

Ascension Parish Head Start



Policy Handbook

2024-2025

Welcome to Our Program!

Head Start is a federal program that was started in 1965 as part of the War on Poverty Campaign. It is one of the longest running programs of its nature and has benefited many children and their families. In Ascension Parish, the school board is the grantee that enters a contract with the federal government to accept the Head Start grant. APSB has been sponsoring Head Start in Ascension Parish since 1983. Two hundred fifty-one children aged three to four are offered the opportunity to participate in the program.

It is the responsibility of all Ascension Parish Head Start personnel to read this handbook as well as the Ascension Parish Employee handbook in their entirety and comply with all guidelines and policies as stated in these handbooks. Failure to comply with these guidelines and policies can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Any questions or concerns about these guidelines and policies should be brought to the attention of the director of Ascension Parish Head Start, Ms. Hope Gautreau at 225.391.7351 or hope.gautreau@apsb.org.

Mission

Provide high-quality adult-child interactions to prepare students to be kindergarten-ready.

Vision

All students and families will acquire the skills necessary to break the cycle of poverty and improve their quality of life so they can fulfill their dreams.

Goals

1. Ensure school readiness by utilizing effective teacher-child interactions and intentional teaching strategies in a positive classroom environment promoting optimal learning and development in order to grow scholars, build futures and support families.
2. Utilize data consistently and efficiently across all service areas to make data driven program decisions that grow scholars, build futures and support families.
3. Improve efficiency in collecting, tracking and utilizing program data to ensure proper provisions for health, mental health, nutritional, and oral health needs, utilizing the program data to improve dissemination of supportive, comprehensive, education to families, reinforcing the correlation between health and school readiness.
4. Ascension Parish Head Start staff will strengthen families by utilizing the PFCE Framework to enhance the overall well-being and personal growth of each family in order to grow scholars, build futures and support families.
5. To be compliant with Head Start standards and ensure that implementation of a sound financial system meets the required federal standards for financial reporting, accounting records, internal controls, budget control, with cost principals, cash management and administrative costs.

General

Policies

- HSPPS 1302.90 - Head Start Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and implement written personnel policies for staff that are approved by the Policy Council and that are made available to all grantee and delegate agency staff. Based on this mandate, 1302.90(a), the Ascension Parish Head Start Program has developed this manual, which includes the policies that govern the operation of the program.
- The Ascension Parish School Board is the grantee-governing agency that is awarded the Head Start grant. All relevant policies that govern school board employees also apply to Head Start employees. All new school board and policy council members will receive orientation within 30 days of their appointment.
- Ascension Parish Head Start classes serving 3-year-old children are also licensed through Division of Licensing, Louisiana Department of Education and therefore must adhere to the mandates established by this bureau. For continued employment, staff must meet the requirements established in Bulletin 137 Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations for Type III licensed early learning centers.
- If there are conflicting policies, the more stringent regulation will be followed.

Consequences

Ascension Parish School Board Policy Manual:

- It should be the policy of the School Board to strive to assist personnel in every way possible to adjust to their positions and to perform their duties satisfactorily. Every reasonable effort shall be made to avoid the necessity of dismissing personnel at any time level.
- The Board may dismiss any tenured teacher in accordance with state laws and regulations. Such dismissal shall be made only for just and reasonable cause, and only after written and signed charges have been filed with the Board and a hearing held. Any professional who has acquired tenure may be dismissed for incompetence, willful neglect of duty, dishonesty, or other valid reasons provided for by the state law.
- The Board, if it decides to proceed upon charges, shall notify the teacher in writing at least 20 days prior to the hearing, stating the charges brought against him, and shall arrange for a hearing to be held in accordance with due process provisions of the law, such hearing to be public or private at the option of the teacher.
- During the probationary term of an employee of the school district, the Board may dismiss an employee upon the written recommendation of the Superintendent; said recommendation to include valid reasons for the dismissal.
- Any permanent teacher or other school employee having supervisory or disciplinary authority over school children shall be dismissed by the Board, in accordance with statutory provisions, upon final conviction or pleading nolo contendere to certain crimes outlined in state law.
- If a volunteer is found to violate any of the above standards of conducts, they will be asked to relinquish their right to volunteer in the center.

Falsifying Documentation

- All licensing forms and logs are legal documents. Any staff member falsifying documentation on these forms will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including determination.

Disclosure of Information Policy

- This early learning center operates under the authority of the Louisiana Department of Education, Division of Licensing. All licensing surveys/inspections, regulations and information regarding early learning centers can be located on the department's website.

Complaint Policy

- Any grievance concerning the program must follow procedures established by the Ascension Parish School Board. Any complaints about our program can be reported to the School Board office at 225-391-7000.

- This early learning center operates under the licensing authority of the Division of Licensing. Parents may call or write the Division of Licensing should they have significant, unresolved licensing complaints at the Department of Education, Division of Licensing, P.O. Box 4249, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, P: 225-342-9905, F: 225-342-2498.

Staff

Standards of Conduct

According to the Head Start Performance Standards, employees of the Ascension Parish Head Start must abide by a standard of conduct that includes:

- Implement positive strategies to support children's well-being and present and address challenging behavior.
- Do not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum, that staff must not:
 - use corporal punishment
 - use isolation to discipline a child
 - bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tap a child's mouth
 - use or withhold food as a punishment or reward
 - use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child
 - use any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child
 - physically abuse a child
 - use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threat, or derogatory remarks about the child or child's family
 - use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward
- Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and do not stereotype on any basis, including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition.
- Comply with program confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families and other staff members in accordance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards, federal, state and local laws.
- Ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised.

Political Activity

- Employee involvement, participation, and conduct as related to political activities are restricted as per the Hatch Act including any and all current revisions and amendments.

Sexual Harassment

- Copies of the sexual harassment policy of the Ascension Parish School Board are included in the manual prepared by the school board. This information can be accessed on the APSB website.

Non-Discrimination Policy

- This early learning center does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, sex, national origin, handicap, ancestry, or whether a child is being breastfed.
- Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the Ascension Parish School District are hereby notified that this school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs and activities.
- The school district pledges to protect qualified applicants and employees with disabilities from discrimination in classification, referral, and other aspects of employment based on disability. The school district will also provide qualified applicants and employees with disabilities with reasonable accommodations that do not impose undue hardship. Any person having inquiries concerning the
- Ascension Parish School District's compliance with Disabilities Act of 1990 or Section 504 is directed to contact Ronda Matthews, at 1100 Webster Street, Donaldsonville, LA. (225) 391-7000, who has been

designated by the school board to coordinate the district's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, The American Disabilities Act and Section 504.

Job Descriptions

- Job descriptions identify the general purposes, minimum requirements, and duties and responsibilities of particular jobs. Each employee signs a job description when they are first employed and then at the start of each school year. If an employee has any questions concerning their job requirements, they should ask questions prior to signing the job description.

Salary Ranges

- The salary schedule for employees of the Ascension Parish Head Start Program is developed based on years of experience and educational status. All employees will follow the APSB pay scale.

Employee Benefits

- The Ascension Parish School Board prepares a personnel manual that is available on the home page for Ascension Parish School system. This information is given to each employee of the school system. It includes the Official Policy Manual. If there are any discrepancies between the handbook and the Policy Manual, the most stringent policy will prevail. All staff sign acknowledging receipt of this information, which can be accessed on the APSB website.

