

**Mary Washington Howe
Pre-K Center
Family Handbook
2024-2025**



**1020 Meares Street
Wilmington, NC 28401**

Leigh Ann Lampley, Director/Principal Staff

The Pre-K Program is proud of its dedicated and professional staff. Staff members have been chosen for the position because of their special talents and their commitment to the early learning needs of your children. All teachers are certified by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and each class has a teacher and a teacher assistant. In addition, staff members receive training in early childhood topics during the school year at workshops, conferences, and professional meetings. Teachers have also received training in CPR, First Aid, and in educational technology workshops. When a staff member is absent, a qualified substitute replaces the teacher and/or teacher assistant in the classroom.

The policies and procedures you find in this handbook are aligned to the laws, requirements, and regulations set forth by the following agencies. Please understand that we are required to follow the most stringent guidelines at all times.

NC Division of Child Development and Early Education: <http://ncchildcare.nc.gov>

North Carolina Health and Sanitation: <http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com>

New Hanover County Schools Board of Education: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/>

NC Pre-K Requirements: <http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us>

NEW HANOVER COUNTY SCHOOLS PRE-K PROGRAM

The New Hanover County Pre-Kindergarten program is committed to creating a strong foundation that prepares all students for academic, social and emotional success as they enter the 21st century.

NEW HANOVER COUNTY SCHOOLS MISSION

The mission of New Hanover County Schools, in collaboration with our parents and the community, is to strive to provide children with an opportunity for a superior education in a safe and positive learning environment where they are prepared with the skills to succeed.

NEW HANOVER COUNTY SCHOOLS PRE-K PROGRAM MISSION

The New Hanover County Pre-Kindergarten program is committed to establishing a foundation of learning by inspiring, guiding, and teaching the children in our program while serving their families and the community. We believe that all children have individual worth and can succeed in the future when given a positive foundation of learning.

MARY WASHINGTON HOWE PRE-K

Mission

Our school family, in conjunction with a collaborative community, will support a cooperative learning experience in which children will embrace problem solving, critical thinking, thoughtful interactions with others, and an enthusiasm for learning that lays a foundation for a successful K-12 education and beyond.

Vision

We will lay a foundation for children and families to have a positive learning experience that will equip them for a successful future.

OUR BELIEFS ABOUT CHILDREN AND LEARNING

We believe that children need nurturing caregivers in the home and school setting.

We believe that children learn through active involvement with developmentally appropriate materials, and that play is an important vehicle for learning to occur.

We believe that children need to be able to identify and communicate their feelings, needs and desires in positive ways in a preschool setting.

We believe that children must learn to make decisions and accept responsibility for those decisions and learn to solve real-life problems, not just find the “right” answers.

We believe that a child’s development and learning is greatly enhanced through a partnership between the school and the child’s family.

We believe that your child is in the best possible place with the best staff.

DAILY OPERATIONAL POLICIES

School Hours

Student hours: 7:15 am - 1:45 pm

Front office hours: 7:00 am - 3:00 pm

All students must be picked up by 2:00 pm.

After school care is not provided on site.

No check out after 1:15 pm.

Sample NC Pre-K Daily Schedule

			9:15	Centers	60 minutes	
			10:15	Outdoor Play		60 minutes
7:15	Arrival / Morning Centers	35 minutes	11:30	Lunch	30 minutes	
7:50	Morning Meeting	15 minutes	12:15	Rest Time		45 minutes
8:15	Breakfast	25 minutes	1:00	Centers	35 minutes	
8:50	Read Aloud / Mini Lesson	15 minutes	1:30	Gathering/ Dismissal		10 minutes

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is very important for success in our program. Parents have the responsibility to ensure regular school attendance. Regular attendance is necessary for your child to get the greatest benefit from this learning opportunity. Anytime children are absent from school, they fall out of their routine. They also miss out on key opportunities to learn, build lasting friendships, and develop the skills and attitudes needed to become good citizens. There is a clear connection between student attendance and student performance in school. In order for your child to meet the goals of our program and to be ready for kindergarten, students need to attend a full day of school each day, which means arriving on time every day.

Why does this matter?

- **Failure to maintain adequate attendance can jeopardize your child's placement at Howe Pre-K.**
- We want your child to establish good habits in Pre-K.
- Chronic absenteeism (truancy) is linked to repeating grade levels and dropout rates. **Unexcused Absences:** missing the bus, oversleeping, bad weather, car trouble

Excused Absences: illness, religious holidays, death in immediate family, medical appointment note, quarantine, education opportunities with prior approval, court or administrative proceedings.

In order to code an absence as excused, Howe is required to have a note from home which meets the following:

1. Date(s) of absence(s) included
2. Specific reasons for absence
3. A parent/guardian signature must be provided.
4. The note for the absence must be received within 3 days of the child's return to school if the absence is to be coded as excused.
5. A written note from a parent does not automatically result in an excused absence. The reason for the absence must be one of those determined by Public School Law.

You will be contacted by the teacher, assistant, or social worker after the third consecutive day of absence.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL SAFETY REMINDERS

NC Childcare Law

Children younger than age 8 and who weigh less than 80 pounds must be properly secured in a child restraint or booster seat. Children less than age 5 and less than 40 pounds must be in the rear seat if the vehicle has an active passenger-side front air bag and a rear seat.

Responsibility/Penalties (According to Buckleup.gov)

- Driver is responsible for all children less than sixteen
- Penalty not to exceed \$25
- Full court costs and fees apply to failure to secure a child in an appropriate CRS or seat belt violations
- Two (2) driver license points

Child Care Rules

(<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/dcdeerulebookpdf/download?attachment>)

Specifically look at Page 50)

● 10A NCAC 09 .1003 SAFE PROCEDURES

- *(b) Each center shall establish procedures for pick-up and delivery of children to ensure children are protected from danger and not exposed to risk of harm. These procedures shall be communicated to parents, and a copy shall be posted in the center where they can be seen by the parents. **In order to ensure the safety of our students:***

1. All students must be loaded from the right side of the car into an appropriate car seat or booster seat.
2. Staff will no longer load students from the left side of the vehicle due to street traffic.
3. Vehicles without appropriate car/booster seats will be asked to leave the car line and pull around and park. Parents will be required to show an ID to retrieve their child at the front door. (Staff will not load students into cars without car seats/booster seats.)

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

The school building opens at 7:15 am. Morning drop off for parents is 7:15 am - 7:45 am. Parents are not allowed to walk students to class.

Parents and children will not be permitted to enter the building until 7:15 am unless you have a prearranged meeting with your child's teacher.

