



NORTH STREET SCHOOL

WEE START
PRE-
KINDERGARTEN
HANDBOOK



Welcome to North Street School. As Windsor Locks’ sole primary school, North Street School prides itself on its commitment to providing a high-quality education experience to our town’s youngest learners. We strive to build a strong school community and foster close connections with all of our parents. We know that our students can only reach their fullest potential if home and school form a solid partnership.

We value the importance of supporting not only your child's cognitive growth, but your child’s social and emotional growth as well. Your child will have time every day to play and explore as this helps develop inquiry and problem-solving skills, two critical and powerful components to foster every child’s development. Each classroom focuses heavily on building community so that all of our students learn the importance and power of strong collaboration and friendship.

Our pre-kindergarten classrooms are literacy and numeracy- rich environments. Our standards-based curriculum and instruction are designed to meet the needs of every child. We individualize for each learner to ensure that all children succeed academically. We are fortunate to have ample resources available to provide outstanding learning opportunities for your child.

We only ask of parents that you remain committed to working alongside us and your child while he/she is at North Street School. Support us by joining us in instilling in your child the belief that anything is possible, and we guarantee that this will be a tremendously successful year, and the beginning of a very promising future.

Welcome to North Street School!

Giovanna Testani
Principal

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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS

Front Office: 860-292-5027

Fax number: 860-292-8191

Principal: Giovanna Testani (gtestani@wlps.org)

Administrative Assistant: Lorraine Weigert (lweigert@wlps.org)

Clerical Aide: Nina Stegman (astegman@wlps.org)



Director of Pupil Services: Josh Robinson (jvrobinson@wlps.org 860-292-5706)

Pre-K Teachers:

Early Childhood Specialist: Linda Zamal (lzamal@wlps.org)

Doreen Baruffaldi (dbaruffaldi@wlps.org)

Heather Leeman (hleeman@wlps.org)

Mary Beth Overbaugh (moverbaugh@wlps.org)

Maria Pelley (mpelley@wlps.org)

Jamie Van Gilder (jvgilder@wlps.org)

Health Office: 860-292-5029 (also attendance/sick line)

Nurse: Joyce Boisvert (jboisvert@wlps.org)

Support Staff:

Speech & Language Pathologists:

Alysa Oling (aoling@wlps.org)

Sarah Fitta (sfitta@wlps.org)

Occupational Therapist:

Judy Robinson (jmrobinson@wlps.org)

Physical Therapist:

Michele McAuliffe (MMcauliffe@wlps.org)

School Social Worker:

Brittany Kokofsky (bkokofsky@wlps.org)

School Psychologist:

Phillip Medeiros (pmedeiros@wlps.org)



PHILOSOPHY

It is our belief that parents are a child's first and most important teachers. The Windsor Locks Early Education Program strives to create a partnership with parents through parent meetings, conferences and ongoing communication. Resources and activities are integrated across all learning styles and include the use of developmentally appropriate materials and hands-on play activities which foster positive self-concepts by encouraging children to think, reason, question and **experience**. We are committed to a playful learning environment where children learn content through play.

We are proud of the diversity in our student population and strive to provide multicultural experiences for all our children.

VISION

North Street School will be a safe and positive environment that empowers students to reach their fullest potential. We are committed to generating positive and collaborative relationships through open and respectful communication, diverse thinking and active parent involvement.

MISSION

The WLPS will create and sustain a community of life-long learners where all students are engaged, empowered and expected to achieve at the highest levels and to become responsible, contributing citizens in an ever-changing, global society.

PURPOSE

- Provide a high-quality Pre-K program for children ages 3-5 and provide support services for children requiring specialized instruction.
- Identify any preschool aged child that may need special education and related support services through monthly screenings.
- Assist families and daycare providers in meeting the developmental needs of their children via professional development workshops.
- Provide opportunities for all children to learn and grow, and benefit from a diverse population with respect to race, ethnicity, and abilities.

Staffed by a trans-disciplinary team, including special education teachers, a social worker, a school psychologist, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, and a speech and language pathologist. Paraeducator support provided in each classroom.