Vacancies

- Vacancies are advertised on the APSB website.
- Applicants submit an electronic application that includes three references, previous employment history, college transcripts, previous completed education, and as outlined by the position's qualifications.
- An interview should transpire culminating with a recommendation to the superintendent. Prior to hiring, the candidate must obtain a Child Care Center Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) with a determination status of "eligible for childcare purposes."
- The Policy Council ensures that all hiring procedures are being followed. A letter of declaration stating all pending and prior criminal arrests and charges related to child sexual abuse and their disposition; convictions related to other forms of child abuse and neglect; and all convictions of violent felonies must be provided.
- Each application must be reviewed individually to assess the relevancy of an arrest, a pending criminal charge, or a conviction. Any applicant who does not meet the CCCBC status of "eligible for childcare purposes" will not be recommended for hire.
- During the time of employment, an employee must follow the requirements established by the Ascension Parish School Board and adhere to the Type III licensing, Division of Licensing regulations and Louisiana Department of Education mandates, and Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Requirements for Employment/Staff Qualifications

- According to licensing, childcare staff shall be at least 18, or 21 if they are staff-in-charge.
- They must be known in the community to be of good reputation as verified by documented reference checks.
- A criminal record clearance must be submitted prior to employment. This is not transferable from one employer to another. It is the responsibility of the prospective employee to have this processed. Any cost associated with fingerprinting or the disclosure of background information on an applicant shall be the responsibility of the Head Start program. CCCBC Determination must have the status of "eligible for childcare purposes," and must be accessible on campus via the CCCBC portal.
- No staff with a criminal conviction of a felony or any offense of a violent or sexual nature or any offense involving a juvenile victim shall be employed in a Type III day care center unless approved in writing by a District Judge of the parish and the local District Attorney. A copy of this approval must remain on file in the center and a copy must be submitted to the Ascension Parish School Board Human Resources Department.
- All center staff shall be required to obtain a statement of good health signed by a physician or designee. Center staff will not remain at work if he/she has any sign of a contagious disease.

- 50% of HS teachers nationwide must have a bachelor's or advanced degree in early childhood education or a related degree with experience teaching preschool children. Additionally, APSB requires that all Early Childhood teachers have a Bachelor's degree and hold a Louisiana teaching certificate or be enrolled in an alternate certification program.
- All HS teacher assistants must pass the ParaPro test. They must also hold or obtain an Associate's Degree or higher, an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate, or a CDA credential within two years of hire.
- Whenever possible (due to available funding), Head Start may reimburse staff for the cost of tuition and textbooks if not covered by another APSB program (TTE, REACH...).
- Head Start will not allow staff to leave their job to attend class since this lowers the staff/ child ratio. It is the responsibility of the employee to follow the above procedure and present all documentation to the education manager by the established deadlines. Failure to do so could result in loss of reimbursement funds.
- Head Start staff who receive financial assistance from Head Start to enroll in college courses **must agree to work in Head Start for at least three years or repay a prorated amount of their financial assistance.**

Training and In-Service Opportunities

- The director must ensure, at a minimum, a quarterly staff meeting and/or training session is conducted. All staff **must** be in attendance. Documentation shall consist of dated minutes of the training sessions including training topics and signatures of all staff in attendance.
- All staff, including substitutes, shall annually review center policies and practices, health and safety procedures, emergency and evacuation plans, supervision of children, discipline policy, job description, individual needs of the children enrolled, current State Type III Minimum Licensing Standards, the detection and reporting of child abuse and neglect, and policy of confidentiality regarding children and their families. Documentation shall consist of a signed and dated statement/checklist identifying that all required topics were reviewed.
- The director will meet regularly, at least once a month, with the Head Start leadership team. At this time, the monthly calendar will be planned, grantee board policies and updates will be shared; information about Head Start correspondence and any other relevant issues will be discussed.
- The Teacher Coach and Disability Coordinator will meet at least monthly with the educational staff. During these meetings, student work and data will be reviewed and analyzed to drive instruction.

Professional Collaboration

- Weekly PLC meetings with the teacher coach during planning time to determine:
 - Question 1. What do we want the students to learn? (Learning Targets, Objectives)
 - Question 2. How will we know they have learned it? (Formative and Summative Assessment)
 - Question 3. What will we do if a student experiences difficulty? (Interventions)
 - Question 4. What will we do if a student already shows mastery? (Differentiation)
- Monthly professional meetings during early dismissal time with a focus on student learning to look at student work and measure student progress.

Employee Performance Evaluations

- **Teachers**
 - **CLASS Observations** - Teachers will be observed with the CLASS Observation tool. Internal CLASS Observations will be conducted twice, once in the Fall and once in the Spring semester. External CLASS observations by observers from the Picard Center will be completed throughout the course of the school year.
- **Support Employees**
 - The Ascension Parish Head Start Employee Performance Evaluation and Review Process should accomplish the following objectives:
 - clarify job duties, performance expectations, accomplishments, and goals for future growth
 - summarize employee performance
 - establish timelines for employee growth goals
- The Performance Review Process provides an opportunity for the Head Start supervisor and employee to discuss employee expectations and how those expectations can be achieved.

- The Performance Evaluation Process is a two-way communication between the employee and the supervisor. It is a time when the employee and supervisor discuss employee strengths as well as areas for improvement. A plan for growth and improvement that includes support from the supervisor, timelines for completion, and roles/ responsibilities will be established during the performance evaluation process by both the Head Start supervisor and the employee.
- Head Start support employees will receive a minimum of two Performance Evaluations per school year.
- All Employee Performance Evaluations that have a score of 2.5 or below will be followed up by another Performance Evaluation Review within 4- 6 weeks of the completion of the Ascension Parish School Board Performance form.
- All Performance Evaluations will become a permanent part of the Head Start employee's personnel record.

Absences

- As soon as a staff member knows they will be absent, they should notify their Principal and follow the procedures for their school.

Operating Policies

- All staff members are to work 7.5 hours per day. Bus drivers and part-time bus monitors work 6 hours per day.
- All staff members must clock in and out. If a staff person has been approved to use a flex hour (one-hour coupon), they must sign out upon leaving campus (and back in, if they return that day).

Meeting Deadlines

- It is very important to submit requested information on time. Deadlines are established to increase efficiency. Late submissions jeopardize program compliance. Failure to meet deadlines on time can result in disciplinary action up to and including conference documentation and suspension without pay.

Continuing Education

- The child-care staff is responsible for obtaining a minimum of 15 clock hours of training per the center's anniversary year. Three of these training hours will be in Health and Safety training.
- The 12 clock hours of approved training (including Pathways certified training) are in addition to the CPR and pediatric first aid requirements.
- All staff must be certified in CPR and pediatric First Aid.
- Administration of medication training can count towards the remaining 12 hours of mandated continuing education training.
- The responsibility to have documentation provided to the designated person on each campus, in order for it to be placed in their licensing personnel folder, lies with the employee.

Director and Director Designee

- At all Head Start licensed sites there is a Director and a Director Designee registered with the Division of Licensing. The Director will act as the official person responsible for the managing and controlling of the center's daily activities, as well as responding to parental concerns and ensuring the minimum standards are met. They will also respond to emergencies, inspections/inspectors, and parental concerns and have access to all required information. The Director Designee will assume these responsibilities in the absence or as assigned by the Director.

Provisional Employee Monitoring

- A center may provisionally employ a staff member, a person for whom it has requested a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for child care purposes, and for whom the department has received a satisfactory fingerprint-based Louisiana or federal criminal history information record, pending the department's receipt of the other CCCBC results and determination of the person's eligibility for child care purposes.
- A provisionally employed staff member may be counted in child to staff ratio, but must be monitored at all times in accordance with the following:
 - a. A monitor of a provisionally employed staff member must be an adult staff member for whom the

center has a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for the child care purposes, (or prior to October 1, 2018, a satisfactory CBC), who is designated by the center to monitor a specific provisionally employed staff member.

- b. The center must designate a monitor for each provisionally employed staff member present at the center.
- c. The monitor shall be physically present at the center at all times when the provisionally employed staff member is present at the center.
- d. Monitors must remain within close enough physical proximity of their designated provisionally employed staff member to be able to intervene at any time if intervention is needed.
- e. A monitor shall perform at least one visual observation of each designated provisionally employed staff member every 30 minutes.
- f. The center may designate one monitor for up to a maximum of five provisionally employed staff members at a given time.
 - i. At least one monitor must be physically present at all times in any room during nap times if a provisionally employed staff member is present.
- g. The center shall have a log or other written documentation of the monitoring of provisionally employed staff members that identifies each provisionally employed staff member, the designated monitor for each and the times of the visual observations.

Confidentiality

- According to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), the Ascension Parish Head Start Program has a policy that ensures that all information acquired on children, families, or employees will be kept confidential. The policy includes the procedures for obtaining and recording information.
- Paraprofessionals should not contact parents. All contact with parents must be made by either the teacher, a leadership team member or the secretary.
- During orientation of staff, staff is explicitly told that information received about a child's family is to be considered private and should not be shared with others. This is a condition for continued employment. Staff must sign a declaration acknowledging their understanding of this policy and the necessity for compliance with this policy.
- At the time of parent orientation, parents will learn of the policy of confidentiality in an attempt to alleviate any fears of sharing information with staff. Volunteers in the program are also required to abide by the policy of confidentiality.
- During the in-take of information, each parent/guardian will sit individually with staff and record information on the child's health booklet. Some of this information is personal and should be considered as confidential. Parents are assured that disclosing such information is voluntary and that they only need to share sufficient information to accommodate the child. With the completion of the child's folder, records will be locked in file cabinets in the rooms. A disclaimer sheet will be stapled on the inside of each child's folder so that whenever a staff person accesses a folder, they will sign knowledge of confidentiality policy.