For your convenience we offer carpool drop off from 7:15 - 7:35 am. Due to NC Child Care Licensing Laws we must stop carpool drop off at 7:35 am to move staff into the classrooms to ensure the appropriate child to staff ratio.

Parents arriving in the car line after 7:35 will need to park and walk their child to the front door and be signed in by a staff member. We operate by hand-to-hand delivery. This means that all children must be handed off from one adult to another. Child care licensing laws dictate that children are not permitted to be dropped off at the door to walk to their classrooms alone at any time.

The bell rings at 7:45. All students are expected to be in their classrooms to start the school day at that time. Students arriving after 7:45 am are considered tardy and will need to sign in at the front office and will be escorted to the classroom by a staff member. Excessive tardiness disrupts your child's routine. Please make all efforts to arrive on time to school.

It is so important to establish good habits in Pre-K as they will last throughout your child's educational career!

DISMISSAL

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE GUIDELINES

All students must be picked up by the parent/ guardian or someone who has been authorized by the parent/ guardian and is listed on the appropriate Transportation Authorization and Authorization for Pick Up forms that are included in the orientation packet. Please inform the individuals listed that they will be required to show their identification prior to taking the child from campus. It is the parent's responsibility to update the names of individuals who are authorized to pick up your child.

Students will only be released to an adult, 18 years of age or older, who is authorized by the parent. All parents and authorized adults are REQUIRED by law to show a photo ID when picking up a student. Bus drivers are also required to verify the identification of an adult before releasing a student to get off the school bus.

We **WILL NOT** release your child to any person who:

- 1) is not listed on the Transportation Authorization Form or Authorization for Pick Up Form **AND**
- 2) cannot produce a government-issued photo ID.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If a student must check out during the day, a parent or guardian must come to the school office to sign out the child. The child will then be called to the office. Please do not call and ask that a child wait for you in the office. Office personnel will call for the student when you arrive. Continual early checkouts will be referred to a social worker and administration. **Parents/guardians will not be able to check out their children between 1:15 and 2:00 pm** as the whole school has begun to prepare for our afternoon dismissal procedures. If parent/guardian arrives at 1:15 or after for early check out, they will be directed to the car rider line for dismissal at 1:45.

DAILY DISMISSAL

Our school day ends at 1:45 pm. After school care is not offered at Howe Pre-K but there are several alternatives available to families. All students are required to have arrangements for their afternoon dismissal.

Our dismissal routine is conducted with **student safety as the top priority** and is meant to ensure that each child is accounted for at the end of the day.

We will have 4 areas for dismissal:

Car Riders - 10th Street

Bus Riders - Meares Street

Daycare Vans - Meares Street

Walkers - Front porch at Entrance Two (by Classroom 1)

WALKERS

For safety, parents/guardians who walk from their residence will retrieve their child at the front entrance areas. Walkers will be dismissed between 1:45 and 1:50pm. Photo ID is required.

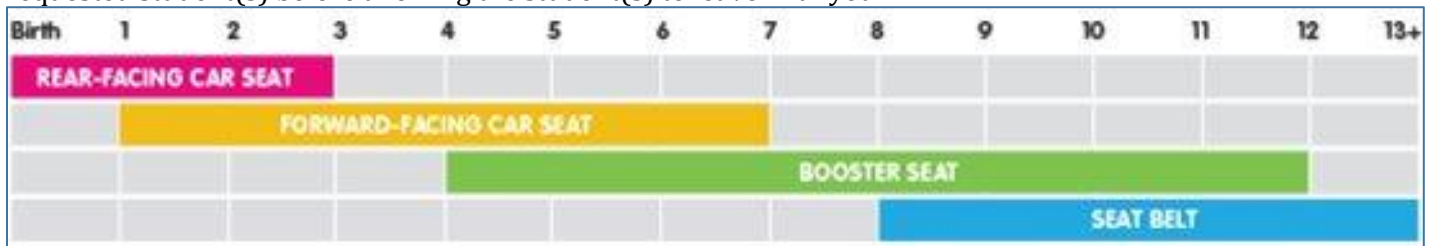
CAR RIDER PROCEDURES

For your convenience, we have established car rider procedures in an effort to provide the safest and most efficient process for our families and staff.

Car rider dismissal will be available from 1:45 until 2:00. Parents are required to arrive by 2:00 pm to pick up students. Parents arriving after 2:00 will be required to check out their child from the front office.

1. We will provide 2 tags per family.
2. Only authorized individuals with a Howe Pre-K car tag will be permitted to pick up a child in the car rider line.
3. The car tag should be clearly displayed in the window when you come through the car rider line.
4. If you give your official Howe Pre-K car tag to another person, you are authorizing that person to pick up your child. Their photo ID will not be checked.
5. Please do not leave your car unattended in the car rider lane. Parents must remain in their vehicle until the child is brought to the car.
6. A teacher will escort your child to the car and open the car door for your child. However, it is the responsibility of the driver or another passenger in each car to buckle/ secure the child in the child safety seat. School staff members are not permitted to buckle seat belts. (Please move down out of the way to buckle your child.)
7. Just as your child's safety is our number one concern while your child is at Howe Pre-K, we are also concerned about your child's safety when they are riding in your vehicle. NC laws dictate child passenger safety seats. Generally speaking, all students at Howe Pre-K should be riding in, at minimum, a booster seat.

Please note: If you do not have the official Howe Pre-K tag or a safety seat, you will be asked to park your car and come to the front office with your photo identification. We will check to ensure that you are able to pick up the requested student(s) before allowing the student(s) to leave with you.



BUS RIDERS

Bus Stop Eligibility: students 1.5 miles outside the safe walking distance of their assigned school are eligible. Students who attend an out of district school, such as Open Choice schools, are not eligible. Exceptions such as special route transportation must be approved by the Transportation Department. Students must use the bus at least three times per week to remain eligible for bus transportation.

Bus Stop Eligibility: students 1.5 miles outside the safe walking distance of their assigned school are eligible. Students who attend an out of district school, such as Open Choice schools, are not eligible. Exceptions such as special route transportation must be approved by the Transportation Department. Students must use the bus at least three times per week to remain eligible for bus transportation.

How to Get a Bus

To request a bus stop, contact the school's main office. Students are assigned to a community stop nearest their home address and must be assigned a bus number before they can ride.

Request Deadlines

Current school year bus requests will roll over into the new school year. New bus stop requests must be made before the deadline in order to ride the bus on the first day of school. Late bus stop requests will not be processed until after the first two weeks of school. School bus transportation will not be available until a Bus Pass is issued to the student.

