

# Le Mars Community Preschool

Le Mars Community School District

Clark Elementary  
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Bus Barn  
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## **Code 100**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of the LeMars Community School District is to guide every student in achieving the highest possible education by teaching the basic skills, developing good character, and promoting lifelong learning, all through an aggressive partnership with students, families, school, and community.

Adopted: 9-14-87

Revised: 8-28-00

## **Code 100.1**

### **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

Our students are the focus of our mission. The Le Mars Community School District exists to develop the intellectual, creative, physical, social and civic capabilities of all students. This school district believes that all students can learn and recognizes that not all students have the same backgrounds, abilities, motivations, or interests. Therefore, our programs and services must effectively meet the needs of all students.

Our Core Beliefs include the following:

- All people can learn.
- Our schools must nurture honesty, integrity, and interpersonal skills necessary for productive citizenship.
- Our schools must serve the unique needs of all students.
- Our schools must teach the skills and promote attitudes necessary for life-long learning.
- Our schools must promote respect for worth and dignity of individuals.
- The families, the schools, and the community must all be advocates for quality education.
- We must develop, communicate, and maintain high standards for everyone involved in education.
- Our schools must emphasize basic skills in reading, writing, calculating, speaking, listening, thinking, and utilizing technology.

We know that learning occurs most effectively in an environment that includes:

- A clear sense of purpose
- High expectations
- Frequent assessment of progress
- Focus on the basic skills
- Opportunity for exploration, experimentation, and expression of creativity and talent
- A sense of personal security.

Therefore, we must strive to assure the presence of all of these conditions.

Finally, we know that we must collaborate with students, parents/guardians, and all community members to prepare our youth for lifelong learning, employment, and positive membership in a democratic society.

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This handbook is designed to acquaint all parents with the LeMars Community Preschool's (LCP) current policies and procedures. The LCP reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to revise these policies and procedures as needed. Parents will receive a handbook during their before-school home visit.

## **PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

The LCP is dedicated to the developmental approach to early education and to meeting the individual needs of children. Our program emphasizes the whole child in a supportive environment, which encourages choices. We recognize that young children learn best through active involvement with their environment. Our program provides an environment for early learners that is spacious and allows free movement. Music is used extensively to enhance language development. Many concrete learning materials are available and arranged on low, open shelves so that children can easily reach them. The children are allowed to exercise choice as a building block to decision-making and problem-solving strategies.

### **We Believe...**

Our Program Provides Children More Time And Opportunity:

- To feel good about themselves as capable, unique individuals.
- To engage in playful work.
- To grow in decision-making, problem-solving, and creative thinking.
- To express themselves through language, writing, movement, and use of materials and resources.
- To develop self-motivation, self-discipline, and self-direction toward purposeful activities.
- To explore their environment using their five senses.
- To foster a curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.
- To enjoy age-appropriate activities for their own sake, not only as a preparation for the future.
- To receive directed instruction to enhance knowledge in the areas of cognitive, language, fine motor and social-emotional development.

## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

We use the Creative Curriculum at the LCP. The curriculum is individualized to meet the needs of every child. Each family's culture is respected and family members are encouraged to participate in the program. The physical environment is safe, healthy, and contains a variety of toys and materials that are both stimulating and familiar. Children select activities and materials that interest them, and they learn by being actively involved. Adults show respect for children and interact with them in caring ways. The teachers have specialized training in child

development and appropriate programming. Curriculum goals and objectives guide staff's ongoing assessment of children's progress, allowing them to individualize learning for each child. The curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible and responsive to individual needs of the children. The schedule provides time and support for transitions, includes both indoor and outdoor experiences, and is responsive to a child's need to rest or be active.

## **CHILD ASSESSMENTS**

It is Le Mars Community School's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction and program improvement. Assessments will never be used to label children or include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential and stored in student files. Children are assessed in the following ways:

- The *Teaching Strategies GOLD* assessment tool is modified to align with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. Teaching staff record and submit student progress data in all developmental areas throughout the year. Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data and child work samples collected on an on-going basis.
- Families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often demonstrate different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.
- Ages and Stages is a questionnaire that assesses a child's physical, intellectual, and social growth.