These persons should be allowed to access information in a child's folder:

- Principal/Assistant Principal
- Program Facilitator
- Child's classroom teacher and paraprofessional
- Family Educator
- Speech Therapist
- Education/Disability Coordinator
- Mental Health Consultant/Guidance Counselor
- Pupil Appraisal Team
- IEP Facilitator
- Itinerant SPED Teacher
- Ascension Parish Monitoring Team
- Office of Head Start Monitoring Team
- Teachers are responsible for the file cabinet key and when absent, arrangements must be made for the paraprofessional to have the key. Substitutes should not have access to confidential files.

Child Abuse and Neglect

- As mandated reporters, all staff and owners shall report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Louisiana Child Protection Statewide Hotline (885) 4LA-KIDS [(855) 452-5437].
- An early learning center shall not delay the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect to the Child Protection Statewide Hotline in order to conduct an internal investigation to verify the abuse or neglect allegations.
- An early learning center shall not require staff to report suspected abuse or neglect to the center or management prior to reporting it to the Child Protections Statewide Hotline.
- **Who shall report?**
 - All Head Start employees who suspect child abuse or neglect shall report their suspicions, since all employees are mandated reporters.
 - All substitutes, volunteers, bus drivers, contracted workers and any other person involved with children in the Head Start program shall report their suspicions.
- **To whom shall reports be made?**
 - The person must directly report their suspicions to the Dept. of Children and Family Services. Local: 1078 E. Worthey Rd., Gonzales, LA 70737. Phone number: 644-4603
 - Toll Free number: 1-855-452-5437 (access to a trained child welfare worker 24/7)
 - Website: <https://www.dcfs.louisiana.gov/page/reporting-child-abuse-neglect>
 - The school administrators and Head Start Director should be notified immediately as well.
- **What is to be reported? Suspicions of abuse and neglect would include, but not limited to the following:**
 - **Physical Abuse Signs:**
 - Bruises-with attention to location, size, and shape
 - Burns, particularly small round cigarette type burns
 - Welts or scratches
 - Head or facial injuries
 - Abrasions and lacerations
 - Bone fractures
 - **Direct Disclosures:**
 - Child tells you that his parent/guardian hit him, touched him inappropriately, or burned him, etc.
 - **Sexual Abuse Signs:**
 - Marked change in child's behavior, such as extreme aggression
 - Withdrawal, or acting out sexual play in activity centers
 - Unusual fear in a child of a person or place, such as fear of a man or fear of the bathroom
 - Multiple layers of clothing inappropriately worn, such as a coat on a hot day
 - **Neglect Signs:**
 - Failure to obtain health care
 - Delay in health care
 - Failure to obtain dental care
 - Abandonment
 - Expulsion of the child from the house
 - Leaving child with others for days
 - Inadequate nutrition, clothing, or hygiene
 - Gross neglect of child's physical care, i.e., food, clothing, shelter, etc.
 - Medical neglect which would adversely affect the child's physical wellbeing (well-documented instances of unwillingness or inability to provide medical care).
 - Suspected physical abuse should be immediately reported.
 - **Immunity:**
 - No person who is required to report shall be liable in any civil or criminal action by reason of such a report so long as the report was made in good faith.
 - **Failure to Report:**
 - Three types of actions can be imposed on a person required to report that improperly reports or fails to report a suspected case of abuse or neglect:
 - Criminal penalty
 - Civil Penalty
 - Personal reprimand

- **Training for Child Abuse and Neglect**
 - Training in recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect shall be provided by the grantee. This training can be located on the DCFS website.
 - Documentation will be visible in personnel folders.

Health and Safety

Health Services

- Observation - Upon arrival, the physical condition of each child shall be observed for possible signs of illness, infections, bruises or injuries, and when something is observed, it shall be documented, and such documentation shall include an explanation from the parent or child.
- Reporting – Incidents, injuries, or accidents, illnesses, and unusual behavior shall be documented and reported to the parent prior to the child leaving the school campus.
- Immediate Parent Notification – The Parent shall be immediately notified in the following circumstances:
 - Blood not contained in an adhesive strip
 - Head, neck, or eye injury
 - Human bite that breaks the skin
 - Animal bite
 - Impaled object
 - Broken or dislodged teeth
 - Allergic reaction skin changes (rash, spots, swelling...)
 - Unusual breathing
 - Symptoms of dehydration
 - Temperature reading over 101°
- Critical Incidents - Immediate Notification to emergency personnel, LDOE Division of Licensing, law enforcement as applicable, and other appropriate agencies for the following:
 - Death
 - Serious injury or illness requiring medical attention
 - Reportable infectious diseases and conditions listed in LAC 51.II.105
 - Use of corporal punishment
 - Suspicion or allegation of abuse and/or neglect by staff members
 - Any child given the wrong medication or an overdose of the correct medication
 - Any child left unsupervised on the play yard
 - Any child left in a vehicle unsupervised
 - Any child left unsupervised on a field trip
 - Any other significant event relating to the health, safety or well-being of any child, including but not limited to a lost child, an emergency situation, fire or other structural damage, or closure of the center

Emergency Crisis Intervention and Procedures

- Crisis intervention will be arranged for parents and their families through the Department of Family Services. Staff will follow this protocol for handling a crisis:
 - Teacher, paraprofessional, or other staff member informs family educators of any crisis occurrence.
 - Family Educator contacts family to assess needs
 - Family Educator e-mails teacher and Director with identified needs and her plan of action.
 - Family Educator will contact agencies on behalf of the family and report relief efforts to the family.
 - Family Educator will make a follow-up visit with the family to see if any other issues can be resolved through Head Start.
 - All efforts will be documented in the child's folder and reported via e-mail to the director.

Infection Control/Universal Precautions

- Infection control practices are the procedures and practices initiated to help prevent the spread of illnesses caused by germs. “Universal precautions” means using the same infection control practices- such as hand washing, using gloves, and cleaning and disinfecting- when dealing with the blood or body fluids of all children and adults at all times. At the Ascension Parish Head Start Program, Mrs. Jeannine Massey, the nurse, is considered the Infectious Disease Contact Person. Her responsibilities include:
 - Collecting reliable information on this topic and keeping a folder on such information.
 - Sharing the policy with the Health Advisory Committee.
 - Planning training for staff and parents on this subject.
 - Monitoring that staff follow procedures.
 - Enforcing confidentiality and the right to privacy policies for all persons.
 - Making a report of all incidents that required first aid to be administered.
 - Reports must include names of all providers, description of the circumstances, with the date and time as well as a determination of whether exposure has occurred.
 - If blood was present at the time of assistance, the first aid provider must be offered the full immunization series as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours.
 - If an exposure has taken place, other post-exposure follow-up procedures must be initiated immediately, per the requirements.
- Ascension Parish Head Start will always also take every precaution to protect children and adults from infections by following universal precautions.
- **Wiping Noses:**
 - Noses shall be blown or wiped with disposable, one-use tissues that are discarded in a plastic lined and covered garbage bag container.
- **Vomit, Urine and Feces:**
 - Floors, walls, bathrooms, table tops, toys, kitchen countertops, and diaper-changing tables shall be cleaned and disinfected.
- **Blood or Blood-Containing Body Fluids / Injury / Tissue Discharges:**
 - The area shall be cleaned and disinfected. Gloves shall be used in these situations unless the amount of blood or body fluid is so small that it can easily be contained by the material used for cleaning.
- **Persons Involved in Cleaning Contaminated Surfaces:**
 - Avoid exposure of open skin sores or mucous membranes to blood or blood-containing body fluids and injury or tissue discharges by using gloves to protect hands when cleaning contaminated surfaces.
- **Mops:**
 - Mops shall be cleaned, rinsed in sanitizing solution and then wrung as dry as possible and hung to dry.
- **Blood Contaminated Material and Diapers:**
 - Blood contaminated material and diapers shall be disposed of in a plastic bag with a secure tie.