Year Round: June 26, 2024

Restart: July 11, 2024

Early Colleges/SeaTech: July 17, 2024

Traditional: August 6, 2024

Pre-K: August 16, 2024

Following the first two weeks of school, students will be notified of bus assignments by receiving a Bus Pass at the school. Bus requests take 3-5 days to process.

Rider Requirements

Riders must use the bus at least three times per week to remain eligible for bus transportation. Students should be at the bus stop 10 minutes before their scheduled pick-up time and allow time for delays due to traffic. Students may only get on or off at their assigned stop - any exception must first be approved by both the school and Transportation. Failure to follow rider requirements may result in a permanent De-Assignment from the bus. To track the bus, download the Edulog Parent Portal App. See instructions below.

Permission Forms

All pre-Kindergarten students must be met at their stop by a parent/legal guardian or a named designee in advance and in writing or they will be returned to school. Students repeatedly returned to school may be permanently de-assigned from transportation.

New Hanover County Schools Transportation Department determines the walk zones for all schools, bus routes, and bus stop assignments. Eligible students are assigned morning and afternoon buses to their home address. Students are only permitted to ride the bus they've been assigned. Students are automatically removed from a bus route when they have not ridden the bus for three consecutive days.

A parent, guardian, or authorized adult (18 years or older) **MUST** be present at the bus stop each day. Due to scheduling, buses cannot wait for a parent to arrive at the stop. Children will be returned to school if an authorized adult is not at the bus stop when the bus arrives. The parent, guardian, or authorized adult will then be required to pick up the student at the school. After a child has been returned to the school three times, their bus riding privileges will be revoked.

Times given are estimated and may vary depending on traffic; please be ready and at the Bus Stop at least 10 minutes early.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Parents must communicate **in writing** to the teacher or front office **all** transportation changes. All transportation changes must be received in writing by 1:00 pm. **We do not accept changes over the phone.**

REQUEST TO RIDE AN ALTERNATE BUS

If, for any reason, a parent needs to request that their child ride another bus, **a letter requesting the change must be written at least 3 days in advance**, including the following information:

- Name of student and parent
- Address of student
- Name of responsible adult & address of alternate location for student drop-off
- Reason for the request
- Date(s) that the change will be needed
- Contact numbers where parent/guardian may be reached
- New bus stop information (if known)

A request may be denied for the following reasons:

- The request requires NHCS to add a stop that is off of its regular routes
- School does not allow change
- Lack of room on the alternate bus
- Prior misbehavior on the alternate bus
- Responsible adult at an alternate location has not been at the stop on three different occasions.
- The existing stop is too far from the home of the alternate location

Please note that if a bus becomes overcrowded or if there are any behavior concerns, the privilege to ride an alternate bus will be revoked. Also, all requests for changes expire at the end of one school year.

A responsible adult (18 years or older) must be at the stop every afternoon to receive a Pre-K student

No child may ride a bus other than the one assigned without prior approval from the School Bus Coordinator and the school principal. Please allow 3 days for this process. Directions for requesting a change in bus assignment are below.

Students may get on and off only at their assigned stops unless pre-approved by the School Bus Coordinator. The driver cannot add Bus Stops to the route. Only the School Bus Coordinator can do this. Please plan for 3 days to process these requests (First 7 School days may take longer).

Stops where students do not ride daily will be deleted. Once a route/stop has been deleted, the driver cannot add them back to the route/stop.

Parents are never permitted to step onto a school bus.

The following guidelines have been provided by the NHCS Transportation Department. Please take some time to review them with your children.

10 Rules of Bus Safety

- Wear bright clothes so the bus driver easily sees you.
- Get to the bus stop at least 10 minutes before the bus is due to arrive.
- Line up quietly in single file away from the edge of the road.
- Don't push, yell or throw things while waiting.
- Stay out of the Danger Zone which is 10 feet around the bus on all sides.
- Use handrails to get on and off the bus.
- Pay attention to the bus driver.
- Keep the aisles clear.
- Never stick your hands, head or feet out the windows.
- Talk quietly and stay seated on the bus.

BUS RULES

1. Students should walk directly to the bus.
2. Remain in your assigned seat.
3. No food or drink allowed.

Edulog

Edulog Parent Portal provides the following benefits:

Accessibility. Parents can see essential student transportation details directly from a smart phone.

- Security. Parents access their children's transportation information with a unique, safe and secure login.
- Accuracy. Parents can be confident in the information they receive, because it's coming from real-time tracking information sent from the GPS system.

- Alerts. Parents can set up notifications by creating custom Alert Zones when a bus is approaching the assigned bus stop.
- Messaging. Parents can receive messages about traffic delays, mechanical issues or bus substitutions.
- New Hanover County Schools has a new smartphone app that allows parents to see where their child's bus is located in real-time. Edulog Parent Portal app can be downloaded from iTunes App Store or Google Play Store.
 - Instructions can be found on the Transportation website at: <https://www.nhcs.net/divisions/operations/transportation/edulog-parent-portal-bus-tracking>

BULLYING

Policy Code: 4329/7311: The board is committed to providing a safe, inviting, and civil educational environment for all students, employees, and other members of the school community. The board expects all students, employees, volunteers, and visitors to behave in a manner consistent with that goal. The board recognizes that bullying and harassing behavior creates an atmosphere of intimidation and fear, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious misconduct or to violence. Accordingly, the board prohibits all forms of bullying and harassing behavior, including encouragement of such behavior, by students, employees, volunteers, and visitors. "Visitors" includes parents and other family members and individuals from the community, as well as vendors, contractors, and other persons doing business with or performing services for the school system. This policy prohibits bullying and harassing behavior, or the encouragement of bullying or harassing behavior, that takes place (1) in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours; (2) on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity; (3) at any bus stop; (4) during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity; (5) at any time or place when the student, employee, or other person is subject to the authority of school personnel; or (6) at any time or place when the bullying has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools.

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, social, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the educational environment.

CALENDAR

Howe Pre-K will follow the approved Pre-K school calendar for New Hanover County Schools. The Pre-K calendar varies slightly from the Traditional K-12 school calendar. Note that Pre-K students DO NOT attend school when traditional schools have half days or a delayed start time!

In the event of severe weather, please listen to the radio or television for an announcement of school closings. Any school closings will also be announced through the system-wide School Messenger telephone messaging network. If New Hanover County Schools are closed, Howe Pre-K is closed. If New Hanover County Schools are going to have a delayed opening, Howe Pre-K will be closed.

CHANGES IN INFORMATION

If you change your address, phone number or persons listed as emergency contacts, please send the information to your child's teacher immediately. It is important that this information be accurate at all times so we are able to reach you in case of emergencies. Please be sure to include both cell and main phone numbers.

