



Family Handbook for Preschool Programs

The Early Learning Office is located at:

Central Education Center

7145 Harriet Ave S

Richfield MN 55423

Contact numbers:

Early Learning Office -----	612-243-3007
Spanish Outreach -----	612-243-3021
Somali Outreach -----	612-243-3009
Early Learning Coordinator -----	612-243-3006
Early Childhood Social Worker -----	612-243-3027
PreK-12 Transportation -----	612-798-6075
Early Childhood Special Education Program -----	612-243-3004
Early Childhood Screening -----	612-243-3048
Fax -----	612-243-3067
Email -----	earlylearning@rpsmn.org
Centennial Elementary School -----	612-798-6800
Central Education Center -----	612-243-3000
Richfield Dual Language School -----	612-798-6700
Sheridan Hills Elementary -----	612-798-6900
RSTEM Elementary -----	612-798-6600

Welcome to Preschool!

Welcome to the Richfield Public Schools. In our preschool program, we are committed to providing you and your child with a high-quality preschool experience that will prepare them for success in school and life. Richfield Public Schools (RPS) is committed to viewing and analyzing our work through a racial and cultural equity lens that intentionally subverts the policies and practices of institutional racism. All students deserve a safe, supportive school environment to thrive academically and developmentally. ([RPS Equity Statement](#))

Please review this handbook and let your child's teacher know if you have questions. Program procedures and policies are subject to change.

Philosophy and Position Statement

The overall philosophy of the Richfield Early Learning programs is to encourage in each child a love and excitement for learning and to prepare children with social and academic skills they need to be successful in kindergarten and throughout their educational careers. The early childhood curriculum across all programs will offer play experiences, emphasizing all four areas of development – social, emotional, intellectual, and physical. It will encompass all eight domains of the [Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress \(ECIPs\)](#):

- Physical and movement development
- Language
- Literacy and communications
- Mathematics
- Science
- Approaches to learning
- The arts
- Social and emotional development

The ECIPs are aligned to the Minnesota Kindergarten Standards.

Curriculum and Assessment

Lessons are planned using the “*Creative Curriculum*,” and teachers are focused on individually meeting the needs of all students. Preschool at RPS will be an active year of hands-on learning with common preschool experiences for all children with a critical focus on anti-bias curriculum and support in building important social and emotional skills.

Academics will be taught through play and experiences. A variety of equipment and materials will be provided to use throughout the day. Large motor activities will promote physical fitness. Fine motor skills are strengthened using writing tools and manipulative toys. Art, music, stories, wordplay, and dramatic play will encourage creative expression. Special activities focus on language, math, and other concepts to develop cognitive intelligence. Daily activities will encourage life skills such as problem-solving, building friendships, cooperating, caring for others, curiosity, and responsibility. Activities will be selected consistent with the child's cultural background.

- At the Richfield Dual Language School preschool class (RDLS), 90% is taught in Spanish, and 10% is taught in English.
- Central Education Center's Spanish enrichment classes are 50% Spanish and 50% English.

 <p>The Creative Curriculum®</p>	<p>Creative Curriculum:</p> <p>Our foundational academic curriculum is <i>Creative Curriculum</i>. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. It is designed to provide a foundation for educators to plan and implement a developmentally appropriate, content-rich program for children with diverse backgrounds and skill levels.</p>
 <p>Teaching Strategies GOLD®</p>	<p>Teaching Strategies GOLD - (TS Gold)</p> <p>TS Gold is an assessment tool used by the Richfield Early Learning programs with the 3 and 4-year-old children in preschool classes. The TS Gold objectives align with the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs) set by the Minnesota Department of Education and assess 38 research-based objectives for development and learning. This assessment focuses on children's growth and progress during the year, understanding that children develop at different rates. The assessment data collected is shared with families during conferences and at the year's end.</p>
 <p>Parent Aware</p>	<p>Parent Aware</p> <p>The Richfield Early Learning preschool program is a 4 Star Parent Aware-rated program. The program operates under the highest level of early childhood standards. Due to this rating, scholarships are available through the state Pathways II program.</p>

Early Childhood Screening

The state requires all students entering school to complete an Early Childhood Screening after age 3 but before kindergarten entrance. This free session lasts approximately 50 minutes and is used to identify potential health or developmental concerns in young children. Screenings are offered in English, Spanish, and Somali. This screening is not the same as a doctor's well-child visit.