Smoke Free Environment

- Based on the publication of ACYF-PI-HS-95-04, Head Start Grantee Agencies will establish a smoke-free environment in Head Start programs. In order to ensure that all Head Start children, staff and parents are not exposed to second-hand smoke from cigarettes or vape pens, the following policies will be followed.
 - Smoking and vaping are prohibited at all times, in all areas of the school campus---classrooms, staff offices, **restrooms**, parent and staff meeting rooms, hallways, play areas, the gym, etc. and vehicles used for transporting children.
 - Smoking and vaping are also prohibited on field trips. Information will be available for parents and staff that educates them as to the adverse health effects smoking has on the community. A written policy should be posted regarding smoke-free environments.

Administration of Medication

- Center staff shall administer no medication of any type, prescription, non-prescription, and special medical procedures, unless authorized by the parent and physician treating the child. The nurse must

approve this as well to ensure that the medication policy of the Ascension Parish School Board is being followed. Contact the nurse concerning any medication issues.

Classroom Hygiene

- The room should be orderly and there should be no exposed safety hazards. Both teacher and paraprofessional must work collaboratively to maintain the appearance of the room, but the paraprofessional works under the guidance of the teacher and can expect to be mostly responsible for upkeep.
- All electric outlets must be covered with a plastic plug cover.

Meals

- Teachers and paraprofessionals are to eat when the children are eating. Fast food will not be eaten in front of the children. Soft drinks and snacks (candy, chips, etc.) will not be visible to the children. Drinks/Cups are considered personal belongings and as such must be kept in a location inaccessible to children. Hot drinks are not allowed at all in the presence of children.

Special Dietary Concerns

- Dietary concerns are to be identified from the health booklet information, through teacher observation and from the parent interview. Confirmation of any problems will include the physician sending a dietary prescription. The teacher is notified of special dietary needs and will bring these concerns to the nurse. The nurse will meet with food service staff to establish menu substitutions. The nurse will monitor classroom and food service procedures monthly to make sure all instructions are being followed. Documentation will be put in the child's folder.

Emergency Procedures

- All emergency procedures are to be followed as outlined in the District Crisis Plan and School level Crisis Plan. Tornado drills must be conducted during the months of March, April and May. Licensing drill forms must be completed and kept in the licensing files.

Mental Wellness

- The Employee Assistance Program offers employees of the Ascension School Board counseling and referral services for themselves or a family member. A brochure with an explanation and phone numbers is available.

Physical Activity

- Children aged two and older shall be provided physical activity that includes a combination of both teacher-led and free play, both indoors and outdoors, weather permitting for a minimum of 60 minutes per day.

Sleep/Rest

- Children under four shall have daily rest time of at least 75 minutes a day. Children ages four and older shall be offered the opportunity for quiet time.

Biting

- Attend to the child who has been bitten immediately, but calmly
 - Wash the area with soap and water if the bite is not severe.
 - Apply a cold pack to bruising.
 - Rinse the bite wound under running water for 3-5 minutes for a break in the skin.
 - Dress the wound with clean dressing.
 - If bleeding is severe, apply pressure to stop bleeding.
 - The child who bit should rinse their mouth with water. Do not have the child brush their teeth as this could cause injury and further increase the chance of contamination.
- **All human bites must be evaluated by a doctor if the skin is broken; or occurs on the face or near the eye; or either the victim or biter has a weakened immune system (as AIDS, or Cancer).**

- Contact the school nurse if the bite breaks the skin or is severe.
- Notify each child's parents of all bites as soon as possible for breaks in the skin.
- Maintain confidentiality: Do not put the names of the other child on the reports or disclose the names of the children to the other parent.

Receiving and Releasing a Child from the Center

- The person checking a student out from Head Start (schools) must be listed on the third-party release form AND be at least 18 years old.
- The person receiving a child from the bus must be listed on the third-party release form, also known as the Parent Transportation Letter of Assurance AND be at least 12 years old.
- Children not enrolled in the Head Start program are not allowed to be in attendance for activities on campus, except for parent meetings.

Families

Teaching Families

- A research-based Parenting Curriculum will be implemented. Ascension Parish Head Start currently uses the parenting programs from Conscious Discipline and Frog Street. Parents are encouraged to follow similar techniques of discipline and will be exposed to these techniques through volunteer training and classroom visitations.

Home Visits

- A minimum of two home visits must be completed with each participating family. Parents are made aware of this during orientation and in-take. Parents can be given the choice of completing this meeting at their home or on the school campus.
- The following guidelines will be followed for the first home visit (in-take):
 - Both the teacher and the
 - Explain every document in the packet and assist the parent in completing it.
 - Call the parent the day before the scheduled visit as a reminder.
- **Family Educator**
 - Family educators will complete family partnerships and follow-ups. This will occur in person at the home, on campus or on the phone, based on the individual needs of the family.

Volunteer Program

- **Parents need to be involved in the Head Start Program.** The funding of this program is dependent on the volunteer participation. This requires that all staff:
 - Encourage families to volunteer to help the program meet its non-federal requirement.
 - Be receptive and welcoming to parents.
 - Understand situations that arise and be considerate.
 - Have volunteers engaged in meaningful work with children.
 - Create opportunities for families to volunteer from home.
 - Have volunteer forms signed by everyone who contributes to the program.

Parental Access Policy

- Parents may visit the center any time during its regular hours of operation and when children are present.

Parental Involvement Policy

- Parents are offered a minimum of two opportunities for involvement each year, which may include but are not limited to, an open house, parent education sessions, parent and staff conferences, family potluck dinner, holiday party, or parent or grandparent's day.

Field Trips

- Follow the field trip guidelines and provided by the Ascension Parish Early Childhood department.
- Submit all licensing field trip forms in a timely manner.
- Face to name counts must be made
 - Before leaving campus
 - Upon arrival at the field trip destination
 - Before departing the field trip destination
 - Upon arrival to campus
- The site shall obtain and maintain a signed parental authorization for each field trip.
- At least two staff, one of whom may be the driver, shall be in each vehicle, unless the vehicle has a communication device and the child to staff minimum ratio is met in the vehicle.
- If transportation is provided by parents, a planned route shall be provided to each driver and a copy maintained in the center if any parent is transporting a child in addition to their own child.
- Children shall be supervised during the boarding and exiting of vehicles by an adult who remains outside of the vehicle.
- A written record for each field trip shall be maintained and shall include the following:
 - date, destination(s) and method of transportation;
 - names of all the children being transported in each vehicle;
 - names of the driver, staff members and other adults being transported in each vehicle;
 - names of other adults who joined the field trip at the destination(s) to assist with supervision of children; and
 - the presence of each child each time the children enter or exit the vehicle.

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Attendance (ERSEA)

The Ascension Parish Head Start Program conduct coordinated enrollment in the Spring of each academic school year. The dates are assigned according to the district Early Childhood Program. Selection Criteria are determined by the program and approved by Policy Council and the Ascension Parish School Board.

Returning Students

All Students who are eligible to return to the Ascension Parish Head Start Program for the Donaldsonville Head Start program will roll up to the Donaldsonville Head Start site. The parent/guardian will need to update their current application. They will be notified of documents needed such as proof of residence and updated shot record to complete the roll up. Families will receive an email with a link to their existing application that will allow them to upload current documents.

Transfer students

All students who would like to transfer to a new site within the school district will be required to provide transportation if it is unavailable within our district.

Initial Application Window

Round 1

- Applications are accepted online beginning March 1st through May15th
- Parents Notification of Eligibility will begin May 16th for complete applications that were received prior to May 15th & include all required documentation

Round 2

- Applications will continue to be accepted after May 16th and will be ongoing thereafter until all publicly funded seats are filled.
-

Recruitment

Recruitment is an ongoing process. This process includes seeking out the most disadvantaged children and families by canvassing the local community, advertising, family referrals and referrals from other public and private agencies.

1. Open enrollment takes place in the Spring.
2. Registration is held at each Head Start site or online.
3. Recruitment efforts include:
 - a. Canvassing all of the local communities in the service area
 - b. Development of fliers and posters
 - c. Use of newspaper, church bulletins, staff and Head Start families
 - d. Family referrals and referrals from other public and private agencies

Ascension Parish Head Start makes every effort to notify the community that registration is taking place. The Ascension Parish school system helps with this by allowing flyers to be posted in the school offices and sending home flyers to elementary age children. Community agencies also post a recruitment poster in their establishment. Churches are encouraged to advertise the date of registration. If necessary, Head Start assists families in filling out an application, which ensures that all information needed for selection is completed.