PROGRAM GOALS

- To utilize play activity as an appropriate means of learning and to provide children with the opportunities to make meaningful choices
- To reinforce and utilize the child's prior knowledge to learn new skills and concepts

- To provide a setting characterized by warmth, personal respect, positive support, responsiveness, and cooperation
- To foster strong caring relationships between children and their classroom teachers
- To develop language and communication skills through thematic and multisensory activities
- To develop and strengthen fine motor skills
- To develop early literacy skills through a variety of learning activities
- To prepare children to function as cooperative members of the school community
- To assess children's strengths, needs and progress through continuous thorough observation and data collection based on the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CTELDS) and the Connecticut Documentation and Observation for Teaching Systems. (CTDOTS) Parent input is an integral part of the assessment tool through regular parent input forms and conferences that includes what families see in the home and in the community. Assessments are used for planning and instruction.
- To report to parents on children's progress through twice yearly parent-teacher conferences and regular ongoing progress reports in all developmental domains. Regular parent contact/communication on an as-needed basis is encouraged.
- To create an environment where teachers work collaboratively with each other to meet the individual needs of children
- To follow the ethical and professional guidelines set forth in the [NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct](http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/ethical_conduct) (http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/ethical_conduct) and The Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=320862>)



REGISTRATION, ENTRY, & ENROLLMENT

Children can be enrolled in the morning session or afternoon session.

Each session is 2 ½ hours, M-F.

Registration is completed online.

Complete the online pre-registration by visiting the Windsor Locks Public schools' website. When you have all required documents, you can reach out to the North Street School Office at 860-292-5027.

You will need to create a Parent Account in PowerSchool account by visiting <https://wlps.powerschool.com/public>

Parents can also fax documents to 860-292-5003. Or drop the documents off in a drop box located outside the Central Office/Board of Education Building at 325 North Street, WL, CT 06096.

Priority will be given to students who have submitted the application by the deadline. Students submission after the lottery deadline will be placed on a waitlist and additional placements will be filled on a first-come basis.

Important Dates:

January -Registration notices are posted on the school sign and on the school website, <http://www.wlps.org>. Signage is displayed throughout the community as well.

February - Lottery drawing

Selection for the program occurs in February/March for the subsequent school year. In the event that there are more applications than places available, a waiting list will be created.

Orientation- Parent and Child Pre-Kindergarten Orientation for incoming students is held prior to students starting school.

Screening-Individualized screenings are conducted by each classroom teacher, the first three days of school in the fall to gain valuable social and developmental information about your child, to help us plan accordingly.



REQUIRED PRE-KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FORMS

- A Health Assessment Record completed by you and your physician (physical and Immunizations)
- A copy of a Birth Certificate
- Photo identification of parents or guardians
- A Pre-Kindergarten permission form for photographing and videotaping
- Proof of Residency, 2 utilities are required (electric bill, mortgage or rent statement)
- Proof of Income Statement (requires for the School Readiness Grant)
- An Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- **Emergency Contact Information (other than parents/guardians). A relative(s) or friend(s) is preferable.**

If your child is accepted into our program but is not yet toilet trained, our PreK team can offer assistance by working collaboratively to assist your child with training at home and at school. We understand that an occasional toileting accident may occur and ask that you send in a complete change of clothing including underwear, socks, and pants your child can manage independently.

CALENDAR

The WEE Start Pre-Kindergarten follows the Windsor Locks Public School calendar. Calendars are posted on our website: wlps.org



ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is a requirement. It is critical for your child to attend school every day. Our day is short, so we want all of our students here for the full 2 ½ hours. We understand the occasional childhood illnesses, but regular attendance is very important for your child's academic and social/emotional growth. If you do need to keep your child home, please call the school nurse at 860 292-5029 and send in a note the following day.

Coming in late or leaving early also disrupts the learning process. Please make sure that you schedule appointments outside of the school day, if possible.

If your child is accepted into our program, we are making a commitment to you and your child. If you make a commitment to our program, we need your child here each and every day that he/she is not sick.