You are encouraged to schedule your child's screening as soon as possible. Appointments fill up quickly, especially toward the beginning of the school year. To schedule your screening or ask any questions, email ecscreening@rpsmn.org or call 612-243-3048.

Communication and Conferences

Each fall, a "Connect and Assess" event will be held to welcome children into the classroom and begin connecting with families to partner in learning. In addition, parents/guardians can meet with the preschool teachers in a scheduled conference each fall and winter. Conference schedules will be posted on district calendars, websites, and through Parent Square communication from building administration. Regular communication with your child's teacher is important; additional conferences can be arranged. Parents can expect regular communication from teachers via Parent Square, newsletters, and all-district communications.

Children's Basic Needs

Our goal is to encourage or provide the following:

- Safe, happy, challenging environment
- Learning material that represents all students
- Growth for the whole child
- Creative expression: art, music, stories, dramatic play
- Physical fitness: large motor activities
- Fine motor skills: writing tools, manipulative toys
- Cognitive learning: language, math, science
- Personal growth: problem-solving, social skills, cooperation, care for others, curiosity, responsibility, and emotional growth

Every child will succeed in our program through best-practice behavior and academic skills instruction. Staff will collaborate with the family to provide skill-based instruction and interventions to ensure the success of every child. To grow and learn, all children have basic needs, including safety, good nutrition, shelter, medical attention, clothing, appropriate discipline, and love. Parents or guardians with difficulty providing for their child's emotional or physical needs are encouraged to ask for help. Our Early Childhood Social Worker will work with you and can be reached at 612-243-3027. If your family is currently experiencing homelessness, such as staying in a shelter, hotel, or temporarily with others, we can help ensure your child's education stability through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act. For help accessing these services, please contact your school's Social Worker at 612-243-3027

Policies and Procedures

Drop-off / Pick-up:

Be on time when dropping off and picking up your child.

- Drop off
 - If you arrive for class early, please wait with your child outside the classroom door until the teacher opens the door.
 - Take your child to the classroom and check in with your child's teacher
- Pick up
 - If a person not listed as an emergency contact for a student will pick them up from school, the parent or guardian must call the office in advance and have them added as an emergency contact. The parent or guardian must then inform the teacher when that person will pick up the student. The person picking up the student must show photo identification.

Non-Custodial Parent Pick-Up:

A copy of a current court order must be on file with the school if a non-custodial parent is not allowed to pick up a child from the program.

Late Pick-Up Procedures

1. If we have yet to hear from a parent/guardian **5 minutes** after the end of class time and/or they are not at the bus stop to receive the student, staff will call emergency contacts.

2. If a pattern is repeated, a program social worker will be available to address the concerns.

We understand that conditions occasionally exceed one's control (inclement weather). If these conditions arise, you must notify your school immediately and arrange for someone else to pick up your child.

Requesting Bus Transportation

Preschool for 4s

- Students in a 4-year-old program who live within the school district boundaries are eligible for busing. Richfield Public Schools does not transport to any location outside the district boundaries.
- Community school boundaries apply.
- Requests for transportation received after July 31st may not be ready for the first school day.
- School buses do NOT stop in front of houses for pick-up and drop-off.

Preschool for 3s

- Busing is not available to 3s. Documentation of an Individualized Education Plan is required to apply for transportation accommodations.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for their child's behavior and safety at the bus stop and as soon as they get off the bus.

Bus Stop Rules

- Pick up (before school)
 - An adult must be with the child at the bus stop.
 - Be ready at your bus stop **5 minutes** before your scheduled pick-up time and wait until 10 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time. If your bus arrives after this time frame, please call (612) 798-6075.
 - If no one is at the stop, the driver will immediately go on to the next stop.
- Drop off (after school)
 - If an adult is not at the bus stop, the driver will keep your child on the bus. After waiting 1 minute, your child will be returned to the school office, where your emergency contacts will be called and will need to pick him/her up.