Ascension Parish Head Start recruits' children with disabilities. Head Start has a Disability Coordinator that has a working relationship with the local LEA, special education staff and other early intervention programs (Early Step) so that we can determine which children with diagnosed disabilities may be best served by our program. Head Start flyers are circulated throughout the parish.

Ascension Parish Head Start recruits' children with disabilities in the following ways:

1. Information about disabilities is on the open enrollment flyer
2. Brochures about Ascension Parish Child Search Program
3. Contact with LEA
4. Information on application about disability
5. Information given to parents about contacting LEA concerning a disability

Procedures to Determine Eligibility and Accepting Children on the Waiting List

A child is considered Head Start eligible if the child meets the requirements for age and family income as established by the Head Start Act.

A family may be eligible for Head Start services if the family's income is determined to be at or below the federal poverty level which are guidelines that are updated annually. APHS may enroll some children from families whose incomes are higher than the federal poverty level if they meet other eligibility requirements. Some families are categorically eligible (such as SSI, homeless, foster care, SNAP) which means they qualify for services. Verification of any of income documents also documentation showing current status as recipients of public assistance or any other documents that will help to determine income.

To determine age, a child must be at least three or four years old on or before September 30th by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in Ascension Parish. At least 90 percent of the children who are enrolled in the APHS program will be from low-income families. At least 10% of the enrollment opportunities will be made available to children who have been determined eligible on the basis of the child's disability. APHS must have a formal process for establishing the selection criteria for selecting children and families. Applications to determine eligibility and to place a child on the prioritized waiting list will be taken from any family in the Ascension Parish area at any time during the year.

Areas on the selection criteria family dynamics / education, age, parental status criteria, income, disabilities,

To complete the application and selection process a staff member will follow the steps below:

1. Conduct an eligibility interview
2. Type of interview in person or audio/ visual call
3. Verify birthday
4. Verify income according to the current poverty guidelines

5. Rank application according to the selection criteria form (from highest to lowest ranking) Families with the highest number of points based on the Selection Criteria are selected first for the program. Selection criteria also determine the order on the waiting list. The waiting list from child plus.
6. Prioritize according to the ranking. If a child has an identified disability, then this documentation will be included in the prioritization of the child.
7. Enroll the families with the highest ranking in the income eligible/categorically eligible list in the program first. If this list is exhausted, staff will enroll families from the next category 101-130% above income guidelines and then the over income families until the funded enrollment is met.
8. If two or more children have the same priority ranking number, then the child will be selected according to his/her birthday, (the oldest child selected first)
9. After enrollment, the enrollment list becomes the waiting list. If there is a vacancy, parents are contacted on the waiting list from highest to lowest ranking until the vacancy is filled.

Intake and Acceptance

Once the class list is prepared from the enrollment list parents are contacted to complete the intake paperwork. Parents are informed at orientation that attendance is important and the program expect the children to come to school every day.

Attendance Policy

The Ascension Parish Head Start Program is mandated in Section 1302.15 of the Performance Standards to have an average daily attendance of 85% of the children enrolled in the program monthly. In section 1302.15 of the Performance Standards, it states that a child must be replaced within 30 calendar days whenever a vacancy occurs. To meet the federal regulations, Ascension Parish Head Start has implement the following procedure on child attendance.

Within the first 60 days of program operation, and on an ongoing basis thereafter, the program uses individual child attendance data to identify children with patterns of absence that put them at risk of missing ten percent of program days per year and develop appropriate strategies to improve individual attendance among identified children, such as direct contact, documented in child plus, information about building good attendance habits send home or intensive case management, as necessary.

Parent Responsibilities

- Parents will be oriented and encouraged during orientation, home visits, and conferences to have their child participate in the program every possible day from the time of enrollment **until** the last day of the program year. The goal is to have your child participate in as many full days as possible. It is necessary to have consistent and daily attendance in order for your child to be prepared for the next educational level.
- Parents are expected to call or send a written note if their child is absent or going to be absent from school. An explanation of why the child cannot attend and when the child can be expected to return to school must be included in the explanation.

Teacher Responsibilities

- A record of all attendance will be recorded daily.
- In the Event of Absences:
 - Teachers will maintain a parent/teacher communication log. When a student is absent, within one hour of the start time of school, parental contact will be attempted. When a student has excessive absences and parent/guardian has not notified staff of absences, immediate contact to parent will be made. This contact will be documented. The teacher may use any method that they would like to maintain these documents. The communication log must indicate the child's name, date of absences, date of contact, and parent response. The log should be available for review should a monitor request this information.
 - When there is a problem or concern with an Ascension Parish Head Start child and their absences, the Family Educator must also be contacted so she can follow up with the family. The teacher will review the absentee report and if they see that a child has not participated in the program on a consistent basis, the teacher will let the Ascension Parish Head Start Leadership Team know.

Family Services Team Responsibilities

- If the parents have not notified the school of the reason for the child's absence, or if the teacher cannot establish telephone contact with the parent, then the family educator will make a home visit.
- If contact is made on the home visit, it will be determined why the child has been absent from school. The reason will be documented in the database. The family educator will point out the need for the child to attend school daily, as well as the federal Head Start regulations regarding attendance, and the possibility of the child being dropped from the program if attendance is inconsistent.
- If there are extenuating circumstances, the family educator will determine if there is anything Ascension Parish Head Start can assist the family with to get the child back into school. The Ascension Parish Head Start Leadership Team will review and discuss situations where extenuating circumstances exist. Some examples are chronic illness with documentation, transportation problems, death in the family, or an ill family member that prevents the parents from getting the child to school. These issues will be considered on an individual basis.
- If contact is not made on the home visit, a letter is left at the parents' home indicating that the parent must contact your child's school within two days. If contact is still not made, Ascension Parish Head Start attempts to make one more contact. If we do not get a response, the Ascension Parish Head Start Leadership Team will review the case to determine if the child should be dropped from the program.
- The Ascension Parish Head Start Leadership Team will meet to review and discuss the situation to see what arrangement has been made and exhaust all possibilities (if any) before dropping the child from the program. If attendance becomes regular and/or parents notify the teaching staff about excused absences, no further action will be necessary. If excessive absences persist, the Truancy Department will be contacted and become involved.

Note: Documenting and following up on attendance concerns will be a combined team effort with the teaching staff and family educator involved in the effort to keep the Ascension Parish Head Start child in the program and educate the parents on the benefits and importance of regular attendance. In the event a child is not participating on a regular basis and the program has made every effort to improve attendance and has not been successful, the child will be dropped from the program and the slot will be filled by a child on the waiting list.

Procedure for Filling Vacancies Dropping /Adding

- When the program or teaching staff is notified that a student is dropping, the teacher completes the child status form.
- The child status form is sent to the leadership team and other on-site staff. The student is dropped in Child Plus and PowerSchool.
- The Program Facilitator selects the next student on the waiting list. The parent is notified about the opening and the teacher and parent make arrangement to pick up the intake package.
- When the parent completes the intake, the teacher completes the child status form for the student to start. This form is also sent to the leadership team and other on-site staff.

Violating Eligibility Determination Regulation Policy

Any staff member who intentionally violates Federal, state, and Ascension Parish Head Start program eligibility determination requirements, and enrolls children that are not eligible for the program shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Records will be checked twice a year to check for errors and fraud enrollment and as needed of a new application.

Eligibility Training Policy

The new eligibility determination staff will be trained on the following stressing the importance of their jobs determining eligibility. The specific items discussed include but not limited to:

- Methods on how to collect complete and accurate eligibility information from families.
- Incorporate strategies for treating families with dignity and respect and for dealing with possible issues of domestic violence, privacy, and stigma; and,
- Explain program policies and procedures that describe actions taken against staff, families, or participants who intentionally attempt to provide false information.
- This training will be as soon as possible but within 90 days of hire.

- Eligibility determination staff will follow all ERSEA policy and procedure.
- All staff determining eligibility will receive annual training on the ERSEA policies and procedures to assure that they are abreast of eligibility requirements.