HOURS, ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE, AND CHILD RELEASE POLICIES

School hours: 9

Morning Session 8:30 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Afternoon Session 12:30-3:00 P.M.

Children should not arrive before scheduled session time. Please use the parent drop off located in the driveway next to the playground. Pre-K staff will greet you at your vehicle in the designated drop-off area and escort your child directly into the building. Students arriving by bus will also be met by school staff.

Please arrive promptly at dismissal time. Students will be released only to approved adults. All approved adults must be listed on the child's emergency contact portion upon completing online registration and please provide picture identification/driver's license. Until we become familiar with the adults picking up a child, adults will need to provide picture identification to the teacher.

Students riding a bus will be escorted by school staff to the bus.

Please make sure that your child's release form is up to date with current contact information for any adult given permission to pick your children up from school.

CLOSING / DELAYS / EARLY RELEASES

Two Hour Delay

No AM PreK

PM Pre-k

12:30-3:00 Early Release AM Pre-k 8:30- 11:00

NO PM Pre-k



HEALTH OFFICE INFORMATION



Health Office – North 860-292-5029

North Street School has a full-time nurse. All health concerns pertaining to your child should be addressed with our school nurse.

If your child becomes ill at school, the school nurse will notify you at home or work. If she cannot reach you, she will contact the individual listed on the emergency contact list.

If your child becomes ill at school (develops a fever of 100° or greater, has diarrhea, or vomits) we will call you to bring your child home. Your child can only return to school once free of signs and symptoms of such illnesses for a minimum of **24** hours, and without medication.

In cases of serious illness or accident the parent/guardian will be notified and if necessary the school may arrange for transportation to the hospital.

If your child has any typical childhood communicable illnesses (e.g., virus, cold with fever or excessive coughing, strep throat, chicken pox) she/he must remain home until no longer contagious. In certain instances, we will require a doctor's note prior to allowing your child to return.

Please notify us if any childhood diseases (e.g., chicken pox, COVID) are going through your household so that we and other parents can watch for symptoms in others. Many of these common diseases are potentially dangerous to pregnant women (e.g., measles, Fifth's disease). Kindly make us aware so that we can take the necessary precautions to protect our staff and volunteers.

If your child will not be attending the preschool on a given day due to illness or any other reason, please call the health office at 860-292-5029 to notify the staff.

Injuries

Every effort is made to provide a safe environment for students. If an accident occurs, first aid will be administered primarily by our nurse. Every classroom has a staff member certified in first aid and CPR.

Medication (*Board of Education Policy Series 5000, Policy number 5141.21:*)

All medications, except those approved for transporting by students for self-medication (in older grades), shall be delivered by the parent or other responsible adult and shall be received by the nurse assigned to the school. The school nurse must examine on-site any new

medication, medication order and medication authorization and develop a medication administration plan for the student before any medication is given by any school personnel. All medications, except those approved for self-medication, shall be kept in the nurse's office in a designated locked container, cabinet or closet used exclusively for the storage of medication.

Physical Examinations / State mandated immunizations (5141.31 and 5141.3)

State law requires each student to have a health assessment within the year prior to entering Pre- K, Kindergarten, Grade 6 and Grade 11. All Pre-K children are now required to have an annual flu shot in addition to regular childhood immunizations. Please speak to your child's pediatrician if you have any concerns about these immunizations.

Health Tests

A **Tuberculin** test is required before a student attends classes when the student is entering Windsor Locks Public Schools from any type of dormitory situation.

Vision /Hearing Screenings



While currently not mandated by district policy, all of our PreK students are offered the opportunity for vision and hearing screening if requested by parents (or teachers).

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS -- DISCIPLINE POLICY

The WEE Start Program implements the district wide RULER approach to social and emotional learning. This approach is rooted in emotional intelligence theory and research with a goal of helping educators and their students develop their five key RULER skills:

Recognizing emotions to obtain valuable information about themselves and their environment

Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions to predict behavior

Labeling emotions to describe feelings precisely

Expressing emotions to communicate effectively and in socially appropriate ways

Regulating emotions to promote learning and personal growth, including healthy relationships

The RULER approach utilizes four anchor tools that provide common language and strategies that students can use at school and at home. These tools include the Charter, Mood Meter, Meta-Moment and Blueprint.

