

# Little Pioneers Preschool Parent Handbook



Freewater School  
17 NW 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Milton-Freewater, OR 97862  
541-938-6611

## MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY STATEMENTS

### District Vision:

~ Delivering Superior Education to All ~

**Mission:** Developing lifelong learners in a safe, positive environment to be contributing citizens in the community.

- **Diversity:** We embrace diversity and strive for equal, inclusive services among our schools and community.
- **Communication:** We believe in timely and transparent communication with our entire community.
- **Community Relationships:** We work together with our community, students and staff to create positive outcomes for all.
- **Safety:** We provide a safe and caring environment in which to learn, grow, and work.
- **Innovative Education:** We value innovative education so students and staff can reach their highest potential.

### District Goals:

- **Provide social and emotional guidance**
- **Eliminate gaps in achievement**
- **Cultivate positive relationships and collaborative working environments to foster a safe and positive community**

### Philosophy Statement:

Milton-Freewater Unified School District is committed to providing an integrated, Oregon Early Learning Standards aligned, preschool program in Milton-Freewater. Little Pioneers Preschool will boast a high quality educational opportunity for children in our community ages 3-5 years old. This program is aligned with the school district's vision of *delivering superior education* to all by providing students and parents with the resources and support necessary for kindergarten readiness.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Little Pioneers is a blended early childhood program with two funding sources. Some students are eligible under the Preschool Promise grant and must meet the criteria for eligibility while other families are supported through the Milton-Freewater Unified School District general fund.**

**Preschool Promise Eligibility-** This program provides educational and child development services for income eligible families. Families must be at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, the student must be between the ages of 3-5 years but not eligible for kindergarten. Priority is given to 4-year old students who meet these guidelines but have had little to no preschool experience. This program helps to prepare children for school. Students may attend the program for two consecutive years.

**MFUSD Funded Eligibility-** Priority is given to students who are 4 years of age and have had little to no preschool experience.

**Office Hours:** Monday thru Friday 7:45-3:45 for office hours  
541-938-6611

**Emergency or  
Message number:** 541-938-6611

**Class Schedule:** Monday thru Thursday AM 8:00-11:00 and PM 12:15-3:15  
Full Day 8:00 am to 3:05 pm

**On-site Childcare:** Our community partner, the YMCA provides childcare at our Freewater School facility. The Y is a separate program from Little Pioneers and is not run by MFUSD but if you need before and after care they are open M-F 7:15 am - 5:30 pm and we encourage you to contact them at 509-525-8863.

**Locked Facility:** Our facility is always locked. We ask that you help us keep our students safe by reporting any unlocked gate or door.

**Please Always Bring ID:** You should always carry an ID with you and make sure anyone else coming to get your child does too. Typically, the same person is at the front desk, but sometimes someone else might be filling in for them and if they don't recognize you or your pick up person, they will ask for ID.

The ID will be checked against the names on your child's emergency card to make sure the right person is getting the right child. We do this to keep your child safe and it is a piece of our Active Supervision Policy.

**Medication at School:** Our first preference is for you to administer all medications at home, before and after school. When this is not possible, we have appropriately trained staff to administer medication. If your child is going to need medication during school hours, **you need to sign the Authorization for Medication Administration Consent Form.**

If the medication is needed for the entire school year, this form must be completed before your child's first day of school. All prescription and over the counter medication must be prescribed by a medical provider.

**Illness:** All children get sick; many are still learning what it means to keep their hands to themselves. We work hard to clean, sanitize and disinfect our buildings. If we have any concerns about the health of your child, we will always communicate with you.

If your child has any symptoms, we will determine the best course of action, which may include:

1. Resting in a quiet area
2. Receiving medication (only with prior parental approval)
3. Being sent home (only for symptoms that fit the criteria listed on the back page).

If your child isn't feeling well, but isn't displaying any of the symptoms listed on the back page, you are welcome to send them to school. However, if their symptoms change or they are not able to engage when they are at school, it is highly likely that we will call you about needing to pick them up.

So, please make sure you have a few folks on the emergency card who can come pick up your child, if you are not able to. If your child cannot attend school due to an illness, they can return to class when they have had **no symptoms for 24 hours** or a medical provider provides a note stating they can return to class.

If you have any questions or concerns about our sick child policy, you can always discuss with the building administrator or your child's teacher.

## Attendance:

Attending school regularly is one of the best ways for a child to succeed. When a child is at school every day or almost every day, they become comfortable with their new routine and classroom, make friends and connect with their teacher.

If your child cannot attend school one day, **please contact us at least one hour before school starts**, or as soon as you can. (541-938-6611)

If your child will not be able to attend school for several days –for example, they are sick enough to stay home several days or you will be out of town, please call and let the school know.

For longer absences, please let your child's teacher know. They will connect you with the building administrator and they will let you know if you need to do anything to keep your child's place in the program.

If your child's attendance drops below 85%, an attendance support plan may be developed with you to ensure your child can remain in the program. Your child may be dropped if they have more than five consecutive absences or excessive non-consecutive absences, without reasonable cause.