Education and Disabilities

Curriculum

- Teachers are required to utilize the adopted curriculum, (Frog Street Curriculum) but are encouraged to use their professional content knowledge and knowledge of students, when planning learning experiences for their class. Teachers are required to follow the pace and sequence of the curriculum, but are also expected to modify the strategies, methods, and materials used to meet the needs of their students, increase student engagement, and promote thinking and problem solving.

Assessment

- Teachers utilize TSG to assess student progress. Assessment is ongoing and should be updated at least weekly. TSG data should continuously be used to form instruction.

Differentiation

- Teachers will differentiate their instruction as much as possible as is appropriate to meet students' individual learning needs. Teachers are encouraged to use small group instruction to remediate, enrich, and extend the core curriculum in order to ensure all students have the opportunity to be challenged and experience success. It is not expected that teachers will differentiate every activity for every lesson every day. Rather, it is expected that teachers will identify the possible need for differentiation during their initial planning based upon what they know about their students and that they will plan activities that use a variety of methods, materials and/or grouping strategies with this in mind. Teachers are encouraged to share their knowledge of best practices in differentiation during regularly scheduled weekly collaborative planning meetings.

Behavior Management Policy

- The behavior management policy for this early learning center includes the Conscious Discipline methods and behavior guidance previously explained in this handbook. (See previous explanation.)
- This early learning center prohibits children from being subject to any of the following:
 - a. Physical or corporal punishment which includes but is not limited to yelling, slapping, spanking, yanking, shaking, pinching, exposure to extreme temperatures or other measures producing physical pain, putting anything in the mouth of a child, requiring a child to exercise, or placing a child in an uncomfortable position
 - b. Verbal abuse, which includes but is not limited to using offensive or profane language, telling a child to "shut up," or making derogatory remarks about children or family members of children in the presence of children
 - c. The threat of a prohibited action even if there is not intent to follow through the threat
 - d. Being disciplined by another child
 - e. Being bullied by another child
 - f. Be deprived of food or beverages
 - g. Being restrained by devices such as highchairs or feeding tables for disciplinary purposes
 - h. Having active playtime withheld for disciplinary purposes, except timeout may be used during active play time for an infraction incurred during the outdoor playtime
 - i. Time Out - Following the principles of Conscious Discipline, this early learning center does not utilize time out.

Electronics

Electronic Devices Policy

- Electronic devices, including but not limited to television, movies, games, videos, computers and handheld electronic devices, shall adhere to the following limitations:
 - a. Electronic device activities for children under age two are prohibited.
 - b. Time allowed for electronic device activities for children ages 2 and above shall not exceed 2 hours per day.
 - c. Electronic device use is not permitted in the classroom. If you receive a phone call, please step out of the classroom to take it.
 - d. Please be mindful when taking pictures in classrooms. At special events, please take pictures of only your child.
 - e. Refrain from posting pictures of both children and adults on social media. Only post photos of your child.

Computer Practices Policy

- Computers that allow internet access by children are equipped with monitoring or filtering software that limits access for children to inappropriate websites, email and instant messaging

Programs, Movies and Video Games Policy

- Programs, movies, and video games with violent or adult content including but limited to soap operas, television news, and sports programs aimed at audiences other than children, shall not be permitted in the presence of children.
- All television, video DVD, or other programming shall be suitable for the youngest child present.
- "PG" programming or its television equivalent shall not be shown to children under age five.

Requirements

Daily

- Daily Attendance for Children Form/Daily Observation Report – Mandatory for 3-year-old licensed sites, optional for all other HS sites.
- Visual Check of Facility (Employee designated Principal)
- Teachers and paraprofessionals sign-in and out using NOVAtime clock.
- Student attendance in PowerSchool
- Toothbrushing – not required during a pandemic or as advised by the Office of Head Start.
- Daily schedules must be posted.
- Lesson plans must be readily available.
- Emergency lesson plans must be housed in the classroom at all times.
- (HSSP 1302.16 Attendance) "If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of program start time, the program must attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child's well-being."
 - Call the parent to assure the safety of the child and determine the reason for absence.
 - Document the reason for absence on ChildPlus.
 - Select the student.
 - Select "Family Services."
 - Select "Attendance Parent Communication Log."
 - Select "Add an Attendance Parent Communication." (green button)
 - Select "Date of Parent Contact."
 - Click the timestamp button. (found within the dialog box – looks like a clock)
 - Type in the specific reason for absence. (should not be just "ill"; should be specific such as flu, fever, attended funeral, etc.)

Weekly

- Email weekly newsletters to Enedina Castillo. She can identify activities on your newsletters that qualify for family involvement or can plan family activities to coincide with your class activities.

- Weekly newsletters can be translated, but it must be emailed to Enedina Castillo by Friday of the previous week to ensure it is translated in time.
- Enter current documentation in TSG.

Monthly

- Post and send home breakfast/lunch menus to parents. You will receive this from Enedina Castillo.
- ChildPlus
 - Home Visits
 - Dentals/Physicals
 - Height/Weight
 - ASQ3/ASQ-SE
 - Documentation from parent contact/meetings/conferences
 - Every other month send home a parent committee invitation that is emailed to you from Sandra Lawless.
- Drill Reports (fire, intruder, shelter in place, tornado)

As Needed

- Non-Federal Contributions Report ("In Kind") – as needed, email to Harriet Brooks at the end of the month.
- Volunteer Sign-In Sheets – as needed, email to Harriet Brooks at the end of the month.
- Family Involvement Sign-In Sheets – as needed for events, email to Harriet Brooks at the end of the month
- Critical Reportable Incident Form – Once the incident is taken care of, contact the parent and email the form to Hope Gautreau, your Principal, and the LDOE Division of Licensing within 24 hours.
- Child Status Information Form (for drops/adds/transfers) – email to Hope Gautreau, Mary McMahan, Sandra Lawless, Enedina Castillo, Rosetta Stevenson, Allison Johnson, Stacy Allen Haupt, Joyy Joseph, Whitney Sheets and Jeannine Massey.
- Post any menu changes.
- New Students
 - To be completed immediately:
 - Home visit (may be virtual at this time due to COVID)
 - Intake packet completed
 - Dental/physical
 - To be completed within 30 days:
 - ASQ-SE/ASQ-3
 - Pedestrian and Transportation Form (included in intake packet)
- Field Trip Permission Form
- Height/Weight Class Roster – twice a year
- Maintenance requests – follow school procedure
- Computer problems - K-box work order for repair or helpdesk@apsb.org

Supplies/Materials

- Email requests for the following items from the HS nurse: toothbrushes, toothpaste, small cups, gloves, and band-aids.
- Email requests for pull-ups and wipes to: Teai Sowell at AHS and Sandra Lawless or Enedina Castillo for all east side campuses.
- Each teacher will receive funds - \$800 for consumable supplies. All orders must be submitted to the school secretary for payment to be made by Ascension Parish Head Start. A Google spreadsheet will be shared with you.