If no adult is present at the bus stop more than 3 times, your child will be suspended from the bus for one day. If no adult is at the bus stop 5 or more times, your child will be suspended from the bus and may lose the privilege of riding the bus for the rest of the year.

Bus Behavior:

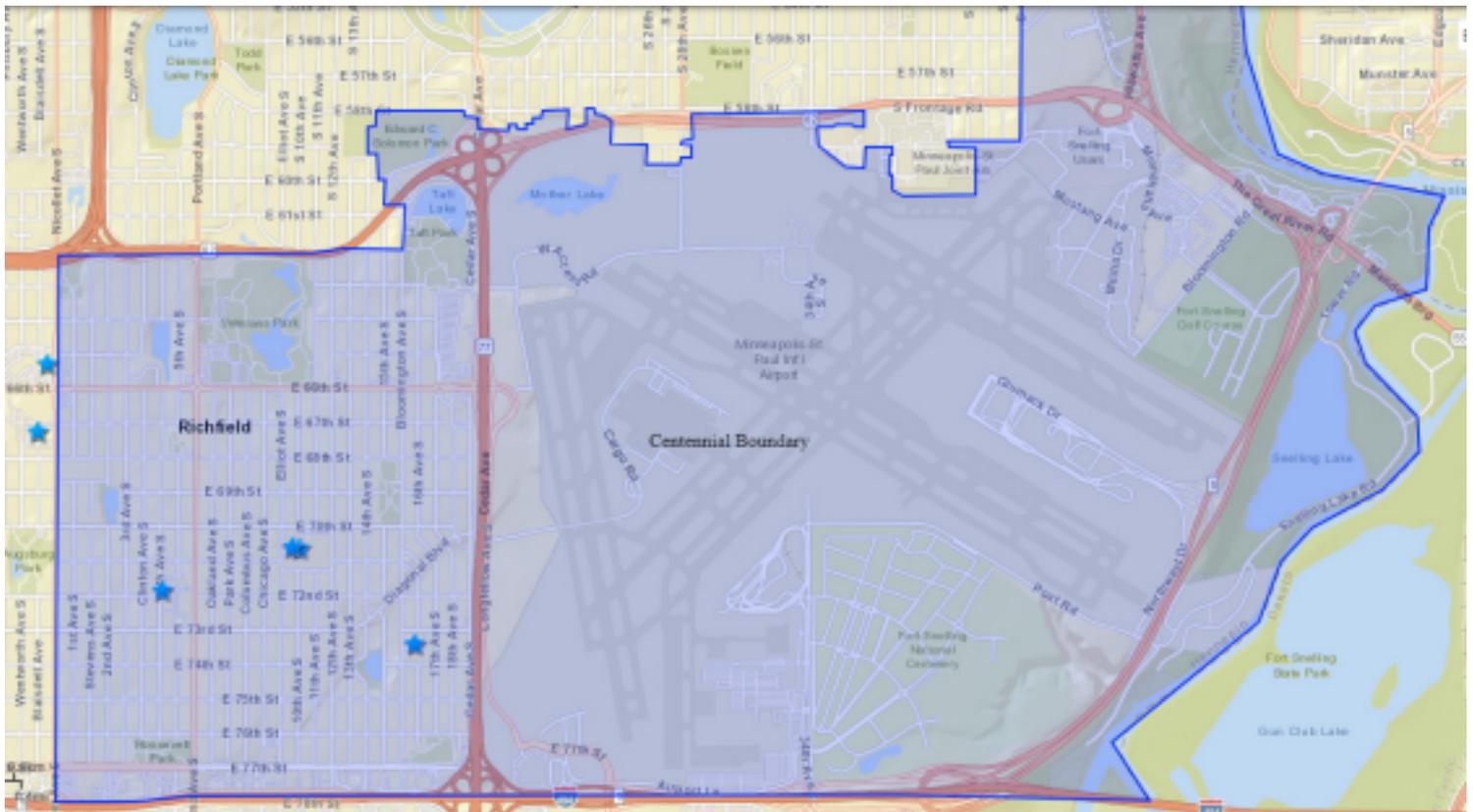
Riding the bus to and from school is a privilege, not a right. If your child's behavior on the bus is unsafe, they may lose the privilege of riding it to and from school. Parents and teachers will work together to teach appropriate bus-riding skills to your child.