**If you are having challenges with getting your child to school, please talk to your child's teacher to see what supports can be offered for the situation.**

## What are the rules at school?

Little Pioneers follows the same Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBiS) model as our K-12 program. School-wide expectations are established to create predictable and positive environments. The three expectations: "Be Respectful", "Be Responsible", and "Be Safe" are used to create specific rules according to the setting. Some examples of rules include taking turns on the slide, using safe hands, and helping to clean up. Rules are posted, taught and referred to so children can become familiar with them and eventually can follow them without reminders. Ask your child's teacher to share them with you, so you can make some for home.

## What if my child does not follow the rules?

If your child is having difficulty following a rule they receive a reminder, are redirected or are given acceptable choices. If your child's behavior becomes dangerous or difficult, a meeting will be arranged with you and your child's teacher to develop a plan for teaching and supporting more acceptable behavior. **No preschool student is suspended or expelled, but may be sent home for the day if circumstances warrant.** We are committed to working with the student, family, and resources to best support the learning needs of all students.

## **Clothing/Belongings/Individual Storage Spaces**

Your child will need clothing which is comfortable, suitable for the weather, and appropriate for play. Children will be painting, gluing and doing other “messy stuff”. Play is the work of children--dress them in play clothes please.

We will not be responsible for damage or staining of clothing. Clothes should be easy for the child or caregiver to manage. During cold weather, boots, socks, mittens, and hats need to be worn. **Please put your child's name or initials in any clothing you bring.**

We discourage children bringing toys from home because of the frequency with which they are lost or broken. Special exceptions will be made when a child needs a special toy for security or comfort. Your child may bring a special item from home on the day they are assigned for sharing or during special events in which a note home will be sent. **All personal items must be labeled with the child's name. Please talk with your teacher before bringing any personal items or toys.**

**Quiet Time:** We will treat each child with respect and individual care during our daily quiet period. Each child will be given an opportunity to rest in a quiet environment which includes: lying down on an individual mat, quiet, relaxing music, soft lighting. All children will use mats/cots placed on the floor during nap time. Depending on their need, children are expected to rest quietly on their mat or look at a story book.

### **Field Trips:**

Parent/ guardian will be notified in advance of all field trips. Permission for children to attend field trips will be received in writing from the parent/guardian at enrollment. Any change in permission must be provided to staff by parent/guardian prior to the scheduled day.

### **Snow Day Policy:**

Little Pioneers Preschool will follow the school district decision for inclement weather. In the event of a **two hour delayed** start with the district, there will be no AM preschool, but PM preschool will proceed on time.

### **Communication:**

It is important to have regular communication between you and our staff. Please contact your child's teacher or the office if:

- you have a new address or phone number

- you need to change who is approved to pick your child up from school (needs to be approved 24 hours in advance)
- your child will not be attending school

You will receive regular written communication from us about your child's progress, child and family development information, and community events that may interest you. We will also send you automated messages about school activities, inclement weather and reminders. Parent needs to provide a current phone number and it is important to keep this information up to date so that you do not miss out on important information from us.

We make every effort to answer the phone promptly, however, it is our policy to utilize all staff toward meeting the needs of the children as our first priority. Therefore, you may be asked to leave a message when staff are in class. Your call will be answered as soon as possible in the order it is received. If you wish to speak with the classroom teacher, our policy states they have 24 hours during the work week to return communication.

## Responsibility for Receiving Children

You are responsible for making sure an **authorized person with ID** is available to receive your child every day.

If you or the person authorized to pick up your child cannot be located within **30 minutes** of the pickup time, MFUSD can consider the situation an issue of possible child neglect and will consult with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to determine the next step.

Remember that your child looks forward to coming home after school every day. Predictability and trust are essential in making their experiences with school positive. When a parent, expected adult or sibling is not available to meet after school, their sense of trust is damaged and any child will likely be frightened. This will make coming to school more difficult in the following days.

No one under the age of 16 is allowed to pick up your child. If an older sibling is picking up your child, please make sure they have their school ID with them.

## Emergency Drills:

We will do regularly scheduled emergency drills. if you have questions about these and how they work, please talk with your child's teacher or the building administrator.

We are required to have a monthly fire drill, two earthquake and emergency safety drills annually. If you arrive during one of these drills, we ask if you are in the building to follow staff directions; if you have not entered the building, please remain outside until the completion of the drill.

### **No smoking, vaping, drugs, alcohol or weapons:**

We want to protect the safety and wellbeing of everyone who enters our center. Weapons, smoking, vaping or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited.

### **Ethics:**

We hold ourselves, our staff, parents and volunteers to the highest set of ethical standards. We believe this is essential for us to gain your family's trust and for your child to prosper in our care. This means that we will respect and promote the unique identities of each child and their families. We avoid all forms of stereotyping. We will protect and keep your family's information confidential. We promote the active supervision of children. Your child will never be left alone while in our care. We use positive methods to guide your child's behavior. We will never use emotional or physical abuse as punishment.

### **Equal Access:**

We do not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability in determining which children and families are served. Our program understands and implements the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities.