Transportation

Transportation Plan

- It is the objective of the Ascension Parish Head Start to transport children safely to and from the centers. To help to do this in an effective manner, the bus monitors will make a checklist of all children who ride on their bus route and mark the riders as they get on the bus. In the afternoons, prior to leaving on the route, the list should be checked to make sure all children who are supposed to be riding are on the bus. If other bus arrangements are made during the day, the teacher must let the bus monitor know.
- The children of the Ascension Parish Head Start Program are given the opportunity of riding a school bus in most situations. The bus drivers employed are certified with a CDL and are approved by the Ascension Parish School Board. There is at least one bus monitor on each bus.
- The Head Start staff shall be currently certified in CPR and first aid. Transportation/pedestrian safety education training is provided to all staff members. This training will include information concerning pedestrian and transportation safety in accordance with mandate 1303.74 bus monitors act to ensure safety and to make the bus ride a pleasant experience for the child. In emergencies the bus monitor will be able to assist the bus driver. All bus monitors must wear the neon bright colored safety vest to ensure the safety of him/herself and each child while on the bus route.
- All students who are transported on a school bus must be given instruction on bus safety issues of school bus transportation. Teachers will plan to present instructions on this and have documentation that this was done, within the first 30 days.
- All parents and students are to be given instruction on pedestrian safety within the first 30 days. Documentation of this training will be on file.
- **Bus monitors will:**
 - Meet the bus driver at a designated location and at the time established by a school administrator.
 - Make sure children are placed on the correct buses.
 - Complete the Daily Transportation Log (name of driver, time driver boarded the bus, name of monitor, time all students released to school in the morning, time of a.m. visual check, signature of person conducting the visual check, time students board the bus in the afternoon, time of the p.m. visual check, signature of the person conducting the visual check, time each child is received in the a.m., time each child is released in the p.m., name of the person from the third party release form that the child is released to).
 - **STUDENTS SHOULD NEVER BE RELEASED TO ANYONE WHO IS NOT LISTED ON THE THIRD-PARTY RELEASE AND SHOWING A VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE, STATE ISSUED ID OR STUDENT ID IF THE PERSON IS STILL IN SCHOOL BUT 12 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER.**
 - Turn in the Daily Transportation Log weekly to the Assistant Principal.
 - Sit throughout the bus route.
 - Wear the safety vest provided, when crossing children in front of the bus and releasing a child to a person on Third Party Release.
 - Help the children on and off the bus.
 - Seat the children and ensure that their seat belts/harnesses are securely and completely fastened.
 - Monitor the children's behavior.
 - Deliver children to someone on the Third-Party Release.
 - Modify situations on the bus to ensure that safety is encouraged.
 - Check to make sure the bus is emptied of all children at the end of the route.
 - Report any unsafe issues to the director/assistant principal.
- If a child must cross the street, the bus monitor must get off and cross the child and meet the parent on the other side of the street. The bus monitor and child must cross in front of the bus.
- Children are not to be left at home alone or with anyone who is not listed on the Third-Party Release.
- If a child is returned to school, the child should be brought to the office. Documentation of this must be maintained.
- If a bus monitor has a problem with a child's behavior on the bus, a plan should be developed with the child's teacher to address this.
- Rules on the Bus:

- **Children**
 - Children enter the bus with the help of an adult.
 - Children are seated in designated seats, with seat belts and harnesses completely fastened.
- **Parents**
 - Parents should notify the school if their child will not be riding the bus.
 - In the morning, children and parents/guardians must be waiting for the bus when it arrives.
 - In the afternoon, the parent/guardian must be present when the bus arrives. If no one is present, the child will be returned to the center. It is then the parent's responsibility to come to the center to pick up the child. The child cannot exit the bus at another stop.
 - Children returned three times cannot ride the bus until a conference is held between the director and the parent.
 - There will be no food, beverage, or smoking on the bus.

Absences

Notify your administrator as soon as you know you will be absent. Submit your absence in NOVAtime.

Third-Party Releases

- Third Party release forms have been collected on every one of your passengers. As new passengers enter the schools, you are given a copy if they are assigned to your bus. The information on these third-party forms are confidential and should never be shared with other passengers or families.
- If any pick-up or drop off location changes, parents **MUST** contact the school to make the official change in written form or in person. We must change it in the system and have accurate information.
 - Children will only be released to persons listed on the Third-Party Release.
 - Children will only be released to persons showing a valid driver's license, state issued ID, or student ID if the person is 12 or older.

Confidentiality Matters

- DO NOT give an address or phone number of another passenger.
- When administrators meet one on one with drivers, you may be asked to sign a documentation sheet verifying we have met and discussed things. If you choose to discuss it with your co-workers, know that you are discussing it at your own risk. Administrators are not allowed to discuss personnel matters with your co-workers, students, or parents.
- You must maintain confidentiality of all school related business at all times.

Visitor Riders

Passengers who do not usually ride your bus will present you with a change of transportation bus note. This is their ticket onto your bus.

Notes from Parents

- Every change **MUST** go through the office for approval. This is for safety reasons, even if you think it is ok or it was done that way in the past.
- Students should give notes from parents to their teacher who will send it to the office for approval.

Seating Charts

- EVERY BUS **MUST** have a seating assignment in place.
- If you make changes, please complete a new form, and submit to the Assistant Principal/ (AHS Principal for drivers of Ascension Head Start).

Bus Behavior Management

- The goal is to teach the students to behave appropriately through modeling and positive reinforcement. We must maintain good communication with parents when discipline problems arise and make parental contact.
- The bus driver and monitor are the first ones our students see in the morning. Be firm but be fair. Yelling and screaming at students will not be tolerated and will be addressed accordingly.

- In some situations, bus personnel will have to use “good judgments.” Report happenings to the administrators so that we know what happened before the parent calls the office or visits the school. When in doubt...call your school administrators.

Speaking with Parents

Refer parents to the campus administrators for any concerns, complaints or requests they may have.

Smoking on Campus and On Buses

- Smoking on campus or on the school buses are strictly forbidden.
- The school grounds are drug free zones.

Leaving Students Alone on the Bus

- Bus personnel must be at the bus when the passengers arrive to load.
- Students should never be on the bus without the driver and/or monitor present.

Checking Buses

- Conduct visual check of the entire bus after students have unloaded for each route.
- Document the visual check on transportation log daily after each route.

Morning Procedures

- Abide by the school's arrival time for school and when unloading begins.
- NO buses are allowed to leave while students are loading or unloading from a bus.

Evening Procedures

- Abide by your school's dismissal time for school and when departing.
- Please be waiting at your buses for passengers.
- Ensure all passengers' seat belts are appropriately fastened.
- Passengers must have prior approval or discussion with the administrators if dropped off at an alternate location.
- Passengers must be dropped off and released only to persons indicated on Third Party Release with proper identification presented. If you must return to school with the student, please call the office. Return to campus log must be completed to document the child was returned to campus. Upon the 3rd return to campus a parent must meet with the administrator prior to being allowed back on the bus route.

Turn Arouds

- Make sure if you are using somebody's driveway that it is an approved turn around.
- Notify your school administrator if you are unsure if it is an approved turn around.

Road Attention/Limbs

Request these forms from the school administrator.

Changes in Routes

Any route changes must be discussed and approved through the administration first.

Accidents

- Call 911 immediately.
- Call administrators.
- Keep the passengers calm and quiet until the police arrive.
 - Once the police arrive, they will take over. DO NOT talk to the other cars involved. Tend to your passengers. **No one is allowed on or off the bus, unless administrators have approved and/or appropriate officials are involved.**
 - All accident forms must be completed immediately.

- Make sure to have insurance cards on the bus.
- If students are involved when the accident occurs, the driver must have a drug screening test conducted immediately after the accident.

Student Illnesses

Please report any illnesses/accidents that happened on the bus immediately to the office.

Evacuation Drills

- Have passengers prepared.
- Two bus evacuation drills will be conducted throughout the year. Be prepared to assist.

Policies

- Crossing the highway just because parents walk their children across the highway, does not make it ok to cross. Every highway is different and treated with safety in mind.
- Bus monitors must wear the safety neon colored vest at all times, for safety purposes.
- Abide by all Division of Licensing Regulations, Head Start Program Performance Standards, Ascension Parish School Board Policies, and the State of Louisiana Transportation Law.

Suggestions

If you have a suggestion about routes or anything to improve the transportation experience contact the school administrators about it. All factors will be considered before a decision is made.

Head Start Program Performance Standards Subpart F - Transportation

§1303.70 Purpose

(a) Applicability. This rule applies to all agencies, including those that provide transportation services, with the exceptions and exclusions provided in this section, regardless of whether such transportation is provided directly on agency owned or leased vehicles or through arrangement with a private or public transportation provider.

(b) Providing transportation services

(1) If a program does not provide transportation services, either for all or a portion of the children, it must provide reasonable assistance, such as information about public transit availability, to the families of such children to arrange transportation to and from its activities, and provide information about these transportation options in recruitment announcements.

(2) A program that provides transportation services must make reasonable efforts to coordinate transportation resources with other human services agencies in its community in order to control costs and to improve the quality and the availability of transportation services.

(3) A program that provides transportation services must ensure all accidents involving vehicles that transport children are reported in accordance with applicable state requirements.

(c) Waiver

(1) A program that provides transportation services must comply with all provisions in this subpart. A Head Start program may request to waive a specific requirement in this part, in writing, to the responsible HHS official, as part of an agency's annual application for financial assistance or amendment and must submit any required documentation the responsible HHS official deems necessary to support the waiver. The responsible HHS official is not authorized to waive any requirements with regard to children enrolled in an Early Head Start program. A program may request a waiver when:

- (i) Adherence to a requirement in this part would create a safety hazard in the circumstances faced by the agency; and,
- (ii) For preschool children, compliance with requirements related to child restraint systems at §§1303.71(d) and 1303.72(a)(1) or bus monitors at §1303.72(a)(4) will result in a significant

disruption to the program and the agency demonstrates that waiving such requirements is in the best interest of the children involved.