The information from the above is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them;
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones; and
- To indicate possible areas that requires additional assessment.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent/Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. In addition, the *Creative Curriculum GOLD* assessment data will be sent home in October, February, and May. On-line access to GOLD may be available to families. The preschool teacher will communicate at least weekly regarding children's activities and developmental milestones. Informal conferences are always welcome and may be requested at any time.

If, through observation, or information on the *Creative Curriculum GOLD* or through concerns expressed by parents, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concerns.

If the need is related to academic or social/behavioral progress, the teacher/parent will follow up with the CARE Team and AEA Staff, following Le Mars Communities CARE Team Protocol to address student needs, and as a resource for an early intervention process. This team engages in problem identification, plans interventions, provides support, and makes outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance. The team is available and functional for all students and teachers in the building.

A request may be made to Northwest Area Education Agency for support or more formalized testing. With parental consent, the preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom

### **DAILY SCHEDULES**

LCP teachers implement daily activities planned to meet our program goals and objectives. Each classroom follows a developmentally appropriate daily schedule, from creative curriculum, adjusted to meet the unique needs of the children served. The daily schedules for each classroom are posted.

### **ART PROJECTS**

Usually children will bring home their creative activity the day it is made or it may hang on the classroom wall. At this age, the DOING is more important than the end product. We want the children to enjoy and gain satisfaction from the PROCESS, rather than have a perfect reproduction. During the year, your child will be exposed to many forms of art. Display their work on a bulletin board, on the refrigerator, or write a note to Grandma about it!

### **MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT**

The LCP is an institution that welcomes and encourages diversity in its population and programs. All families are welcome regardless of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, or differing ability. Appreciation of diversity is immersed in anti-bias curriculum in daily planning, issues addressed, tolerance of others, class meetings, and involvement with families to share their culture. Dolls, books, posters, and food also provide the children with a multicultural, anti-bias perspective, but it is the daily discussions, activities, and experiences that make a program diverse. Multicultural materials are incorporated, when appropriate, within the curriculum so it fits in naturally with what we are doing rather than standing out as "different." Diversity issues related to culture, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, ability, and gender are addressed during curriculum planning and implementation. The natural and timely inclusion of multicultural materials and activities provide children with a meaningful and realistic experience. Providing a multicultural and diverse environment is best met by enrolling children from many different countries, different ethnic backgrounds, different socio-economic levels, and children with special needs. In addition, our assessment includes an English Language Acquisition section.

**EQUITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

It is the policy of the Le Mars Community School District to provide equal opportunity in its provision of educational and auxiliary programs for students. The district will not engage in any illegal discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio economic status, creed, disability or marital status in its educational programs, activities or employment policies and practices.

The board requires all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and any other persons or organizations doing business with or performing services for the district to subscribe to this policy and to all applicable federal and state laws or lawful regulations.

In addition to its policy and practice of equal opportunity and non-discrimination, the board directs that the district's education program shall foster knowledge and appreciation for the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups as well as those of both women and men. The curriculum will also reflect the diverse variety of occupational and societal roles open to both women and men.

Questions or complaints alleging illegal discrimination on the basis of gender should be directed to the district's Title IX and Multicultural Gender Fair Coordinator – Dr. Neal Utesch, Assistant High School Principal, 921 3rd Ave. SW, Le Mars, IA 51031, phone 712-546-4153.

Questions or complaints alleging any other types of illegal discrimination should be directed to the district's Equity Coordinator – Ms. Rachel Leavitt, Curriculum Director, 940 Lincoln Street SW, Le Mars, IA 51031, phone 712-546-4155.

Inquires or complaints may also be directed to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission in Des Moines, IA, or to Region VII Office of Civil Rights, Education Division, Kansas City, Missouri.

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10-22-07  
9-26-09  
8-13-12  
2-25-13

## **ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment is open to children in the community with the goal of having a well-rounded, diverse group of children that is representative of the population of Le Mars. Selection of children is based on a random selection process. However, the LCP reserves the right to enroll children based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, special needs, and member of a low-income family for the purposes of high-quality preschool experiences.