Expected behaviors include:

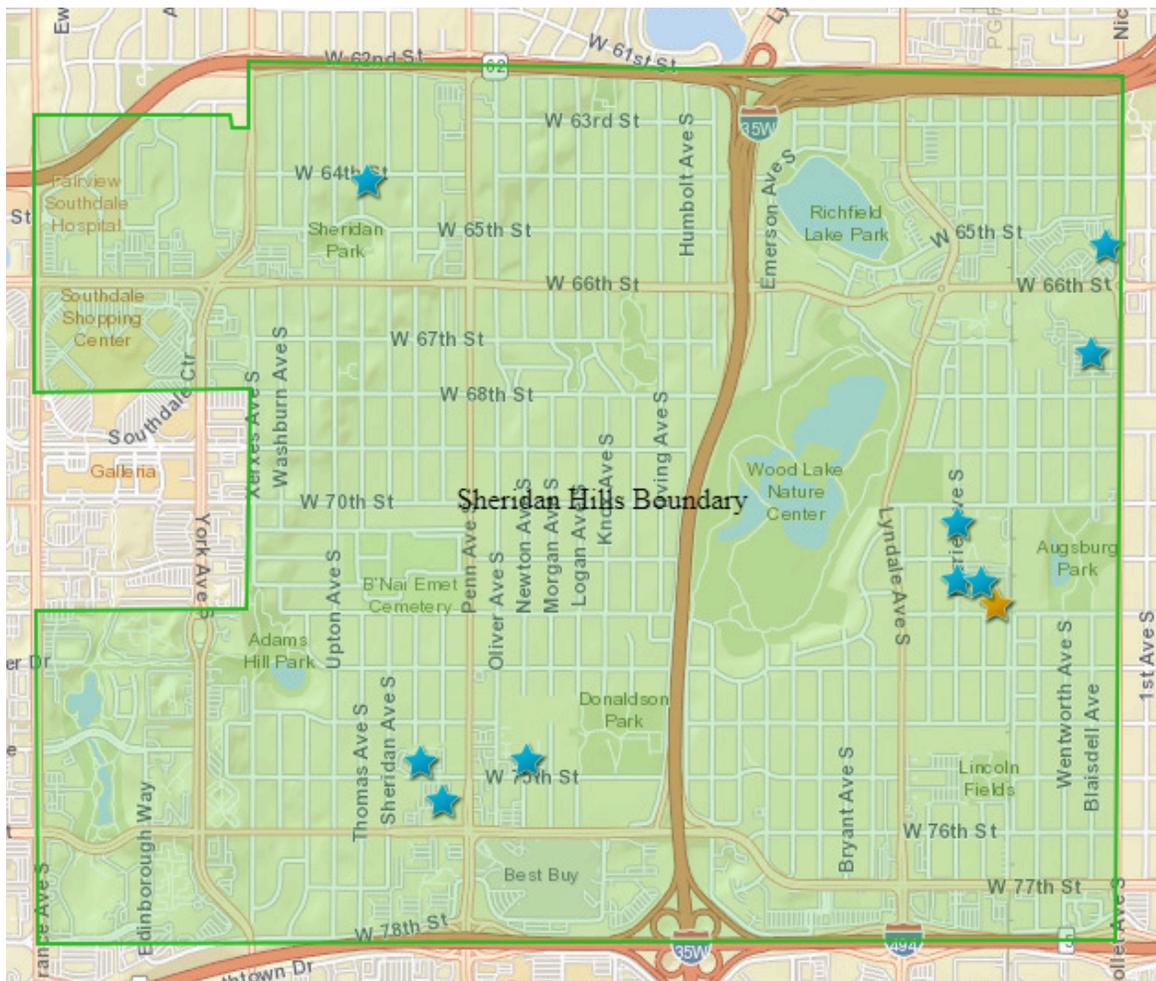
- Sit in the first few rows of the bus
- Remain seated on your pockets facing forward the whole ride
- Use a quiet voice
- Do not stand up until the bus driver says its ok to stand up
- Listen to the bus driver

Community School Bus Boundaries:

Centennial Elementary



Sheridan Hills Elementary



Absences

Your child needs to be at school every school day. Please schedule doctor and other appointments when school is not in session. If your child will be absent from class, please call your school. Phone numbers are listed below. The teacher will contact you if your child misses 5 or more school days. If your child misses **15** consecutive days of school, he/she will be disenrolled from the program in alignment with state statute.