All pre-K classrooms have a cozy corner space with materials including visuals, tools, books and sensory items as needed for regulation.

In addition, we maintain close communication with parents to ensure we remain consistent between home and school. When students struggle with behavioral expectations, we model, reteach and utilize a logical consequence system. In addition, staff utilize restorative practices to build a strong sense of community and address conflict that will support positive peer interactions. Together, we can provide students with the tools and strategies that will help them grow academically and behaviorally across settings.



SNACK GUIDELINES

Each classroom provides a designated snack time every day. The school provides meals daily that are listed on the Windsor Locks School website under school lunches. Students in the morning session are given the breakfast items and the afternoon Pre-k will get choice option 1

on the school lunch menu. If your child does not like the items offered you may elect to send additional snacks from home. We encourage families to send in healthy snacks such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, yogurt, whole grain crackers, rice cakes or other foods low in sugar and fat.

Candy, gummy treats, chocolate, chips, and soda are not healthy and are not allowed at school they will be returned home. Snack is never withheld as a punishment or for disciplinary reasons. If a child chooses not to eat his/her snack, at the designated snack time, we will provide another opportunity for the child to have snack.

Please be aware that some classrooms are **peanut-free**. Notifications will be sent home if this is an issue in the classroom.

Children may not bring the following items for snack as these are known choking issues for young children:

- whole grapes
- nuts
- popcorn
- raw peas
- spoonfuls of peanut butter
- chunks of raw carrots
- hot dogs

Children may choose to bring a drink from home if they do not wish to have school milk or juice. Drinks such as 100% fruit juice or water are encouraged. Soda and sugary drinks are not acceptable. Glass containers are not allowed. Fresh tap water is always available to students throughout their school day.

We do not allow children to share or trade snacks with other students.

CURRICULUM



- The content of curriculum reflects and is generated by the needs and interests of the individual children within the group and developed according to **CT Early Learning and Developmental Standards. (CTELDS)**

- The curriculum incorporates a wide variety of learning experiences, materials, equipment, and instructional strategies to accommodate the broad range of children's individual differences and levels of development.
- Curriculum content is designed to achieve long- range goals for children in all areas- social/personal development, language and literacy, math discovery, scientific thinking and creative arts/physical development.
- Student assessments are conducted at the beginning and throughout the year to individualize programming to meet the needs of all students.
- Curriculum builds upon children's unique experiences, learning styles and strengths to foster the acquisition of new skills and concepts.
- Curriculum emphasizes the value of social interaction to learning in all areas and provides opportunities to learn from peers.
- Parent input is also requested as parents are the child's first teacher. Regular input is expected in the assessment process.

TYPICAL DAY

When children arrive at school, they participate in opening activities which may include: Sharing, calendar, weather, stories, songs and poems, music and movement.

Each day, our schedule incorporates time for readiness activities. We utilize learning centers to work on language development, listening skills, reading readiness, math readiness, gross motor, and fine motor skills. The day includes a balance of whole group, small group and individual learning time.

A designated snack time takes place each day.

The children also experience outdoor play to promote large motor and social development. The teachers take children out every day when the temperature is higher than 20 degrees (with wind chill factored in), when it is not raining, or when serious weather is imminent.

In the event of inclement weather, gross motor activities will be planned for the classroom, gym or cafeteria.

Students also attend school specials weekly. They will go to library, art, music and physical education.

CLASSROOM LEARNING CENTERS



Writing Center: A writing center allows children to investigate early forms of writing. Materials include a variety of paper, writing journals, crayons, markers, scissors, tracers, story pictures to sequence and picture word cards.

Reading Corner: In this area of the classroom, the children have the opportunity to relax and read. This area is equipped with comfortable furniture, a selection of books, student IPAD's, puppets, flannel boards, and other story props.