CHANGES IN HOME LIFE

If your family relationships change, please share this information with your child's teacher. It will be kept in strict confidence. Family changes often affect your child at school.

CHILD CUSTODY

If there are special custody agreements for a child, the parent(s) must notify the child's teacher and the school principal. Court documentation must be provided that addresses the custody agreement. Without court documentation that says otherwise, both parents listed on a child's birth certificate will have equal access to the child.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- Every citizen, including parent and child care workers, has the legal responsibility to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities.
- A report can be made by phoning the NHCS Department of Social Services at the child abuse hotline number (910) 798-3420 or by calling 911. If you need to make a report after 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, or on the weekend, or a holiday please call 911 and ask to speak to the social worker on duty.
- An individual failing to report, or knowingly preventing another from doing so is guilty of second-degree misdemeanor and may be prosecuted.

NHCS employees are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

COMMUNICATION

The home and school communication connection are very important. All teachers have county-provided email addresses and are expected to check their email daily. However, while students are in the building, teachers have limited access to email. Email addresses of all teachers can be found on our school's website. All students are given ***one Home/School Communicator folder.***

Parents are expected to do the following daily:

1. Read and sign papers in the blue folder
2. Most communication can be handled through written notes and emails to the teacher. Send any notes to the teacher when necessary.
3. Call the teacher when you have a question or a concern. Please remember teachers are unable to take phone calls during instructional time, but our front office staff will take the message and have the teacher return your phone call. Teachers are required to return all calls within 48 hours.
4. Messages regarding changes in transportation should not be sent by text or phone. The request must be in writing and can be sent to the teacher in the blue folder or emailed to the teacher.
5. Parent/teacher conferences and home visits are an integral part of reporting and monitoring student progress. Parent/teacher conferences and home visits are held during the school year to share information with parents about students' progress on the pre-academic skills outlined under the curriculum section.

We are partners with you in the education of your child; therefore, it is important to share information regularly.

CURRICULUM

Children in Pre-K learn through play using exploration and discovery as a way of learning, The Creative Curriculum enables children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. It is based on 38 objectives for development and learning which are fully aligned with our state standards and fall under the following domains: reading, math, social-emotional, physical, and language.

Conscious Discipline

Our Social-Emotional Core instruction comes from the philosophies of Conscious Discipline. Our goal is to assist students with learning self-regulation.

Creative Curriculum

We follow The Creative Curriculum Fifth Edition, Teaching Strategies GOLD and Conscious Discipline. Second Step is also used for teaching social skills which are a priority in Pre-K. The variety of instructional programs will be used to provide a solid academic foundation for children. Pre-academic skills are rarely taught in isolation, and are integrated into a variety of instructional and play activities woven throughout the school day.

HOMEWORK

Parents of children attending the Pre-Kindergarten program in New Hanover County Schools are asked to spend time reading to their child each evening. (We suggest one minute per year of your child's age.) In addition to reading, teachers may give children short assignments to reinforce a skill that they are learning in the classroom. For example, your child may be asked to look for a certain number of items in the home (environment) or find items that are a specific shape. It is important to follow through with these activities, as they will reinforce what your child is learning and impress upon your child the importance of school and education.

MTSS TEAM

The mission of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Team is to design and implement timely intervention strategies targeting improved performance of an individual student. The Team utilizes a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach to support students, teachers, parents and others as a vehicle to ensure the success of each student. Parents and staff members with concerns about a student may request assistance from the team. The primary responsibility of the team is to help teachers and parents meet the needs of students. This may include developing interventions, proposing, and designing services, requesting evaluations, and possibly proposing an Individualized Education Program.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

We believe that children learn self-discipline in many ways. They learn from the example of their teachers and other adults. They learn through play and social encounters with the other children. They learn by trying things over and over again. Children need to know the adults in their classrooms will love them and keep them safe no matter what negative behaviors they display. We believe that children develop discipline through many different experiences with loving professionals to guide their progress. Teachers and other staff members in the Howe Pre-K Program do not use corporal punishment or other negative forms of discipline (shaming, teasing, humiliating, or yelling).

Mary W. Howe Pre-K Center
Discipline and Behavior Management Policy

Date Adopted: August 18, 2021

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods in managing the behavior of children. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. No child shall be subjected to any form of corporal punishment. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, this facility will practice the following age and developmentally appropriate discipline and behavior management policy:

We:

1. DO praise, reward, and encourage the children.
2. DO reason with and set limits for the children.
3. DO model appropriate behavior for the children.
4. DO modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
5. DO listen to the children.
6. DO provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
7. DO provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
8. DO treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
9. DO ignore minor misbehaviors.
10. DO explain things to children on their level.
11. DO support students through breathing and calming techniques.
12. DO stay consistent in our behavior management program.
13. DO use effective guidance and behavior management techniques that focus on a child's development.

We:

1. DO NOT handle children roughly in any way, including shaking, pushing, shoving, pinching, slapping, biting, kicking, or spanking.
2. DO NOT place children in a locked room, closet, or box or leave children alone in a room separated from staff.
3. DO NOT delegate discipline to another child.
4. DO NOT withhold food as punishment or give food as a means of reward.
5. DO NOT discipline for toileting accidents.
6. DO NOT discipline for not sleeping during rest period.
7. DO NOT discipline children by assigning chores that require contact with or use of hazardous materials, such as cleaning bathrooms, floors, or emptying diaper pails.
8. DO NOT withhold or require physical activity, such as running laps and doing push-ups, as punishment.
9. DO NOT yell at, shame, humiliate, frighten, threaten, or bully children.
10. DO NOT restrain children as a form of discipline unless the child's safety or the safety of others is at risk.

Distribution: One copy in Family Handbook; One copy to be maintained in the child's facility folder.

DRESS CODE

Clothing should encourage movement and play. Be sure your child's clothing is comfortable, washable and allows for **self-dressing** as we encourage children to be independent when using the bathroom. NC Child Care Licensing Laws require us to provide 60 minutes of outdoor play **every day**, so please dress for fluctuating temperatures. Tennis shoes must have no open backs or spike heels. Flip flops and/or sandals without straps are not safe for pre-K and should not be worn. Close toed shoes are preferred.

During the cooler month's students will need a coat.

School Board policy 4316

The board believes that responsibility for the dress and grooming of a student rests primarily with the student and his or her parents or guardians and that appropriate dress and grooming contribute to a productive learning environment. The board expects students to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to wear clothes that are suitable for the school activities in which they participate.