## **HOME AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**

A close family-school relationship is essential for the school to be fully responsive to the child and if the child is to reap maximum benefits from the early educational experience. To assist in this, all children in the LCP are assigned a primary teacher. This is the teacher who has primary responsibility for the assessing of and planning for your child and also, the one responsible for primary communication with you, as a parent. All family information shared with the LCP, either written or verbal, is kept confidential and only shared with necessary LCP personnel, which includes the teaching staff working with your child and administration. Additionally, any information concerning your child, including observations, assessments, and work samplings, will not be shared with anyone outside of the LCP, such as an AEA consultant, without your written permission. If you need any information, whether verbal or written, translated, please contact the Elementary Principal at Clark Elementary.

**Parent and Child Orientations** are held each fall. This is an opportunity for parents to learn more about the LCP and, in particular, about their child's classroom and teachers. The teaching staff will explain their classroom, activities, schedules and etc. at this meeting. This is also a wonderful opportunity for parents to ask general questions about the LCP.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

**Newsletters:** Each month you will receive a copy of the LCP newsletter. This newsletter provides you with LCP general information, educational resources you can use with your children, and also information that is specific to your child's classroom.

**Home Visits** are important opportunities for the parents and teachers to gain insights about the child, the classroom, and the home setting. Home visits will be conducted prior to school starting.

**Parent Teacher Conferences:** Two conferences will be held each school year (one in the fall and one in the spring). Conferences will provide an opportunity for the preschool teacher to share assessment results, observational notes and samples of children's work. You are welcome to arrange additional conferences by contacting your child's teacher. If you need translation services for any written or verbal communication in order to fully understand information shared during conferences, please inform the staff prior to the meeting and we will make arrangements.

**Family Night:** Parents will have the opportunity to attend Parent Education Programs and/or

Family Night one time throughout the school year.

**Parent Questions/Concerns:** The LCP staff is committed to a team approach in working with parents to resolve questions and/or concerns. Do not hesitate to bring any question or concern to the attention of the teacher most directly involved. The administrator is available to assist parents and staff in resolving concerns.

### **HEALTH, SAFETY, & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

**Health and Dental Requirements:** Our center requires that each child have a physical by his or her family doctor, as well as a dental check from the family dentist. Parents are required to provide the LCP with the name and contact information of the child's doctor and dentist. Additionally, parents need to provide the LCP with a physician's report of their child's physical examination done within the twelve months before attending the LCP and annually thereafter. If you find this to be a hardship, please let a staff member know as soon as possible so arrangements can be made.

**Immunizations:** The immunization record for all children is required on the form issued by the Iowa Department of Health and signed by a health official. A copy of the most current immunization record must be on file at the LCP and must be updated each time a child receives a new vaccine. This record shall include documentation of immunization with the Hib vaccine given on or after the 15-month birthday. Effective July 2003, children over 18 months of age enrolled in licensed child care centers are required to have received the Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine. However, if your child has had the chickenpox disease in the past, it is not necessary to receive the vaccine. Simply note on the certificate of immunization that your child has had a diagnosed case of the disease.

**Both the Health forms for physical and dental checks and the immunization card must be on file at the school in order for your child to be enrolled.**

**Illness:** Families are requested not to bring a child to school when signs of illness or infections are present. If the child is not well enough to play outdoors or not well enough to comfortably participate in activities, the child should stay at home. **Please call Clark School at 546-8121 and the bus garage (if your child rides the bus) 546-6801 whenever your child is ill.** Families will receive notification when children have been exposed to a communicable disease. Additionally, notices of exposure will be posted by your child's classroom door. Families should immediately notify the child's teacher if their child becomes ill with a communicable disease.

