

Northwest Public Schools Preschool Handbook 2026/2027 School Year

We are excited to have you and your child be a part of our program! This handbook is designed to answer some of your questions and give you an overview of the policies and procedures of our program. Feel free to contact your teacher any time with questions or concerns you may have. We always welcome you to visit the classroom at any time. We look forward to watching your child soar this year!

In our program your child will receive:

- Excellent Educational Opportunities by a Certified Teacher
- Nutritional snacks
- Developmental Screenings

Program Description

Northwest Public Schools uses the 'Early Learning Guidelines for Ages 3-5 as a framework for the Lockwood Preschool Program. The following elements are included in the preschool program.

Social / Emotional Development is about socialization, the process by which children learn the values and behaviors accepted by society.

Physical Development includes gross (large muscle) and fine (small muscle) motor skills. Gross motor includes balance and stability, movements such as running, jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping and physical manipulations such as throwing, kicking, and catching. Fine motor development involves using and coordination of the small muscles in the hands and wrists. As fine muscles develop, children are able to perform self-help skills and manipulate small objects such as scissors and writing tools.

Cognitive Development involves how children think, how they see their world, and how they use what they learn.

Language Development includes understanding and communicating through words, spoken and written. Included in language development is listening and speaking and reading and writing.

Calendar:

The Northwest Preschool will begin classes on August 24, 2026. The Lockwood Preschool does follow the Northwest Public Schools District calendar throughout the school year. Northwest Preschool is not in session on Fridays of each week.

Preschool Hours:

Morning Session: 8:00-11:30

Afternoon Session: 12:15-3:45

Home Visits:

The child's preschool teacher will contact families in late July/August for an initial home visit. The purpose of the visit is to have your child meet the teacher, to establish a relationship between the family and the teacher, to review preschool guidelines and to complete necessary paperwork. An additional home visit will be made sometime throughout the remainder of the school year

Snack:

Each preschool session includes a snack.

Enrollment Process

Enrollment for the preschool program will be conducted on an annual basis. Parents or legal guardians must complete and submit a preschool enrollment application form by the specified deadline.

Applications will be reviewed, and enrollment decisions will be based on available space, eligibility criteria, and other factors deemed appropriate by District staff. Parents will be notified of their child's enrollment status within a reasonable timeframe after the application deadline.

In the event that the number of applicants exceeds the preschool program's capacity, a waitlist may be established. Priority on the waitlist may be given to eligible children based on the following priorities as listed in Board Policy 5013.

1. Those students that are required by law to participate or be given a preference in the preschool program;
2. Resident students who are or will turn four-years old during the school year;
3. Resident students who are not otherwise eligible to enroll in kindergarten;
4. Non-resident students who are not eligible to enroll in kindergarten;
5. Resident or non-resident students who are eligible to enroll in kindergarten.

Transportation:

Transportation is not provided by Northwest Public Schools.

Student Pick-Up & Drop Off:

DROP-OFF: Students may be dropped off **no earlier than 7:45 am for the morning session and 12:00 pm for the afternoon session**. Parents or another adult **MUST** accompany the child to the designated drop-off point. If there are scheduling conflicts for drop-off, please talk to your child's teacher.

PICK-UP: It is essential that children are picked up promptly by 11:30 (AM session) or 3:45 (PM session). We understand that unforeseen circumstances can occasionally cause delays. However, consistent late pick-ups create difficulties for our staff and can be disruptive to the children. Therefore, we have implemented the following policy:

- First Late Pick-Up: A verbal warning will be issued.
- Second Late Pick-Up: A written warning will be issued.
- Third Late Pick-Up: Your child's enrollment may be terminated (administrator's discretion.)

Attendance:

Attendance is critical to optimum learning. **It is required that parents will call the school when a child will be absent or late.** When a child has 5 or more absences per quarter, a parent contact will be made to discuss the importance of attendance and to determine a reason for the absences. A child who will miss more than 3 consecutive days of preschool due to illness must have a note from the physician. Excessive absences may result in removal from the Northwest Preschool program, to accept other children on the waiting list.

Tardies:

Five (5) tardies at Northwest Preschool will be counted as one day of absence. Excessive tardies and being absent from preschool may result in removal from the program.

Illness:

If your child is running a fever, has a persistent cough or runny nose that is difficult to control, or has had diarrhea, vomiting or fever in the previous 24 hours, please do not bring them to preschool. They need to be symptom-free without medication. If your child appears to have pink eye or just does not seem to feel well, even if they do not have a fever, we will call and ask that you come get your child. Viruses spread quickly in the preschool classroom and we do the best that we can to help prevent that with frequent hand washing, table and toy disinfecting, and learning to cover coughs and sneezes. Please help us by keeping your child at home if their health is in question.

