results of a background check.

Each child will be assigned to an adult for every part of the trip. Before every trip, the teaching staff will instruct children and all adults using the bus about the ten-foot danger zone around the vehicle where the driver cannot see.

During the field trip, all children will wear identifying information that gives the program name and phone number. A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children will frequently be counted while on a field trip. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

### Attendance

Students enrolled for classes in the Cornell Preschool Program are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Please call the elementary office at 244-8173 with the reason for an absence no later than 8:20 A.M. if your child attends the morning session and by 12:05 if in the afternoon session.

For safety's sake, if a student is absent without notification, the school secretary/teaching staff will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school. If the office does not receive a phone call from the parents/guardians, the office will try to contact you or your emergency numbers.

After accumulating 10 days of absences within a semester, parents of the student will be requested to attend a meeting with the preschool coordinator and school social worker. The purpose of this meeting is to collaboratively develop an attendance contract aimed at addressing any barriers contributing to the student's frequent absences. The goal is to support the student in maintaining regular attendance.

Should the student persist in irregular attendance despite the implementation of the attendance contract, Saydel Community School District reserves the right to withdraw the student from the program. This action ensures that the spot can be offered to a student on the preschool waiting list, maximizing access to our educational services.

### Ethics and Confidentiality

Staff follows an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information about any particular child is shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.



Parents/Guardians are asked to direct any questions to the classroom teacher and not the classroom associates as the classroom teacher is ultimately responsible for each student's preschool programming.

All teaching staff follows the ethics and confidentiality policy on the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct.

#### Student Records

(QPPS 5.1; 10.8) (BP)

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest, are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular office hours. Parents may also file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they feel their rights regarding their child's records have been violated.

Parents or guardians are asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

#### Preschool Family Feedback

(QPPS 7.5; 10.15)

As a program, the Cornell Preschool seeks out information from each family member initially in the form of the Cornell Family Questionnaire.

#### Grievance Process

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we encourage you to address your concerns to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for assistance from the Cornell Principal. If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the Superintendent of Saydel Community School District.

#### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

(QPPS 7.1-7.7)

The Cornell Preschool Program encourages families to be very involved in their child's education by observing their children during the day, when possible, and meeting with staff. Teachers and administrators use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication; and information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds as they wish to share. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year. Ongoing interactions throughout the school year help strengthen the home/school relationship regarding family, their beliefs, and preferences. Home visits can be conducted at the beginning of the school year. Family-teacher conferences are held twice a year, as well as when either party requests. At least one Family Night is held during the year.

The Cornell Preschool Program values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the families' expertise

regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for their child's growth and development are incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. The classroom teacher is responsive to a family's values, beliefs, and language. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences, or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

The Cornell Preschool Program staff invites parents/guardians to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcomes other ideas as well.

1. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keeping the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child allows the teacher to be more responsive to your child's needs;
2. Attend family meetings;
3. Return all forms promptly;
4. Attend Family/Teacher conferences held twice during the school year;
5. Take time to read the family bulletin board;
6. Check your child's backpack each day;
7. Participate in field trip activities;
8. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken;
9. Share any of your families' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs;
10. Help prepare snack and enjoy it with your child;
11. Read all the material sent home with your child;
12. Come to play;
13. Help with special events. Helping takes many different forms such as preparation of materials at home, making telephone calls, preparing or posting flyers, recruiting other volunteers, collecting donations or prizes, photography, setup before the event, or clean afterwards; or,

The teaching staff provides information to families about available community resources and assists as requested in helping the family make connections. Staff support, and encourage families' efforts to negotiate health, mental health, assessment, and educational services for their children.

The school district will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of families with children with limited English proficiency, families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats on request, and, to the extent possible, in a language families understand.

### Volunteering

QPPS 7.2, 10.15, 10.17

Opportunities for volunteering and supporting your child's program may include:

- Joining the Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO). Meetings are held six times throughout the school year on the second Tuesday of the month. Information is listed in the school's monthly newsletter.
- For classroom volunteering opportunities please contact your child's teacher. If needed for field trips or class celebrations teachers will communicate this through newsletters or notes.
- Other: Teachers may have opportunities for volunteering, such as assisting with classroom preparation through copying, cutting, etc.

Please let your child's teacher know if you are interested in ways to volunteer and support your child's program. All classroom volunteers are required to have a background check per district policy.

## **V. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Saydel Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, our guidelines meet Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

### **Health and Immunization Certificates**

QPPS 5.1

By the first day a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service must be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program. Exemptions from the immunizations requirement in this policy will be allowed only for medical or religious reasons recognized under the law. The student must provide a valid Iowa State Department of Health Certification of Immunization Exemption to be exempt from this policy. (reference Board Policy 507.1)

### **Health and Safety Records**

QPPS 10.10

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse's office. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

QPPS 5.1, 10.14

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;
4. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
5. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);

6. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support; and
7. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff will implement a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

### **General Health and Safety Guidelines**

QPPS 5.2, 5.8, 5.22, 5.23

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.
- Teaching staff is to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- All teaching staff must complete "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens" annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times.

### **Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children**

QPPS 5.3

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms during the night, he or she will not be admitted the following day for the safety of the other children.