If your child becomes sick or is unable to fully participate, you will be called and asked to pick up your child. If your child has had any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours, please do not send your child to school:

- Temperature over 100 degrees
- One or more incidents of vomiting or diarrhea
- Persistent abdominal pain or intermittent pain with fever
- Severe coughing
- Wheezing or difficulty breathing
- Inexplicable irritability or persistent crying
- Unexplained rash and any rash with fever or open, weeping wounds

- Mouth sores with drooling
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pink eye
- Chicken pox that are not scabbed
- Ringworm, treated, if lesions must be covered
- Visible impetigo

The following is an example of when a child may return to school: A child is sent home with diarrhea. The diarrhea stops at 9:00 p.m. The child should remain home the following day even though the child does not have any further problems with the diarrhea. This prevents the child from getting more seriously ill the following day and also helps from passing the illness to others. This example would include vomiting, temperature or other signs or symptoms of an illness.

NOTE: As a safeguard for all the children in the program, any exceptions to our health policies require a written statement from the child's physician noting that he or she is not contagious and is able to fully participate in a child care program. However, the final decision of participation in the program resides with the administrative personnel.

**Medical and Dental Emergencies:** If a child is injured or becomes ill after arriving at school, a parent will be called immediately. It is the parent's responsibility to update the family's emergency contact numbers as needed. If we cannot reach a parent, the emergency contact will be phoned. Parents will be notified of all known minor and major injuries by a written incident report.

If a child needs **immediate** medical attention, the teacher will call **911**. Then, the parent or the child's physician will be called. If we cannot reach the parent, the emergency contact will be phoned. A staff member, who witnessed the emergency situation, will accompany the child in the ambulance to the hospital and will bring records and parent permission forms. Similarly, if a child experiences a dental injury, the child's dentist will be called, as well as, the parent or emergency contact person.

**Health and Safety Records:** Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse's office. Files are kept current by updating as needed and at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, and is immediately available to administrator or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records, the child's parent or legal guardian, and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child health and safety records will include:

- Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency.
- Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunization and screening test with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;

- Current emergency contact information for each child that is kept up to date by a specified method during the school year.
- Names of individual authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
- Instruction for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (i.e. asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
- Individual emergency care plan for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might required special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support.
- Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implements a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

**Administration of Medication:** Staff administers both prescription and over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent or legal guardian has given the program written permission. The child's record includes instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended medication for that child; alternatively, the licensed health provider's office may give instructions by telephone to the staff. Any staff who administers medication has a) specified training and b) a written performance evaluation updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: 1) verifying that the **right child** receives the 2) **right medication** 3) the **right dose** 4) at the **right time** and 5) by the **right method** with documentation of each right each time the medication is given.

Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication, or the period of use of the medication. All medications are kept in a locked container.

**Sunscreen and Bug Repellent:** LCP will not be responsible for the application of sunscreen or bug spray. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to apply sunscreen and/or bug spray to their child before school, if the parent/guardian deem it is necessary.

**Allergies:** Please notify your child's teacher of any possible allergies. An allergy action plan form should be completed and posted in all areas of the building your child will be participating.

Individual emergency care plan for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support.

**Diapering and Toileting Procedures:** For children who are unable to use the toilet

consistently, the LCP makes sure that:

- Staff will use only commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use (the health provider documents the medical reason).
- For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper has an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer coverings are changed as a unit.
- Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
- Staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces) at least once per class time.
- Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
- Staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
- Each changing area is separated by a partial wall or is located at least three feet from other areas children use and is used exclusively for one designated group of children.
- At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child when the child is being changed on the elevated surface.
- In the changing area, staff post and follow changing procedures.
- Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
- Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly by using a hand-free device.
- Containers are kept closed and not accessible to children.
- Staff members whose primary function is preparing food do not change diapers until their food preparation duties are completed for the day.

**Cleaning and Sanitization:** One of the most important steps in reducing the spread of infectious diseases among children and LCP staff is cleaning and sanitizing surfaces that could possibly pose a risk to children or staff. Household bleach with water is recommended. It is effective, economical, convenient, and readily available. The solution is non-toxic and safe if handled properly, and kills most infectious agents. The standard solution is 1/4 cup of household bleach to one gallon of cool water. This mixture is actually safer to ingest than swimming pool water. It also loses its strength over time and is weakened by heat and sunlight. New solution should be made daily and left over solution discarded at the end of each day.

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with detergent and water, then rinsed, sanitized and air dried.