Attendance Lines

Centennial-----	612-798-6800
RSTEM-----	612-798-6600
Richfield Dual Language-----	612-888-7357
SheridanHills-----	612-798-6900
Central-----	612-243-3010

Snow Days/Emergency Closing

If Richfield Public Schools close, all Richfield Preschool classes will close. Information will be posted at

www.richfieldschools.org, <https://www.facebook.com/RPSCommunityEd>, and on local media: KSTP, WCCO, FOX, and KARE11.

Illness or Injury at School:

If your child becomes sick or is hurt at school and cannot continue with the school day, we will call you to come and pick your child up. Other injuries are reported to parents at the end of class. We will call the emergency contact person if we cannot reach you. You must have a person on the emergency card who can pick up your child if necessary.

Sick Child Policy:

Please report all potentially communicable health conditions to the school office within 24 hours. The district follows the Hennepin County Infectious Diseases in Childcare Settings and Schools when determining if a child and parent can attend class. If your child is not at school due to illness or injury, please report all diseases or health conditions to your child's school attendance line or email.

If your child is sick, it is important for them to stay home.

Generally, your child should stay home with the following symptoms:

- Fever 100 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea (frequent, loose, watery stools not related to a known chronic health condition)
- Vomiting (that is not related to a known chronic health condition)
- Rash (unexplained or that is not related to a known chronic health condition). Keep in mind that there are several possible causes for a rash. Common conditions that cause a rash are
 - Allergic reactions (Examples include medications, food, detergents and other cleaning products, insect bites and stings, and others.)
 - Illnesses (Examples include bacterial illness such as strep throat, viral illnesses, fungal infections such as ringworm, and others.)

Also, pay attention to **nonverbal cues** that your child may be using to communicate that they are feeling ill, such as increased or decreased sleep, decreased appetite, or change in behavior or mood.

Remember that children may:

- be sick enough to stay home even if they do not have a fever.
- have a low-grade fever, yet still be well enough to be in school.

Your child can return to school when their **symptoms have significantly improved** and they have been fever, vomit, and/or diarrhea free for **at least 24 hours** (without using medication to reduce symptoms).

You know your child the best, and we know you want what's best for your child. Regular school attendance helps your child grow academically and socially and can contribute to their present and future success. Significant illness symptoms may mean that your child needs to stay home from school to get well. Staff members are available to work with you and your child on illness and attendance issues and to help your child work toward wellness and school success.

Medical Concerns and Medications at School

If your child has health concerns and/or needs medication at school, please let your child's teacher know. We will work with you and your child's healthcare provider to follow our medication procedures and/or respond to your child's health concern at school.

The following is needed to give medicine at school

- A Medication Consent Form from a licensed prescriber. This form is available under "Health Services" at www.richfieldschools.org
- Signed permission from the parent/guardian
- Labeled medication in its original container

Please provide a written excuse letter if there is an activity that you do not want your child to participate in for health or other reasons.

Building Emergencies:

Staff are trained and prepared to take the proper safety steps for any kind of emergency in the buildings. Fire drills, lockdowns, and tornado drills are practiced during the year, and safety plans have been made in case of dangerous weather. Richfield Public Schools has developed a plan that includes procedures for evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lockdowns for all buildings. When it is safe to do so, parents will be notified using the submitted emergency form information of any emergency. Information will be shared with parents about the situation and the process to reconnect with their child(ren) safely.

Forms/Required Paperwork

1. Birth Certificate:

All children must have a copy of their birth certificate by the child's date of attendance in Richfield Early Learning School Programs. Please email a copy of the birth certificate to earlylearning@rpsmn.org or bring it to the Early Learning School office.

2. Emergency Form:

When you registered your child, you completed the questions necessary for this form. We will keep the form on file for your child. This information must be updated yearly.