- fever greater than 100 degrees F
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- pink eyes with drainage
- cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge

The school established policy for an ill child's return:

- Fever free for 24 hours
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode

- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably; if the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group; or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

### **Illness or Injury at School**

QPPS 5.3

When a student becomes ill or is injured at school, the school district will attempt to notify the student's parents as soon as possible. An ill or injured child will be turned over to the care of the parents, emergency contact or qualified medical personnel as quickly as possible. Annually, parents will be required to complete a medical emergency authorization form indicating the procedures to be followed in an emergency involving their child. The authorization form will also include the phone numbers of the parents and alternative numbers to call in case of injury or illness. Please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child's pediatrician. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives under the supervision of school staff. (reference Board Policy 507.4)

### **Reporting Communicable Diseases**

QPPS 5.4

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur. (Reference Board Policy 507.3)

### **Medication Policies and Procedures**

QPPS 5.10

Some students may need prescription and nonprescription medication to participate in their educational program. Given that preschool students attend half day, administration of medication at home is preferred. However, if needed due to individual child needs or maintaining schedule of administration, the school can administer medication.

Medication will be administered when the student's parent or guardian (hereafter "parent") provides a signed and dated written statement requesting medication administration and the medication is in the original, labeled container, either as dispensed or in the manufacturer's container.

When administration of the medication requires ongoing professional health judgment, an authorized practitioner will develop an individual health plan with the student's parents. Persons administering medication will include the licensed registered nurse, physician, persons who have successfully completed a medication administration course, or an authorized practitioner, including parents. A medication administration course and periodic update will be conducted by a registered nurse or licensed pharmacist, and a record of course completion kept on file at the agency.

A written administration record will be on file including:

- Date;
- Student's name; prescriber or person authorizing administration;
- Medication;
- Medication dosage;
- Administration time;
- Administration method;
- Signature and title of the person administering medication; and
- Any unusual circumstances, actions, or omissions.

Medication will be stored in a secured area unless an alternate provision is documented. Emergency protocols for medication-related reactions will be posted. Medication information will be confidential information. (reference Board Policy 507.2)

### Cleaning and Sanitization

QPPS 5.6-5.7; 10.5

The facility is maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area is made inaccessible to children and the area is cleaned immediately.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be first cleaned with soap and water then disinfected using a non-toxic solution of one-tablespoon household bleach to one quart of tap water made fresh daily. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. The bleach solution will be left on for at least 2 minutes before it is wiped off with a clean paper towel, or it may be allowed to air dry. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Staff is trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling, and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency table of the IQPPS manual.

Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Non-toxic substances will be used whenever possible.

### Hand Washing Practices

QPPS 2.27-2.28; 3.8; 5.6-5.7; 10.5

Frequent hand washing is key to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Staff teaches children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored;
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others; and
- Staff assists children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- upon arrival for the day
- after diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants);
- after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit);
- before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry);
- after playing in water that is shared by two or more people;
- after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals;
- playing in sand, on play sets, and outdoors; and,
- when moving from one group to another.

Adults also wash their hands

- before and after feeding a child;
- before and after administering medication;
- after assisting a child with toileting; and
- after handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include

- Checking to be sure a clean, disposable paper (or single-use cloth) towel is available;
- Turning on warm water, between 60°F and 120°F, to a comfortable temperature;
- Moistening hands with water and apply soap (not antibacterial) to hands;
- Rubbing hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears, hands are out of the water stream, and continue for at least twenty seconds (sing Happy Birthday silently twice) (2). Rub area between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands. Nails should be kept short; acrylic nails should not worn (3); 20
- Rinsing hands under running water, between 60°F and 120°, until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands;
- Drying hands with the clean, disposable paper or single use cloth towel;
- Turning taps off with a disposable paper; if taps do not shut off automatically
- Throwing the disposable paper towel into a lined trash container;
- Using hand lotion to prevent chapping of hands, if desired.

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any situation listed above.

- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- Staff does not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material. In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

### **School Closing Announcement (Inclement weather/Emergency)**

Saydel Preschool will be closed when Saydel Community Schools are closed. Emergency situations sometimes occur that warrant the closing, delay or early dismissal of school. In the event of a late start, there will be no morning preschool. If there is an early dismissal, there will be no afternoon

preschool. If preschool must be closed due to inclement weather, notification will be done through radio stations and television stations: (reference Board Policy 711.9)

It is important that phone lines are kept open for communication from the District Office. Each family is required to have an emergency plan on file in the classroom of where to go in case of an emergency closing that occurs after the students arrive at school. This could be for weather, loss of utilities, disaster, etc.

I acknowledge receipt of the Saydel Community Preschool Orientation Handbook. The Preschool Teacher has reviewed general preschool and district procedures with me. I am responsible for reading the Handbook and following district procedures and guidelines to ensure the health and safety of my child and other children in the program.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Saydel Community School District does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, military affiliation, socioeconomic status, or familial status. Inquiries and grievances may be directed to Director of Student Services Aimee Rhode, 5740 NE 14<sup>th</sup> St, Des Moines, IA 50313, (515) 264-0866, [rhodeaimme@saydel.net](mailto:rhodeaimme@saydel.net), or the Director of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, 500 West Madison Street, Suite 2800, Chicago, IL, 60661.