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US

Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents. Staff clean and sanitize toilet seats, toilet handles, toilet bowls, doorknobs or cubicle handles and floors either daily or immediately if visibly soiled.

Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Nontoxic substances will be used whenever possible.

**Procedures for standard precautions are used and include the following:**

- Surfaces that may come in contact with potentially infectious body fluids must be disposable or made of a material that can be sanitized.
- Staff use barriers and **techniques** that minimize contact of mucus membranes or of openings in the skin with potentially infectious body fluids and reduce the spread of infectious disease.
- When spills of body fluids occur, staff clean them up immediately with detergent followed by water rinsing.
- After cleaning, staff sanitize nonporous surfaces by using the procedure described in the Cleaning and Sanitation Table.
- Staff clean rugs and carpeting by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent-disinfectant, and shampooing or steam cleaning.
- Staff dispose of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie that is placed in a closed container.

**Hand-washing Policies and Procedures**

The LCP follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- All adults and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing is required by all adults and children when hand washing would reduce the transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and others.
- Staff assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task. Children wash either independently or with assistance.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- On arrival for the day.
- After diapering or using the toilet.
- After handling body fluids.
- Before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food, or after handling any raw food that requires cooking.
- After playing in water that is shared by two or more people.
- After handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals.

Adults also wash their hands:

- Before and after feeding a child.
- Before and after administering medication.
- After assisting a child with toileting.
- After handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include:

- Using liquid soap and running water.
- Rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, a single-use towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands.

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any required hand-washing situation listed above.

- Staff wears gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- Staff does not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or for removing smeared fecal material.
- In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

**Water Play:** Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious disease. No child drinks the water. Children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in communal water play. Fresh potable water is used, and the water is changed before a new group of children comes to participate in the water play activity. When the activity period is completed with each group of children, the water is drained. Alternatively, fresh potable water flows freely through the water play table and out through a drain in the table.

**Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergency Procedures:** Fire regulations and tornado warning procedures are posted in each classroom.

**Child Abuse:** Every LCP staff member is a mandatory reporter of child abuse to the Iowa Department of Human Services. If a staff member suspects any kind of child abuse, it must be reported to authorities. Strict confidentiality will be maintained.

**Custody:** A copy of any document issued by the court, such as a “no contact order” or “joint custody order” must be on file with the school administrator in order for the LCP to fully abide by the orders.

**Smoking:** Smoking shall not be allowed in any program area, child-occupied room, or in a facility-operated vehicle. In addition, the LCP school building and grounds are posted as smoke-free.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

We believe that children learn best through play and hands-on experiences. We also believe that the outdoors is an extension of the indoor learning environment. Toys, materials, and activities are also available outdoors to enhance the children’s play experience.

It is important for parents to provide the appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (e.g., coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, etc.). Please **label** all articles of clothing

with the child's name. The LCP has a few extra hats and mittens but not enough for everyone. Since the buildings and shade trees often shelter our playground from the cold wind and hot sun, staff members use the following general guidelines when determining whether to go outside:

**Winter: As temperatures/wind-chill approach 20°F,** staff will check local weather stations to monitor the latest temperature and weather conditions. Children spend a shorter amount of time outside in cold temperatures and are monitored closely. When the wind chill reaches 20°F, children will remain indoors.

**Fall/Spring: As temperatures/heat index approach 90°F,** staff will check local weather stations to monitor the latest temperature and weather conditions. Children often participate in water play activities outside in shady areas of the playground. Children are also encouraged to get plenty of liquids to replenish body fluids. Parents are encouraged to provide sunscreen and insect repellent. Typically, the length of time spent outside is reduced or the children remain indoors when the heat index reaches 90°F. At times, we will have the children only go outside early morning or late in the day when the sun is less intense.