### **Confidentiality:**

We respect your family's privacy. We only ask for information like your income, and address to prove you are eligible for our program. We will never ask for information related to citizenship or immigration status. We will protect your family's confidentiality by requiring all staff to adhere to a confidentiality policy. We will maintain a confidential file for each family and child in our program. You have the right to review and obtain the information in your child's current education records and/or your family records. The district office can assist you in filling out the necessary forms to access historical files and/or make copies. **Your information is safe in our hands!**

### **Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention:**

We are required to have a policy and procedure for reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect. All MFUSD staff receive training on how to recognize and report child abuse and neglect. All MFUSD staff are required by law to report their suspicions



to Child Protective Services (CPS) within the Department of Human Services (DHS) or to the local police department.

If a child discloses abuse to you, try to keep a neutral reaction. Let the child know that what they told you is very important and telling was the right thing to do. Reassure them that what happened to them was not their fault. Report it!

Any member of the community can and should report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, you can make a confidential report by calling the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline or your local police department 1-855-503-7233 or 541-938-5511.

## **Program Services**

### **Developmental Screenings:**

Developmental screening is a “quick look” at how your child plays, learns, speaks and behaves. This is to help ensure your child is ready to enter Kindergarten “Ready to Learn.” A development assessment will be conducted three times a year for each of our students.

We use a screening tool called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire & Social/Emotional Questionnaire. On these questionnaires we will ask you about how your child talks, moves, plays, and gets along with others.

These questionnaires help us understand how your child is learning and growing and is a way for you to let us know if you have any concerns about your child and how we can better support them at school.

These screenings do not diagnose any developmental or learning delays. They can help us to identify any concerns, so we can identify and provide you with the resources available to support your child.

### **Early Intervention Services:**

If your child has a disability, your family will receive all activities and services provided, with any extra support needed. We work closely with Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education programs and other community agencies to provide services that meet the special needs of your child.

If you have concerns about your child’s development you are encouraged to contact their teacher for information about screening and referral or 1-800-927-5847.

### **Education Services:**

Your child’s teacher will partner with you to meet your child’s individual needs. Teachers are trained in child development and early childhood education, and will utilize a variety of classroom experiences to support the growth of your child’s mind, body, and social skills.

Little Pioneers uses a variety of curriculums, Imagine It! Preschool edition, Guided Language Acquisition and Development (GLAD) instructional strategies, Conscious Discipline for social/emotional strategies and The Creative Curriculum in our classrooms. This means teachers set up classrooms and activities based on children’s development. Children learn by exploring and playing in their environment. Children learn best when the classroom is clean, organized, and set up so they can be as independent as possible. The classroom is divided into interest areas, and children can choose where and how they want to play.

## **Mental Health Services:**

Research shows that social and emotional development in young children predicts their school success better than any other factor. Our goal is to help your child develop the social and emotional skills they need for success, such as sticking with difficult tasks and getting along with others.

We partner with mental health professionals to support children and families that are experiencing challenges. If needed, these consultants can meet with families or provide referrals to outside agencies for more support. You can always get more information regarding mental health services from your child's teacher.

## **Parent, Family & Community Engagement:**

In order for your child to get the most out of their education, it is important for you to have a strong connection to their school. MFUSD is committed to providing opportunities for you to participate in your child's education. We encourage you to attend family night events/activities, participate in our home-visiting program and attend parent/teacher conference conducted twice a year. Please ask questions, we are here to support you and your student(s). We recognize parents as their child's first and best teacher.

If needed, we may ask for volunteers for a variety of activities. If this interests you, please fill out a Volunteer Application which may be obtained from the district website, under Info & Links and at the bottom of the Parent column you will find the volunteer information.

## Reasons to Keep your Child Home

If your child has any of the symptoms below we ask that you keep them home.

- Fever of **100.4°F** or higher. Your child may return when they have not had a fever for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medicine, like Tylenol.
- Diarrhea. 2 or more watery or loose stool in 24 hours OR sudden onset of loose stools. Your child may return when 24 hours after their last diarrhea stool.
- Vomiting. At least one episode that is unexplained in the past 24 hours. Your child may return when no longer vomiting.
- Rash. Any new onset of a rash if accompanying a fever OR if a rash has increased in size. Your child may return after the rash resolves or if clearance given by a health care provider.
- Unusual yellow color to your child's skin or eyes.
- Skin or eye lesions or rashes that are severe, weeping, or pus-filled and when drainage cannot be contained within a bandage OR if new sores or wounds are developing day-to-day.
- Stiff neck or headache with one or more of the symptoms listed above. Your child may return after symptoms resolve or a diagnosis is made and clearance is given by a healthcare provider.
- Difficulty breathing or abnormal wheezing, persistent cough with or without fever, or serious sustained coughing.
- Behavior Changes; such as new onset of persistent crying, sleepiness or if you are at all concerned about changes in their behavior.
- Any symptoms or complaints that will prevent your child from actively participating in school activities, or if your child requires more care than the school staff can safely provide.