(2) The responsible HHS official is not authorized to waive any requirements of the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) made applicable to any class of vehicle under 49 CFR part 571.

§1303.71 Vehicles

(a) Required use of schools' buses or allowable alternative vehicles. A program, with the exception of transportation services to children served under a home-based option, must ensure all vehicles used or purchased with grant funds to provide transportation services to enrolled children are school buses or allowable alternate vehicles that are equipped for use of height- and weight-appropriate child restraint systems, and that have reverse beepers.

(b) Emergency equipment. A program must ensure each vehicle used in providing such services is equipped with an emergency communication system clearly labeled and appropriate emergency safety equipment, including a seat belt cutter, charged fire extinguisher, and first aid kit.

(c) Auxiliary seating. A program must ensure any auxiliary seating, such as temporary or folding jump seats, used in vehicles of any type providing such services are built into the vehicle by the manufacturer as part of its standard design, are maintained in proper working order, and are inspected as part of the annual inspection required under paragraph (e)(2)(i) of this section.

(d) Child restraint systems. A program must ensure each vehicle used to transport children receiving such services is equipped for use of age-, height- and weight-appropriate child safety restraint systems as defined in part 1305 of this chapter.

(e) Vehicle maintenance.

(1) A program must ensure vehicles used to provide such services are in safe operating condition at all times.

(2) The program must:

(i) At a minimum, conduct an annual thorough safety inspection of each vehicle through an inspection program licensed or operated by the state;

(ii) Carry out systematic preventive maintenance on vehicles; and,

(iii) Ensure each driver implements daily pre-trip vehicle inspections.

(f) New vehicle inspection. A program must ensure bid announcements for school buses and allowable alternate vehicles to transport children in its program include correct specifications and a clear statement of the vehicle's intended use. The program must ensure vehicles are examined at delivery to ensure they are equipped in accordance with the bid specifications and that the manufacturer's certification of compliance with the applicable FMVSS is included with the vehicle.

§1303.72 Vehicle operation

(a) Safety. A program must ensure:

(1) Each child is seated in a child restraint system appropriate to the child's age, height, and weight;

(2) Baggage and other items transported in the passenger compartment are properly stored and secured, and the aisles remain clear and the doors and emergency exits remain unobstructed at all times;

(3) Up-to-date child rosters and lists of the adults each child is authorized to be released to, including alternates in case of emergency, are maintained and no child is left behind, either at the classroom or on the vehicle at the end of the route; and,

(4) With the exception of transportation services to children served under a home-based option, there is at least one bus monitor on board at all times, with additional bus monitors provided as necessary.

(b) Driver qualifications. A program, with the exception of transportation services to children served under a home-based option, must ensure drivers, at a minimum:

- (1) In states where such licenses are granted, have a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) for vehicles in the same class as the vehicle the driver will operating; and,
- (2) Meet any physical, mental, and other requirements as necessary to perform job-related functions with any necessary reasonable accommodations.

(c) Driver application review. In addition to the applicant review process prescribed §1302.90(b) of this chapter, a program, with the exception of transportation services to children served under a home-based option, must ensure the applicant review process for drivers includes, at minimum:

- (1) Disclosure by the applicant of all moving traffic violations, regardless of penalty;
- (2) A check of the applicant's driving record through the appropriate state agency, including a check of the applicant's record through the National Driver Register, if available;
- (3) A check that drivers qualify under the applicable driver training requirements in the state or tribal jurisdiction; and,
- (4) After a conditional employment offer to the applicant and before the applicant begins work as a driver, a medical examination, performed by a licensed doctor of medicine or osteopathy, establishes that the individual possesses the physical ability to perform any job-related functions with any necessary accommodations.

(d) Driver training.

- (1) A program must ensure any person employed as a driver receives training prior to transporting any enrolled child and receives refresher training each year.
- (2) Training must include:
 - (i) Classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel instruction sufficient to enable the driver to operate the vehicle in a safe and efficient manner, to safely run a fixed route, to administer basic first aid in case of injury, and to handle emergency situations, including vehicle evacuation, operate any special equipment, such as wheelchair lifts, assistance devices or special occupant restraints, conduct routine maintenance and safety checks of the vehicle, and maintain accurate records as necessary; and,
 - (ii) Instruction on the topics listed in §1303.75 related to transportation services for children with disabilities.
- (3) A program must ensure the annual evaluation of each driver of a vehicle used to provide such services includes an on-board observation of road performance.

(e) Bus monitor training. A program must train each bus monitor before the monitor begins work, on child boarding and exiting procedures, how to use child restraint systems, completing any required paperwork, how to respond to emergencies and emergency evacuation procedures, how to use special equipment, child pick-up and release procedures, how to conduct and pre- and post-trip vehicle checks. Bus monitors are also subject to staff safety training requirements in §1302.47(b)(4) of this chapter including Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.

§1303.73 Trip routing

(a) A program must consider the safety of the children it transports when it plans fixed routes.

(b) A program must also ensure:

- (1) The time a child is in transit to and from the program must not exceed one hour unless there is no shorter route available or any alternative shorter route is either unsafe or impractical;
- (2) Vehicles are not loaded beyond maximum passenger capacity at any time;
- (3) Drivers do not back up or make U-turns, except when necessary for safety reasons or because of physical barriers;
- (4) Stops are located to minimize traffic disruptions and to afford the driver a good field of view in front of and behind the vehicle;
- (5) When possible, stops are located to eliminate the need for children to cross the street or highway to board or leave the vehicle;
- (6) Either a bus monitor or another adult escorts children across the street to board or leave the vehicle if curbside pick-up or drop off is impossible; and,

(7) Drivers use alternate routes in the case of hazardous conditions that could affect the safety of the children who are being transported, such as ice or water build up, natural gas line breaks, or emergency road closing.

§1303.74 Safety procedures

(a) A program must ensure children who receive transportation services are taught safe riding practices, safety procedures for boarding and leaving the vehicle and for crossing the street to and from the vehicle at stops, recognition of the danger zones around the vehicle, and emergency evacuation procedures, including participating in an emergency evacuation drill conducted on the vehicle the child will be riding.

(b) A program that provides transportation services must ensure at least two bus evacuation drills in addition to the one required under paragraph (a) of this section are conducted during the program year.

§1303.75 Children with disabilities

(a) A program must ensure there are school buses or allowable alternate vehicles adapted or designed for transportation of children with disabilities available as necessary to transport such children enrolled in the program. This requirement does not apply to the transportation of children receiving home-based services unless school buses or allowable alternate vehicles are used to transport the other children served under the home-based option by the grantee. Whenever possible, children with disabilities must be transported in the same vehicles used to transport other children enrolled in the Head Start or Early Head Start program.

(b) A program must ensure special transportation requirements in a child's IEP or IFSP are followed, including special pick-up and drop-off requirements, seating requirements, equipment needs, any assistance that may be required, and any necessary training for bus drivers and monitors.

Contacts

<u>Director/Principal</u>	Hope Gautreau
<u>Enrollment/Attendance/Family Concerns</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add/Drop ● Attendance ● Difficulty contacting parents ● Family crisis situations ● Parent volunteering ● Policy Council ● In-Kind ● Pull-ups/wipes ● Child Plus 	Enedina Castillo Sandra Lawless Rosetta Stevenson
<u>Health and Safety</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vision/Hearing ● Height/Weight ● Vaccinations ● CPR/Pediatric First Aid ● Toothbrushing/supplies ● Child Plus 	Jeannine Massey
<u>Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instruction ● Curriculum ● SLT ● CDA ● Coaching ● Classroom Environment ● CLASS ● Teacher Qualifications ● Child Plus 	Stacy Allen Haupt
<u>Disabilities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student concerns ● SBLC ● ASQ ● SPED ● Child Plus 	Alison Johnson
<u>Mental Health/Behavior Support</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff/student/family mental health ● Behavior concerns ● Social concerns ● Emotional concerns 	Joyy Joseph Whitney Sheets
<u>Dual Language Learning</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Translating ● Support for dual language learning students 	Kristen Castillo