***Reminder--- if your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor play, he or she is not well enough to attend the LCP.***

### **CLASSROOM GUIDANCE STRATEGIES**

Positive guidance strategies are used in the LCP to keep children constructively involved with satisfying and challenging learning activities. Adults provide children with clear and positive expectations. Guidance directives are stated positively instead of negatively, for example, "Walk indoors"; "Use your words to tell him or her you're angry"; "Chairs are for sitting." Most children have constructive experiences when they are physically healthy and when teachers prepare and manage the daily schedule, classroom space, and environment based on knowledge of each child. Adults provide support, focused attention, physical proximity, and encouragement to the children throughout the classroom day. Teachers help each child develop self-control by helping them to recognize, talk, and express their emotions appropriately. The natural, expected sounds of the early childhood classroom are giggling, whispering, animated voices, relaxed talking, and busy sounds as well as occasional crying, shouting, and frustrated voices. Teachers sometimes need to enforce guidance limits either by planned ignoring, redirection, removing materials, or removing children from the situation. It is understood that adults teach age- and individually-appropriate behaviors until the behaviors are within the child's repertoire. The Positive Behavior Support Approach is used to help children develop social and emotional skills, resolve conflicts, and manage anger.

**PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH TO CONFLICT:** In the course of children's play, conflicts arise. We regard these situations as opportunities for children to develop skills in social problem solving. The following strategies are what we use to help children resolve conflicts and become more aware of themselves as capable problem-solvers:

1. Approach social conflict calmly and acknowledge children's feelings.
2. Gather information and restate the problem.

3. Ask for ideas to try from the solution kit, choose one together, and be prepared to give follow-up support.

One goal of the LCP is to help children develop a positive self-image. Children are encouraged to be self-directed and to exhibit self-control. In order to do this, children need the opportunity to build self-esteem. Therefore, such practices that humiliate or shame a child will not be used. Young children, due to their developmental age, are not capable of understanding the ramifications of many of their behaviors; therefore, they need to be encouraged to make good choices and to be prevented from harming themselves and/or others. This goal can best be accomplished through close supervision, gentle guidance, and, most importantly, redirection. Children need to learn to identify and express their feelings. However, adults must often assist a child by verbalizing the child's feelings in a given situation. For example, if a child is about to hit another child for taking a toy away, an adult would prevent that child from hitting the other saying, "That really made you angry when Billy took your toy. You wanted to hit him. Instead, tell Billy 'It's mine. I'm playing with it.'" This way, we hope to prevent one child from hurting another while, at the same time, helping that child to learn to identify feelings and verbalize expectations.

Another important guidance understanding is to remember that small children are very egocentric and are not yet capable of understanding the concept of sharing and taking turns. Therefore, it is the adult's responsibility to lend guidance through assisting children in solving their problems when conflict situations occur. Caring for young children requires a lot of patience, as they often need to be reminded about safety rules and sharing over and over again.

Play involving guns, weapons, or war play is prohibited in LCP. Guns or weapons brought to the LCP will be removed immediately until the item can be returned to the parent. The child will be involved with this process. When children engage in play with violent overtones (war, pretend shooting, etc.), teachers will redirect the children to more constructive types of social activity. Bullying behavior is considered violent play and is unacceptable; it will be handled quickly and is taken seriously. Parents are asked to help us enforce this "no guns/weapons, violent play, and non-bullying" policy.

#### **Specific Guidance Techniques Used by LCP Staff:**

- Maintaining realistic expectations for young children
- Providing clear, simple, and consistent limits
- Planning an environment that facilitates a caring atmosphere
- Keeping children productively involved
- Modeling appropriate behaviors
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors toward desired outcomes
- Giving children choices between two appropriate alternatives
- Encouraging children to work together to solve problems and make cooperative decisions using the solution kit from Positive Behavior Supports
- Encouraging children to use their words to solve problems or to elicit peer cooperation
- Providing logical and natural consequences for children's actions
- Removing children from the situation until they are calm and able to discuss the problem

## **Suspension & Expulsion Policies in Early Childhood Classrooms:**

First, the parents of a child in a publicly funded early childhood program are constitutionally entitled to notice and an opportunity to be heard before any expulsion or lengthy removal (removal of more than ten days). See, e.g., *Goss v. Lopez* (U.S. Supreme Court, 1975). These are the same disciplinary protections in place for children in grades kindergarten through twelve receive.