3. Immunization Form

State law requires that immunization forms be on file for each child in our program on the **first** day of class. This form must be submitted yearly. A doctor's signature is not required. According to state law, parents conscientiously objecting to certain immunizations must sign this same form, have it notarized, and provide this to the school by the first day of school.

To quote Minnesota law on the web address below:

Q: *Can a school refuse to enroll a child who does not meet the minimum requirements of the law?*

A: YES. *The law requires it and specifically states, "No person over two months old may be allowed to enroll or remain enrolled in any Elementary or secondary school or childcare facility until [a record of immunizations in compliance with Minnesota law]..have been submitted." [M.S. §121A.15 subd.1]*

Q: *Can a school dismiss a student who is already enrolled if he or she does not meet the minimum*

requirement of the law?

A: YES. *Since one of the statute's objectives is to prevent the introduction and spread of disease, permitting unimmunized persons to enroll or remain enrolled in schools **violates the language of the law as well as its purpose.***

If a child has not received the recommended doses or types of vaccines for their age, they may be excluded from school if a vaccine-preventable disease occurs.

For complete information on Minn. laws governing immunization [requirements for schools](#), click on this link.

Outdoor Play:

Please send outdoor clothing for your child every day. Your child will play indoors if the temperature and wind chill combination is below 10 degrees. We check the weather conditions at 7:30 a.m. and noon on various websites. In rare cases, children may need to stay indoors if playground conditions or air quality are unsafe or conflicts with special events in the classroom.

Toilet Training

Children must be toilet trained before attending preschool unless a previously granted medical/developmental exemption applies. Children must be wearing underwear. A child having accidents daily would not be considered toilet trained. Please note that wearing pull-ups is NOT considered toilet trained. Why do children have to be toilet trained before they begin preschool?

- There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull-ups; our classrooms are not equipped for this.
- When an adult is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it takes away from learning time for all students and removes one adult from direct supervision and interaction with the rest of the class.

We do understand that even toilet-trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible. A toilet-trained child is a child who can do the following:

- Communicate to the teachers that they need to go to the restroom before they need to go
- Possess the self-control to stop what they are doing to go and use the bathroom.
- Pull down their clothes and get them back up without assistance
- Wipe themselves after using the toilet (with minimal assistance for 3-year-olds)
- Get on/off the toilet by themselves
- Wash and dry hands
- Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom, or if we are away from the classroom.

We certainly will ask your child many times throughout the day if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently. This is an issue that protects all concerned.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Preschool staff are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary. Please have your child dressed in clothing that they can easily manage independently. Please send a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season. These will be left at school in case of accidents and returned at the end of the school year. Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently. Therefore, we will allow 4 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable in the classroom, we will discuss the issue with the parents.

A child will not be considered toilet trained for our preschool program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 4 weeks of school.

School Supplies

- All students should bring a backpack every day.
- Send an extra set of clothes and write your child's name on all clothes and other things he or she brings to school.
- School supply lists will be distributed over the summer

Clothing

Clothing should be:

- appropriate for messy play (comfortable and casual)
- durable shoes for running and climbing, no sandals
- easy for them to take on and off by themselves to go outside or to the bathroom and appropriate for the weather:
 - Winter – coat, boots, hat, mittens, snow pants
 - Spring and Fall – long pants and light jackets
- The school is not responsible for lost jewelry.
- Please contact our social worker if you need any assistance (612) 243-3027

Food

Children will have a light breakfast or snack and water or milk each day. This snack is free to all preschool students. Snack time is learning time for preschoolers. Children practice self-help skills (unfolding their napkins, pouring water, opening a package). Snack time is also great for children to practice talking with one another and the teachers.

Holidays/Celebrations

While teachers may teach about religious holidays as part of an objective and secular educational program of teaching about religion, celebrating religious holidays in the form of religious worship or other practices is unconstitutional. Teaching about holidays on both a religious and secular basis may be constitutional if it furthers a genuine secular program of education, is presented objectively, and does not have the effect of advancing or inhibiting religion. The study of religious holidays should reflect this nation's diversity and bountiful heritage.