The board respects students' rights to express themselves in the way they dress in accordance with the dress and grooming standards established in this policy. The board recognizes that clothes are not gender specific.

A. Minimum Dress and Grooming Standards

The board requires that student appearance and clothing comply with the following standards. Enforcement must reasonably accommodate clothing or accessories worn by students as an expression of sincerely held religious beliefs or by students with disabilities.

1. Students must wear clothing that includes both a shirt with pants or a skirt, or the equivalent (for example, a dress or a shirt with shorts), and shoes with a solid sole.
2. Headgear, including hats, hoodies, and caps, are not allowed.
3. Upper clothing must cover the chest, from armpit to armpit, and the torso. Straps are required.
4. Lower clothing, specifically dresses and skirts, must extend to the mid-thigh. Shorts or pants must not reveal undergarments or buttocks. Holes/designs in lower clothing must meet the above criteria.
5. Sunglasses may not be worn inside the building.
6. Clothing and accessories must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities, including activities in physical education courses, science labs, and shop classes, and other activities where unique hazards exist or specialized attire or safety gear is required.

Additionally, students are prohibited from wearing, carrying or displaying any clothing or accessories that:

1. Depict, imply, advertise, or advocate unlawful violence or other illegal conduct, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other controlled substances.
2. Display or imply vulgar, lewd, or obscene language or images. Clothing and accessories may not depict or imply pornography, nudity, or sexual acts.
3. Endanger student or staff safety.
4. Are prohibited under policy [4328](#), Gang-Related Activity, or any other provision of the Code of Student Conduct; or
5. Create a substantial disruption of the educational process or operations of the school.

B. Individual School Dress Codes

The administration at individual schools may enact a standard school uniform or dress code with the approval of the school improvement team and the board. Individual school dress codes must not be inconsistent with this policy.

Schools may not use “dress down days” for economic gain.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned to supplement and enrich the total instructional program. In an effort to ensure student safety, transportation is provided by New Hanover County school buses. Every child must have written permission from a parent or guardian before he/she can attend a field trip. No verbal permissions (in person or over the phone) will be accepted from parents.

For some field trips parents of currently enrolled students may be permitted to attend field trips for the purpose of assisting with chaperoning students. Siblings and students not enrolled at our school are not permitted to attend the field trip. Parent chaperones must first become a qualified volunteer and undergo a background check through the school system.

As a chaperone, your participation is very important. In order to make field trips educational, fun, and a safe learning experience, we have outlined a list of chaperone guidelines. A previously approved roster of all persons who are participating on the trip **MUST** be submitted to the office **BEFORE** leaving for the destination. Non-chaperoning parents/family members are asked to honor the rules by not “just showing up” with the intention of accompanying the class unexpectedly. Non-chaperoning parents/family members must complete background checks as well. These guidelines are for your child's protection, and are necessary in keeping all of our children safe. The teacher is ultimately responsible for maintaining discipline and control of the group. Chaperones and volunteers are under the direction of the teacher.

****other family members can chaperone only if they were previously listed on the student's emergency contact.***

HEALTH

We make every effort to observe and teach healthy practices at school. Children are encouraged to practice good toileting habits, and to wash hands after toileting and before eating. We also encourage children to cover coughs and wipe runny noses.

The best way to prevent the spread of illness is to make sure you do not send your child to school when he or she is visibly ill. Please **DO NOT** send your child to school if **any** of the following is present:

- Live Lice
- Bedbugs
- Ringworm
- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Thick, discolored nasal discharge
- Chest congestion or constant cough
- First 24 hours on antibiotic medicine
- Pink eye
- Rash or impetigo
- Earache
- Sore throat with fever
- Communicable diseases such as: chicken pox, measles, mumps, strep throat, hepatitis, etc.

Your child may ask to come to school even though he/she is ill. We understand that your child may be disappointed, but we ask that you please keep him/her at home when he/she is sick.

CHILDREN ARE NOT PERMITTED TO RETURN TO SCHOOL UNTIL THEY ARE SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS!

If you have any questions about whether your child should come to school with a medical condition, please call the school and ask to speak to the school nurse. In addition, please inform the school if your child becomes ill with a highly contagious illness such as chicken pox, flu, strep throat, pink eye, etc. We will want to notify the parents of the other children so they can watch for symptoms.

Your child's physical health is very important to us. Always send a note to school whenever your child is absent explaining the reasons for the absence. A note must be sent to school in order for the absence to be noted as excused. Teachers or assistants will contact you after a third absence.

If your child becomes ill while at school, we will make every effort to contact you or the persons designated on the emergency contact forms. If your child has a medical emergency, we will also call all of the people listed on the emergency contact list. Please be sure that we have your home, work, and cell phone numbers and that these numbers are kept current. Please make sure this information is kept up to date by informing the office and the teacher. If no one can be reached, we will take the child to New Hanover Regional Medical Center for emergency treatment and act on the parents' behalf until they can be reached.

EMERGENCY CARE PLANS

Please notify your child's teacher if your child has a serious medical condition, such as diabetes, asthma, sickle cell anemia, or severe allergies. It is important that we have an emergency care plan in place to provide the necessary medical care for your child if the situation arises.

ASTHMA

The nurse will work with the family and child's physician to develop a care plan for an asthmatic student to include the teacher/staff having the appropriate preventative or emergency medications on hand to treat symptoms of an asthma attack or severe allergic reaction.

DIABETES

North Carolina law (G.S. 115C-47) was changed in 2002 to strengthen support for students with diabetes attending NC public schools. The law requires development of care plans and staff training relative to students with diabetes. If your child has diabetes please let us know so that we can have our school nurse contact you to complete a Parental Request for an Individual Diabetes Care Plan.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

We will give medication to children under the following conditions:

- A medical form must be obtained from the office, filled out and signed by the prescribing doctor as well as the parent or legal guardian.
- The prescription must be current.
- **Medicine must be brought in by the legal guardian in the original container/ prescription bottle. Do not send any medicine, prescription or over-the-counter, to school by your child.**
- The child's name and dose must appear on the container. Expired medication will not be given.

SUNSCREEN

Sunscreen protects the skin from the sun's ultraviolet rays and helps to prevent sunburn. Children go outside for at least one outside play time each day and for a minimum of 60 minutes daily. During the summer and spring months, classes are outside more frequently. In an effort to protect your child's skin from the damage that exposure to direct sunlight can cause, please apply sunscreen to all exposed areas prior to sending your child to school each day. This is extremely important if your child is prone to sunburn. The school is not permitted to apply sunscreen or allow children to have sunscreen in their backpacks.