Second, children with disabilities in early childhood programs are entitled to additional protections when they are removed from their educational program for disciplinary reasons. These protections are required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Third, early childhood programs must implement disciplinary removals in a nondiscriminatory manner. Suspensions and expulsions of children administered in a discriminatory manner may violate federal civil rights laws. Discipline practices should not disproportionately impact any group of children. For example, for young children with disabilities (or for whom a disability has not been ruled out), the program is obligated to consider the implications of the child's behavioral needs, and the effects of the use of disciplinary removals when ensuring the provision of FAPE. Failure to make behavioral supports available throughout a continuum of placements, including in regular education settings, could result in an inappropriately restrictive placement and denial of placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (IDEA, 300.114(a)(1)).

**Program Assessment:** The program administrator will be working closely with all sites to ensure all standards are met and maintained. Administrators, families, staff, and other routinely participating adults will be involved annually in a program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. The annual evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. A parent survey is provided at least annually each school year to collect parents' feedback on positive/negative aspects of the program. Each year a self-evaluation is completed by the classroom teachers and administrators, as well. Information gathered from all of these sources is used to continue to enhance the quality of the program and the services provided to children and families. Collaborative and shared decision making is used with all participants to build trust and enthusiasm for making program changes. Staff and families meet at least annually to consult on program planning and ongoing program operations.

The link to the parents survey and agenda items can be found here:

[Parent survey link for handbook](#)

## **LCP SUPERVISION POLICY**

Teaching staff supervise the children primarily by sight. Teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight (e.g., those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the book corner, or different center areas) using supervision by sound for short intervals.

## **SNACK TIME**

At the LCP, children are served a nutritional snack. Menus are posted outside each room and will be sent home with your child each month. We will also do cooking activities in the classrooms to try new foods. Your child will be encouraged to sample all foods served, but will never be forced to eat. If for any reason your child cannot eat a certain food or has different dietary needs (e.g., vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant), please inform the LCP. For allergies and food restrictions, a form must be completed by a medical professional indicating the allergy and the appropriate substitution. An action plan may also be written for allergies.

As an important part of our curriculum, meals are learning experiences for children. Small groups come together to socially interact, which fosters self-help skills and good nutritional habits. Conversation is encouraged at snack time.

## **FOOD FROM HOME POLICY**

Food from home is not allowed in the LCP, unless there are unusual circumstances. As participants in the CACFP program, our program must ensure that all children's nutrition needs are being met according to the CACFP guidelines. The only way to monitor this is to have the children eat the food provided by the program. Food allergies and special diets (e.g. vegetarians, etc.) can generally be accommodated by the program. Please see the school administrator to complete a form.

Your child may celebrate a birthday with a special treat. The treat will be served in addition to the snack for the day. Please discuss this with your child's teacher and follow the guidelines below:

- Food should be pre-packaged, unopened, and preferably nutritious.
- Any treats, cakes or cookies purchased at a store are acceptable but should remain in the original package to list ingredients to allow monitoring of food allergies.
- Be sure to include enough servings for all children.
- When planning your child's home birthday party, please consider inviting all of the children or none. If this is not possible, please mail invitations directly to children's homes to avoid sad or hurt feelings.

## **ANIMAL AND PET POLICY**

All interactions between children and animals must be respectful and staff must instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. The staff makes sure that classroom pets and visiting animals appear to be in good health. These animals have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. The teaching staff supervises all children and knows who is allergic to which type of animals and is not exposed to the animals. Reptiles are not allowed as classroom pets because of the risk of salmonella infection.

## **CLARK PRESCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

- To qualify for transportation to Clark Preschool, your child's pick-up and drop-off location must be within the Le Mars city limits or your child may qualify if they have an Individualized Education Plan that determines their eligibility.