Birthdays

Kindly refrain from bringing treats or gift bags. The classes honor each child's birthday with an individualized class tradition. Please let us know if we should not celebrate your child's birthday. Suggestions for sharing and celebrating:

- donate cake mix, frosting mix, and candles to the food shelf
- bring a favorite book for the teacher to read to the class.

Behavior Guidance/Discipline in the Classroom

Our district-wide behavior expectations are Kind, Safe, and Responsible. We aim to develop a culture that supports and communicates nonexclusionary positive guidance practices when necessary. Our staff is committed to maintaining your child's safe, comfortable experience. We model positive behavior by respecting ourselves, others, and property and behaving safely and orderly. Our expectations of children are based on age and development. All teachers in Richfield are being trained in the *Conscious Discipline* ©. ([Conscious Discipline Link](#))

Staff will never use physical punishment (shaking or hitting) or engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Staff will never use threats or derogatory remarks with parents or children, withhold food, or threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. Class rules for safety and cooperation are fair, carefully explained to the children, and consistently enforced. We use positive discipline, such as teaching problem-solving or redirecting children to constructive activities. If a problem persists, teachers follow through with fair, logical consequences that encourage appropriate behavior.

What guidance looks like in the classroom:

- Staff will model respectful behavior.
- Adults support children as they learn what is expected.
- The activities in the classroom help children stay involved in learning.
- When children need extra help with making friends, solving problems, or telling us how they feel, adults will teach children these skills.

Teaching children social-emotional skills is an important part of the preschool program. We use positive ways to help children learn and practice appropriate behaviors, and are committed to working with your child while they learn these skills.

In addition to teaching and learning, our role is to ensure a safe, secure classroom for all children and staff. If your child needs more support, we will work with you to develop a plan. Sometimes, we will work with Early Childhood Special Education staff, social workers, or behavior specialists to help your child. *If parents and staff cannot agree on a behavior plan, we will work together to find an alternative placement that better supports your child.* If your child's school behavior is unsafe, your child's teacher will contact you. We want to work in partnership with families to support all children.

Mandated Reporting

All Richfield Early Learning school staff are mandated reporters. A staff member suspecting that a child is in danger or has been abused or neglected in the preceding 3 years is required by law to call the proper authorities. If a child is in immediate danger, we will call 911.

Reports of suspected abuse or neglect can be made by anyone in the community to Hennepin County Child Protection at 612-348-3552 or the city police where the incident may have occurred. Call 911 to connect with any police department.

Transfer Procedures

Requests for transfer will be evaluated on an individual basis. Requests will only be honored if the request is within enrollment criteria and space is available.

Withdrawal from the Program

If you wish to withdraw your child from the program, a written notice must be submitted to the office by mail, email, or in person at the Central Education Center a minimum of *one week* in advance. Payments already made may not be refunded or prorated.

Tuition Payments

If tuition is part of your child's program, the yearly tuition is divided into 9 monthly payments, regardless of the number of participation days. Tuition is due on the 1st of the month. You will receive your invoice by email. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure their email address is current, and they are receiving our monthly invoice.

Automatic Payments

We encourage you to sign up for monthly automatic tuition payments using any of the following: VISA, Mastercard, Discover, Checking, or Savings Account. Sign up for AutoPay online through your preschool account at <https://richfield.ce.eleyo.com> or call 612-243-3007 for assistance setting it up.

Credit Card Payments

VISA, Mastercard, Discover & American Express

Cash

If you wish to pay your account in cash, please deliver in exact amounts directly to the main office of the Central Education Center so that our staff can provide you with a written receipt.

Check or Money Order

Make payable to ISD 280 Community Education and drop off or mail to the office. (Please write your child's name in the memo line).

Late Payments

If your payment is not on time, please call the office immediately at 612-243-3007. If you do not call, you will be mailed a late notice. If payments are over two months past due, and you have not contacted the preschool office, we reserve the right to remove your child from the program.

All accounting and payment information must be communicated directly with the office staff at the Central Education Center (in person, by phone, by email, etc.) Classroom staff cannot accept payments.

PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I acknowledge that I have received and read this handbook's policies and procedures.

Parent/Guardian(s) Printed Name: _____

Student(s) Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian(s) Signature: _____ Date Signed ____ / ____ / ____

Please return this signed copy to your child's teacher or the Central Education Center.