Technology Time: Each classroom is equipped with an interactive smart board which is utilized throughout the day. In addition, iPads are available for children's use. Through a variety of applications students can have fun while working on math, handwriting, and reading.

Dramatic Play: This area provides opportunities for make-believe and role-play. It provides children with opportunities to work together, express feelings/ideas, and to use language to communicate and respond to needs and requests. It includes dress up clothes, dolls, masks, and other thematic props.



Building Center: In this center children use a variety of building materials to create horizontal and vertical structures and in the process solve spatial and structural problems of balance and enclosure. Children explore materials by building cooperatively, role-playing, sorting, grouping, comparing and arranging objects.



Science Center: We are eager to foster inquiry of the world around your child in our Science centers. Children are given opportunities to engage in investigations, make predictions, explore cause and effect, with living and non-living materials.

Art Center: Children explore and use art materials to express ideas, develop fine motor skills, and recognize colors, shape design and textures. Materials include paint, play dough, chalk, markers, crayons, glue, scissors and an assortment of paper.



Math Center: Children explore numeracy concepts through manipulatives and a variety of materials that encourage sorting, comparing, classifying, ordering and patterning

Sensory Table: This center provides children with opportunities to explore the principles of math and science. A variety of materials and props are included in this center as they reflect thematic units of study. Materials include sand, water, rice, corn, pasta, and paper. Children improve their physical dexterity and social skills development by working together to share materials, make observations and predictions.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Windsor Locks Board of Education encourages its teachers and administrators to broaden and deepen their knowledge, their understanding of the teaching-learning process, their understanding of students, and their perception of themselves and their colleagues as worthy and effective professionals. To this end, the Windsor Locks Board of Education is committed to the support of a planned, ongoing and systematic professional development plan designed to maintain, enrich and/or improve the skills, knowledge and abilities needed by educational personnel to meet their professional responsibilities.

All staff participate in a minimum of two (2) professional development trainings each year focused on early childhood development, or topics directly related to the field of early childhood education and one (1) training in serving children with disabilities. We also provide training to all staff to improve the learning of students whose first language is not English.

PARENT COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

One of our primary goals of the WEE Start Pre-Kindergarten is to maintain close communication between home and school. An Open House/Curriculum Night is scheduled in the fall to introduce parents/guardians to the program. The classroom teacher maintains contact with parents through notes, phone conversations, Parent Square app, parent/teacher conferences, and progress reports. A link to the Pre-Kindergarten website can be found at <http://www.wlps.org>.

Individual conferences are scheduled twice annually for students; however, parents are encouraged to request a conference at any time. If English is not your first language, translation assistance can be arranged.

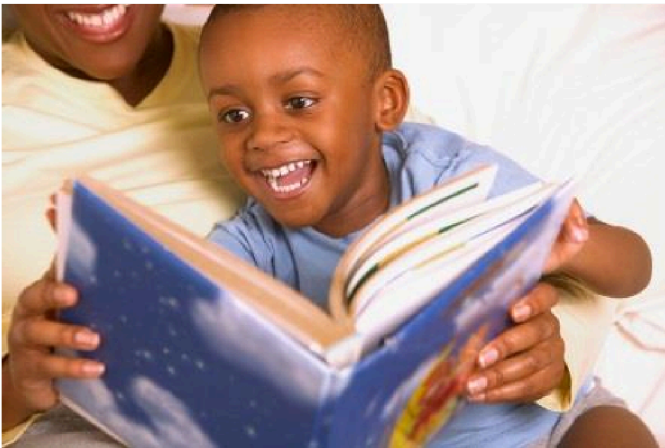
We actively seek parent participation to assist with field trips, special events, etc. We ask you to keep in mind that one of the primary purposes of any preschool program is to ease the child's transition from home to school. If your child would be upset by your presence in the classroom we will happily work with you to find alternative ways to volunteer.

Other parent involvement options might include Board of Education Meetings, Wee Start Family Connections Group, PTO, Community Table, Principal Advisory, volunteering in other areas of the school, Family/School Events, participating in educational opportunities and workshops.