Potty Training Guidelines

It is important to understand that our preschool is not responsible for initiating the potty training process. This crucial first step is the responsibility of the parents/guardians, as they are most familiar with their child's individual cues and routines.

Our Role:

- **Support, Not Initiation:** Our role is to support and reinforce the potty training efforts that are already underway at home.
- **Readiness:** We will primarily support children who are already showing signs of readiness and whose families have actively begun the potty training process.
- **Communication with Families:** Open communication with parents/guardians is essential. We encourage families to inform us of their child's potty training progress and any specific routines or cues they use at home. We will work together to maintain consistency between home and school.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** We use positive reinforcement, such as praise and encouragement, to celebrate successes and build confidence. We avoid pressure or punishment related to toileting.
- **Accidents are Normal:** We understand that accidents are a normal part of the learning process. Our staff is trained to handle accidents calmly and discreetly, ensuring the child feels comfortable and supported. We will have spare clothing available for such instances.
- **Hygiene Practices:** We emphasize the importance of good hygiene practices, including handwashing after using the toilet. Staff will supervise and assist children with proper handwashing techniques.
- **Flexibility:** We will adapt our approach to meet the individual needs of each child within the context of ongoing potty training initiated at home.
- **What We Can Offer (in support of home efforts):** Once a child is in the process of potty training and consistently indicating the need to use the toilet, we will:
 - Provide regular opportunities for children to use the toilet.
 - Offer gentle reminders and support as needed.
 - Assist with clothing as necessary.
 - Communicate any progress or challenges with parents/guardians.

What We Ask of Families:

- **Initiate Potty Training at Home:** We require that families actively initiate the potty training process at home and ensure their child has some familiarity and success before we actively support it at school.
- **Consistent Potty Training Effort:** To ensure a healthy and hygienic environment for all children, we expect families of children who are developmentally ready to begin actively implementing a consistent potty training schedule at home.
- **Potential Withdrawal:** If, by **December**, a consistent potty training schedule is not being actively implemented at home for a child who is developmentally ready, and this is impacting the child's ability to participate fully and hygienically in the preschool environment, the preschool reserves the right to request a withdrawal of the child from the program. This decision will be made in consultation with the parents/guardians and will prioritize the well-being of all children in our care.
- **Provide Necessary Supplies:** Please provide your child with several changes of clothes in a labeled bag.
- **Communicate Openly:** Please keep us informed of your child's progress, any setbacks, or any specific strategies that are working well at home.

We believe that by working together, with parents taking the lead in initiating potty training, we can help your child develop this important life skill in a positive and supportive environment. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have with your child's teacher or the school director.

Weather and Schedule Change Guidelines:

We will follow the same schedule that the Northwest Public Schools reports. When there is a late start due to bad weather, there will be NO morning preschool. When there is an early dismissal due to weather, there will be NO afternoon preschool. Please listen to the radio or TV for school closing information.

Field Trips:

Occasional field trips are scheduled to a variety of locations. Field trip experiences build a child's language and awareness of the world. Parents will be notified when field trips are scheduled and will be asked to sign a field trip permission slip at the beginning of the school year. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to assist with the field trips when possible.

Assessment and Reporting:

The following methods will be used to inform parents of a child's progress in the preschool program:

- Report Cards: Progress reports will be sent home multiple times per year.
- GOLD ASSESSMENT: This is a required state assessment that measures student growth over the year.
- Parent-Teacher Conferences: Conferences are held twice a year (November and March).
 - Parents will be contacted by their child's teacher to schedule a conference time.

Communication:

Communication between home and school is very important. All questions and concerns should be addressed with the child's teacher. Contact information is included at the end of this document. Newsletters will be sent home with preschool students to inform parents of classroom activities and special events. School Messenger phone messaging may be used to remind parents of events or to let parents know about weather-related issues.

Preschool Contacts:

Chelsie Van Buskirk	Registrar	(308) 385-6398
Taylor Harms	Preschool Teacher	(308) 384-2042
Jamie Lepant	Early Childhood Special Educator	(308) 385-6398
Dr. Jeffrey Edwards	Superintendent	(308) 385-6398
Tara Retzlaff	Director of Special Services	(308) 385-6398

Toys:

Toys may only be brought to school as an assignment or if requested by the teacher.

Gifts for Students and Party Invitations:

Students will not bring gifts for other students to school unless it is a class function or if a present can be given to each student in the classroom. If a student wants to give another student a special gift, it should be done outside school time.

Party Invitations will not be allowed to be handed out in school unless all students in the class are invited.

For treats, they need to be individually wrapped.