TOBACCO FREE CAMPUS

It is the belief of the New Hanover County Board of Education that the use of tobacco is harmful to general health. The Board desires that all New Hanover County School facilities and properties be free from the use of tobacco products. Therefore, the use of tobacco and all smoking devices in or on New Hanover County School facilities or property is prohibited.

LOST AND FOUND

Parents are asked to put the child's name in/on all of his or her belongings. Sweaters, coats, hats, and lunch boxes are items that are frequently lost. If an item is missing, please check with your child's teacher or the bus driver.

NUTRITION

Breakfast, lunch, and snack are provided each day at no cost to students. Howe Pre-K is a Community Eligibility Provision School. Child Care Licensure requires meals to be nutritionally balanced. In order to ensure compliance with the DCDEE requirements, all students are required to eat the food provided by the Howe Pre-K cafeteria. Outside food and beverages will not be permitted for breakfast, lunch, or snack. Our meals are defined as follows:

Breakfast: milk, juice or fruit, & bread or cereal (all 3 components)

Lunch: milk, 2 or more fruits or vegetables, meat or meat alternative, bread or bread alternative (all 4 components)
Families who request to opt out of this nutrition program must schedule a conference with the principal. If your child has special dietary restrictions or food allergies due to a medical condition, please communicate this to your child's teacher and the school nurse. Documentation from a physician will be required and well as completion of appropriate paperwork.

NONDISCRIMINATION

New Hanover County Schools Pre-K Programs do not and will not discriminate in relation to race, sex, age, religion, national background, handicap and other human differences in all matters concerning our customers. This policy of nondiscrimination is in accordance with local School Board Policy 1710.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

New Hanover County

NC Pre-K Family Engagement Plan

NCPK sites shall implement strategies designed to develop partnerships with families and build reciprocal relationships that share decision making. In order to make this happen, different types of communication channels may be used. Some of these are and are not limited to:

- Newsletters
- Daily notes
- Telephone
- Text
- Email
- Digital platforms
- Social media
- Bulletin boards
- Webinars
- Workshops

Parents will be offered:

- Home Visits (Required Home Visit at the beginning of the year)
- 3 parent/teacher conferences to discuss fall, winter, spring/end of year child progress
- To volunteer and/or attend field trips
- Serve on any committee/parent groups which may be offered at the site

- Notified of family community events (ex. Smart Start parenting programs, etc.)

When children are enrolled during the year, parent/teacher conferences will be adjusted as needed.

CELEBRATIONS AND BIRTHDAYS

Classroom celebrations are held during the school year. Your child's teacher will send a letter home with your child in their communication folder notifying you of any planned parties. If you do not want your child to participate in a holiday or class celebration, please notify your child's teacher. It is the parents' responsibility to inform their child that they cannot participate. Please discuss with your child prior to the scheduled party/celebration.

We believe that each child is a unique and wonderful creation and recognize that birthdays can be a special day for the child. If you would like to bring refreshments for your child's birthday, please make arrangements in advance with your child's teacher. Generally, birthdays are celebrated with small food items such as mini cupcakes or cookies. **These items must be store bought only and must be in the original packaging.** All birthday treats must be served at the end of the day and are not allowed to take the place of school lunch. *As we promote healthy living parents who wish to send in a birthday treat are encouraged to send in healthy alternatives such as Gogurt or any other healthy treats. No pizza, cakes, drinks, or gift bags are allowed.

Please let us know if your family celebrates a holiday that is different from traditional American holidays. We would love for you to visit and share some of the traditions and symbols of the holiday with the rest of us.

Our program does not allow balloons in our classrooms. Balloons will not be permitted in the building.

CELL PHONE USE

To protect the time that parents spend with their children in the school, parents are asked to position their phones to vibrate when in the building, and to refrain from having phone conversations when visiting the building and especially during classroom volunteer time. At no time are students permitted to use a cell phone.

Parent Visitation at Lunch: Due to space and child care restrictions, we do not allow parents or visitors to have lunch with students.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Each school is required by state law to develop a School Improvement Plan. A School Improvement Team, consisting of staff and parent representatives, oversees the improvement process. Parent representatives are elected by the parents of students in our school. Parents are always invited to attend these meetings.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Public schools and licensed childcare facilities are required to conduct routine safety drills in preparation for emergency situations. Fire drills will be held monthly to ensure that children know how to respond in the event that the building has to be evacuated. An annual tornado drill is held each spring and an earthquake drill is held in the fall. In addition, we will practice quarterly lockdown drills and shelter in place drills to ensure that children and staff know how to respond in the event that an emergency arises that requires us to stay within the confines of the school building and classrooms. Emergency bags are located in each classroom which contains plans, contact information as well as emergency supplies.

The district has extensive and comprehensive safety plans that are continually reviewed and updated as necessary by district personnel along with our Emergency Services partners. The New Hanover County Schools Emergency Operations Plan Summary is available on the district website.

We constantly strive to make every facility in our district as safe as possible. All exterior doors remain locked during the school day, requiring every visitor to check-in at the main office after being screened using a front door entry system that includes video and audio. There are School Resource Officers and School Nurses assigned to each school. Additionally, students and staff periodically conduct drills for all types of emergencies throughout the school year.

The New Hanover County School system, along with all of the Emergency Services within the county, works cooperatively to keep our students safe. Staff at every campus are trained to respond to numerous types of emergencies.

Student and staff safety is a priority, and everyone plays a part in maintaining safe schools. Additional information can be found here: <https://www.nhcs.net/divisions/student-support-services/safety-and-crisis-management>

SCHOOL AND SCHOOL SYSTEM EMERGENCIES

If an incident occurs that requires the notification of all parents, our school, along with all schools in the New Hanover County Schools system, will initiate the contacting of parents using the School Messaging system. **School Messaging is** capable of sending a telephone or email message to every parent in our school and our school system all at once at a specified time. The successful delivery of information is dependent upon accurate phone numbers. In order to make sure that you receive important messages, we must have the most current names and phone numbers of emergency contact people. If your emergency information changes during the school year, please let school personnel know immediately so that we can keep school records updated and accurate.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RECEIVING CALLS SENT THROUGH SCHOOL MESSENGER:

Caller ID will display an "844" prefix when a general announcement is delivered.

- Caller ID will display 411 if the message is a dire emergency.
- SCHOOL MESSENGER will leave a message on any answering machine or voicemail.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Parents are asked to provide students with a full-size book bag (without wheels) and a water bottle for school. Also bring a small rest time blanket and a full change of clothes, including underwear and socks (change out with the seasons.) All school supplies that your child will need will be provided by the school. Paper, scissors, glue, crayons, and markers are supplies that you may want to have at home to give your child an opportunity to write, draw, and cut. These activities will support what your child is learning at school and enhance his or her pre-academic skills.

SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME AND HEAD TRAUMA

New Hanover County Schools Early Childhood Education Program Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma Policy

Belief Statement

We, NHCS Early Childhood Education Program, believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and being required to report shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and educating families.

Background

SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death¹. According to North Carolina Child Care Rule for Child Care Centers (10A NCAC 09 .0608) each child care facility licensed to care for children up to five years of age shall develop and adopt a policy to prevent SBS/AHT².

Procedure/Practice Recognizing:

Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high-pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage, or head resulting from gripping or from hitting the head.

Responding to:

- If Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma is suspected, staff will³:
- Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.
- Call the parents/guardians.
- If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR⁴.

Reporting:

- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care are reported to Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) by calling 1-800-859-0829 or by emailing webmasterdcd@dhhs.nc.gov.
- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in the home are reported to the county Department of Social Services. Phone number: NHC Department of Social Services 910.798.3400

Prevention strategies to assist staff* and parents in coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child

Staff and Parents first determine if the child has any physical needs such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff and parents will attempt one or more of the following strategies⁵:

- Take at least 3 calming breaths with the child encouraging to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth
- Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child and/or stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Turn on music or white noise
- Staff: Distract the child with a book, toy or other activity
- Parents: Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy or go on a stroller ride.
- Other: strategies as needed for the situation

In addition, the facility:

- Allows for staff who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the children⁶.
- Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a calming break if needed.
- Other: strategies as needed for the situation

Prohibited behaviors

Behaviors that are prohibited by staff and parents include (but are not limited to):

- shaking or jerking a child

- tossing a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat
- pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture

Strategies to assist staff and parents understand how to care for infants

Staff reviews and discusses:

- The five goals and developmental indicators in the 2013 North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development, ncchildcare.nc.gov/PDF_forms/NC_Foundations.pdf
- How to Care for Infants and Toddlers in Groups, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, www.zerotothree.org/resources/77-how-to-care-for-infants-and-toddlers-in-groups
- Including Relationship-Based Care Practices in Infant-Toddler Care: Implications for Practice and Policy, the Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers, pages 7-9, www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nitr_inquire_may_2016_070616_b508compliant.pdf

Parents are encouraged to read through these links and to contact Smart Start of New Hanover County at 910.815.3733 for parent resources, classes and opportunities.

Strategies to ensure staff and parents understand the brain development of children up to five years of age

All staff take training on SBS/AHT within first two weeks of employment. Training includes recognizing, responding to, and reporting child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment as well as the brain development of children up to five years of age. Staff review and discuss:

- Brain Development from Birth video, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, www.zerotothree.org/resources/156-brain-wonders-nurturing-healthy-brain-development-from-birth
- The Science of Early Childhood Development, Center on the Developing Child, developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-ecd/

Parents are given the links above and are encouraged to contact Smart Start of New Hanover County at 910.815.3733 for parent resources, classes and opportunities. Parents are also encouraged to look up information on www.consciousdiscipline.net related to parenting.

Resources

Staff: Principal, Guidance Counselors, Social Workers and the School Nurse are immediate support staff Staff and Parents: Smart Start of New Hanover County and the Department of Social Services

Parent web resources

- The American Academy of Pediatrics: www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/athome/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx
- The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome: <http://dontshake.org/family-resources>
- The Period of Purple Crying: <http://purplecrying.info/>
- Other: www.consciousdiscipline.net

Facility web resources

- Caring for Our Children, Standard 3.4.4.3 Preventing and Identifying Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma, <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView.cfm?StdNum=3.4.4.3&=+>
- Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/trprev/Preventing_SBS_508-a.pdf
- Early Development & Well-Being, Zero to Three, www.zerotothree.org/early-development

References

1. The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome, www.dontshake.org
2. NC DCDEE, ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/general/mb_ccrulespublic.asp
3. Shaken baby syndrome, the Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/shaken-babysyndrome/basics/symptoms/con-20034461
4. Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED, American Red Cross, www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240175_Pediatric_ready_reference.pdf
5. Calming Techniques for a Crying Baby, Children's Hospital Colorado, www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-andadvice/calm-a-crying-baby/calming-techniques
6. Caring for Our Children, Standard 1.7.0.5: Stress <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/1.7.0.5>

Application

This policy applies to children up to five years of age and their parents and all family members responsible for caring for children, operators, early educators, substitute providers, and uncompensated providers.

Communication

Staff

- All current staff members and newly hired staff will be trained in SBS/AHT before providing care for children up to five years of age.
- Staff will sign an acknowledgement form that includes the individual's name, the date the center's policy was given and explained to the individual, the individual's signature, and the date the individual signed the acknowledgment
- The child care facility shall keep the **SBS/AHT staff acknowledgement form** in the child care file labeled SBS/AHT.

Parents/Guardians

- A copy of the policy will be given and explained to the parents/guardians of newly enrolled children up to five years of age on or before the first day the child receives care at the facility.
 - Parents/guardians will sign an acknowledgement form that includes the child's name, date the child first attended the facility, date the operator's policy was given and explained to the parent, parent's name, parent's signature, and the date the parent signed the acknowledgement
 - The child care facility shall keep the **SBS/AHT parent acknowledgement form** in the child care file labeled SBS/AHT.
- * For purposes of this policy, "staff" includes the operator and other administration staff who may be counted in ratio, additional caregivers, substitute providers, and uncompensated providers.

Effective Date: 2017

This policy was reviewed and approved by: NHCS Early Childhood Department and Howe Pre-K Administrative Staff

Distribution:

One copy in Parent Handbook, Copy of Parent/ Guardian Acknowledgment to be maintained in child's facility folder:

SENDING MONEY TO SCHOOL

Any time you send money to school (for pictures, book order, etc.), send it in a **sealed envelope** in the blue communication folder with your child's name, amount, and reason (what the money is to be used for).

TERMINATION FROM PROGRAM

When a family does not abide by the policies of the Pre-K Program, they will be called for a conference with the principal and Early Childhood Department representatives. At the conference, a plan will be developed to address concerns. If the situation does not improve, your child may be in jeopardy of being excused from the program.

WHAT TO BRING (AND NOT BRING) TO SCHOOL

We need your child to have:

1. An extra set of clothes (underwear, socks, shorts/pants, and shirt)
2. A full-size book bag (no wheels)

*If a child's clothes are sent home soiled, please send clean, dry clothes the next day to ensure that your child always has a change of clothes. As the weather changes, be mindful of the clothes you have sent to school. Your teacher will remind you when warmer or cooler clothes are needed.