The Wee Start Pre-Kindergarten is an evolving program which needs parental feedback to evaluate and to improve the program. The staff is committed to continuously improving and modifying the program to better meet the needs of our students and their families.

The PreK staff believes that parent input is a valuable part of our program evaluation. Parents are encouraged to address concerns or share ideas with the teachers at any time. If issues arise, parents should initially speak with a classroom teacher. If they are unable to resolve the issue with the classroom teacher, they are encouraged to contact the building principal.

FAMILY LITERACY



Opportunities are available to families to participate in a literacy activities including: BINGO for books, literacy kits, vacation and summer reading programs, adult education classes, school-to-home extension activities, and North Street School Connections programs.

WHOLE CHILD / WHOLE FAMILY SERVICES

We are committed to supporting children and their families both in and out of school. We are fortunate to have a full time Social Worker and School Psychologist on staff. If you ever have any questions, concerns, or need support gaining access to outside services such as HUSKY Health care, family counseling, or other community resources please call 860-292-5027 and ask for our Social Worker or School Psychologist. We have a Parent as Teachers Educator that provides play group opportunities at our school on Fridays from 11:00-12:00 for younger children not attending our preschool program. Please contact the office for contact information. We work in partnership with community resources including Social Services, Youth services, Park and Recreation, Public Library and the town daycare. phone numbers and contact information can be found at <https://windsorlocksct.org>.

In addition, the WLPS District provides ample adult education classes that include offerings such as gaining a HS diploma, enrichment opportunities, citizenship, and even English Language instruction and support. Please contact our Adult Education office at 860-292-5712 or online adulthood@wlps.org.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees and volunteers are held responsible for certain levels of confidentiality. Employees and volunteers are required to refrain from discussing individual children with parents in hallways, at ballparks, in the grocery store, etc.

The PreK staff will not disclose confidential and/or personally identifiable information about any student or family in the absence of written consent or as otherwise permitted or required by law. In accordance with state and federal law, the Board of Education has adopted policies regarding the confidentiality of records and the circumstances under which disclosure of student information is permitted. Copies of these policies are available from the principal.

ITEMS YOUR CHILD NEEDS FOR SCHOOL

- A backpack for folder and art work (*not too small*)
- Warm or cool clothes to match the weather (*don't forget the boots, mittens, etc.*) Please initial all clothing. Please apply sunscreen at



home prior to coming to school when you feel the weather dictates its use.

- A change of clothes to stay at school
- Art smock – oversized tee

SOME HINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PRE-K EXPERIENCE

- A well- rested child is able to play, cooperate and learn.
- A well-nourished child is able to play, cooperate and learn.
- Be positive with your child as he/she leaves for school. Tell him/her to “Have a good day.”
- Ask your child about his/her day. Ask who their playmates were, what centers they used, what story was read, etc.
- Get involved with your child’s teacher, classroom, and school.
- Remain positive about school and always emphasize the importance of learning. If you start at this young age, you will be amazed at how well your child achieves!!

IT WILL BE HELPFUL IF YOUR CHILD KNOWS. . .

- How to follow simple directions.
- How to speak respectfully to adults.
- How to put away playthings and materials safely after using them.
- How to wash hands using soap and water.
- How to use a tissue when coughing, sneezing, or blowing nose.
- How to take off and put on outer clothing, mittens, and boots without assistance.

PROBLEMS ARE LESS LIKELY TO ARISE IF . . .

- Your child arrives at school on time and is picked up on time.

- The teacher is notified in writing of any change in the adults allowed to pick up your child at dismissal.
- You keep your child at home when he or she shows symptoms of illness.
- You contact the teacher with any concerns or questions.

TRANSITIONING CHILDREN TO KINDERGARTEN

Each spring, the principal holds a kindergarten orientation for all parents and their children. During this orientation, each child visits a kindergarten classroom and engages in a few fun activities to facilitate a smooth transitional experience. Meanwhile, the Principal and the support staff- the School Psychologist and Social Worker—share academic and behavioral expectations for parents and provide ample opportunities for parent questions.