Your child is welcome to bring and share:

1. A book.
2. An interesting nature item to display. (please be sure it is in a Ziploc bag)
3. Something (arts and crafts) they have made at home.

Please do not allow your child to bring:

1. Toys
2. Due to regulations by the NC Department of Health and Human Services (Child Care Licensure) children are not permitted to bring any animals or rodents to visit classrooms.
3. Candy; outside food/snacks
4. Any type of lotion, hand sanitizer, soap, etc.

5. Balloons
6. Anything in an aerosol container

Please check with your child's teacher before sending anything not assigned or requested.

VISITOR AND VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES

Parents and visitors are expected to stop in the main office and sign in at any time they are visiting or volunteering in the classroom. You will sign in on the computer located by the front door. This includes volunteer time, having lunch with your child, going on a field trip, or attending a conference or meeting. These procedures are critical to maintain the safety of our school and all of the children.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services conducts regular routine sanitation and safety inspections. Any purse, backpack, briefcase, etc. in this building is subject to inspection. Any item found in a purse, backpack, briefcase, etc. and labeled "Keep out of Reach of Children," will result in our Pre-K building being cited for a health code violation and temporarily closed. **Therefore, all visitors will be asked to leave all personal belongings, including purses, backpacks, briefcases, etc. locked in the trunk of their car.** While we understand that this is inconvenient, it is an effort to ensure that all of our students are safe at all times and that your belongings. Please remember to grab your photo ID before locking your belongings in your trunk.

NOTICE OF RIGHTS UNDER SECTION 504 1973 REHABILITATION ACT

1. Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act is a non-discrimination statute barring discrimination on the basis of disability.
2. It is the policy of the New Hanover County Schools (NHCS) not to discriminate on the basis of disability in its educational programs, activities or employment policies as required by the Act.
3. The 1973 Rehabilitation Act requires the school system to locate, evaluate and determine if the student is a qualified individual requiring accommodations necessary to provide access to educational programs. The accommodations will be provided in the least restrictive environment for the student.
4. Parents are entitled to have the opportunity to review relevant educational records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The requirements are described in the local board of education policy manual and implementation procedures.
5. Parents or guardians disagreeing with the decisions reached by school personnel regarding necessary accommodations for access to educational programs may request a hearing before an impartial hearing officer by notifying the school principal.
6. Compliance with Section 504 is managed by the Exceptional Programs Office which can be contacted by calling 254-4445.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE 1973 REHABILITATION ACT SECTION 504

When parents or guardians and the school are unable to agree about services proposed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, it is expected that the disagreement be resolved at a level closest to the student. The first attempt to reach accord should be through a meeting involving the classroom teacher(s) that serve the student and the principal at the local school level.

If no resolution is reached, the parent or guardian may request, in writing, a review. Address the written request for a review to NHCS Section 504 Compliance, Exceptional Programs Office, 1802 South 15th Street, Wilmington, NC

28401. As a part of his review, the parent or guardian will receive the formal Grievance Procedures adopted by New Hanover County Schools.

At any point in this grievance procedure, the complainant has the right to file formal complaints with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202.

New Hanover County Schools Annual Notice about Educational Records

The Family Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires New Hanover County Schools to annually notify parents and student who are 18 years of age or older about their rights concerning educational records. The following information summarizes these rights. Parents and students 18 years of age or older have the:

- Right to confidentiality of the Official Record at the collection, storage, disclosure and destruction stages
- Right to inspect, review and obtain free copies of the Official Record
- Right to have a representative of your choosing inspect and review the Official Record with you
- Right to a full explanation, interpretation and analysis of the Official Record by the principal or designee
- Right to add data or information to the Official Record which explains or clarifies information contained in the Official Record
- Right to a list of the types of and the location of all records maintained and disclosed by New Hanover County Schools
- Right to know that written consent is required to disclose the Official Record to others EXCEPT for the following: NHCS officials, teachers and other employees (list posted at each school), other schools where a student intends to enroll, state and federal education authorities, financial aid applications, studies and research, accrediting organizations, judicial order or subpoena, health or safety emergency, and Directory Information.
- Right to request the correction or removal of information from the Official Record if you believe it is inaccurate, outdated, irrelevant, misleading or violates privacy
- Right to a hearing, if NHCS refuses your request to correct or remove information from the Official Record
- Right to file a complaint regarding records with the U.S. Department of Education, FERPA Office, Washington, D.C. 20202. Complaints must be written and specify allegations of fact
- Right to obtain copies of the New Hanover County School Board Policies on records from the New Hanover County Schools Superintendent's Office
- Right to know that the New Hanover County Board of Education has designated a student's name and school of enrollment as Directory Information
- Right to know that Directory Information is disclosed as a part of officially designated school activities such as: team/activity rosters, scholar athlete awards, athletic eligibility, honor society, honor roll, good citizens, academic scholars, presidential awards
- Right to refuse to allow New Hanover County Schools disclose Directory Information by notifying the principal within 10 days of receipt of this notice
- Right to know that when records are no longer needed, NHCS destroys them according to a destruction schedule. NHCS permanently maintains only the following information: student name, address, phone number, grades, attendance, classes attended, grade levels completed, date of birth and identification numbers
- Right to know that a graduating senior's name, address, phone number and school name are disclosed to the military

NHCS has designated the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support as the school official responsible for ensuring confidentiality of the Official Record. A student's principal also is responsible for maintenance and

security of the Official Record. Please direct any inquiries or requests concerning your rights and the Official Record.

Title IX- Keeping Students Safe 2022-2023

Title IX is treating anyone differently based on sex or gender identity. Any unwelcomed harassment or discrimination falls under Title IX. No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Title IX of the Education and Amendment Act of 1972 states that *"Title IX team is committed to protecting and supporting you by responding to Title IX complaints and reports throughout the district. Reporting a complaint is easy and can be anonymous."*

Here is how you can report:

- [Ethix 360](#) - Secure, anonymous 24/7 reporting system accessible online.
- [Say Something](#) - Secure, anonymous 24/7 reporting system accessible through an app, online, and through a hotline.
- Call 910-254-4200
- Email: TitleIX@nhcs.net
- Tell NHCS staff
- Visit the Title IX office at 6410 Carolina Beach Rd, Wilmington, NC 28412

New Hanover County School Board policies can be found at www.nhcs.net under the Board of Education tab or by following this link: <http://media.microscribepub.com/landingpages/hanover.htm>

END OF HANDBOOK