- If your child is not on an Individualized Education Plan, or does not qualify for transportation based on their disability you will need to purchase a bus pass. The cost of a bus pass is \$100 per year or \$50 a semester. Bus passes may be purchased in the office at Clark School before the first day of school. Your student will not be transported until a bus pass is purchased.
- Unless it is an emergency, you will be allowed one pick-up location and one drop-off location. If your student will be at any other location, you will be required to transport the student yourself unless you receive prior approval through the bus garage. If you have a permanent change to your student's pick-up or drop-off location, you must notify the bus garage with adequate time to make the changes. If your student is not riding the bus, **you need to notify the bus garage at 546-6801. If your child will be absent from school, please also call Clark Elementary at 546-8121 to inform them of the absence as well. If the bus garage or school is not notified of your child's absence, the Clark Elementary secretary will be calling to check on the reason for your child's absence. If we are unable to contact the parents directly, work numbers and emergency numbers will be called.**
- You will need to have your pick-up and drop-off location, parent contact information, and any medical information that the bus driver might need to know in case of an emergency to Clark School **three weeks before the start of classes.**
- Our buses are on a very tight schedule when picking up and dropping off students. The time your student will be picked up may vary slightly depending on weather and which students are riding. You need to make sure your students are ready for the bus. An adult needs to be **visibly present** upon your child loading and unloading the bus. When picking up or dropping off students the bus will wait **2 minutes**. If no one shows up, or your student is not ready, the bus will leave. We will not return for any students. When dropping off your students a parent or guardian must receive the child from the bus. If no one is home or doesn't come out to the bus in 2 minutes the bus will leave with your child and bring your child to the Bus Garage at 921 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW and you will be responsible for picking up your child.
- No food, drink, or toys are allowed on the bus. Backpacks are to be placed under the seats of the bus for safety reasons.
- Parking during delivery and pickup of children is provided on the north side of the building. If parking on the north side, **please do not park in the designated loading zone as this is for the bus pick-up and drop-off, and please do not block the driveway of any resident living across the street from the school.**

### **TRAFFIC SAFETY GUIDELINES**

- PLEASE teach your children to stay with you when leaving and entering the building.
- Children running ahead in the parking areas and inside the building can be in danger of serious injury.

**DRIVERS MUST EXERCISE THE UTMOST PATIENCE AND CAUTION WHEN ENTERING AND LEAVING THE PARKING AREAS. Do not leave any children unattended in a vehicle.**

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Each classroom plans their own field trips and parents are informed of each trip. Parents give permission for their child to attend field trips. If you do not wish for your child to attend an

outing, please make alternative child care arrangements. Administration will make the decision about field trip attendance concerning preschoolers who enter the program after January 1. The LCP uses school buses with **seatbelts for transportation** on field trips.

### **CLOTHING AND PLAY ITEMS FROM HOME**

**Play Clothes:** Send your child to the LCP in comfortable play clothes and shoes. Play is usually active and often messy; comfortable, washable clothes are important if your child is to participate fully in the program. Outdoor play is scheduled every day as an integral part of our planned curriculum. We expect that you will send your child to school dressed for both indoor and outdoor activities. We recommend your child wear tennis shoes due to the large motor activities that take place during the school day.

Please send your child in clothes that are easily manageable when toileting. All children occasionally get their clothes wet and have toileting accidents. Whenever this occurs, it is best to change the child's clothes into an "extra" set of clothing provided by the family. Your child's teacher will request that you bring a complete change of clothing, including underwear and socks, to be kept at school and replenished as needed. Please be sure that you clearly label all items of clothing.

**Play Items from Home:** It is often difficult for young children to share their special "treasures" with classmates. Since some items may be more appropriate than others in the group setting, please encourage your child to not bring toys from home. There may be special opportunities when your child is asked to bring a toy from home for sharing, you will be notified when this occurs.

**Weapon Play and Competition:** There is a strict policy of allowing no weapon play in the LCP. Children are not permitted to play with weapons of any type or size or to pretend that other items are weapons, including their fingers, hands, or blocks. Viewing aggressive acts in movies or television is NOT recommended for children. Competitive behavior is minimized in our programs. In young children, competition often increases negative behavior and decreases acceptance of others. Furthermore, competition can work against the positive characteristics we are trying to instill in children, such as, cooperation, positive self-concept, acceptance of others, and friendship. Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior; all efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others. Your help in this area is especially appreciated.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Since teachers need time to prepare the environment and for safety reasons, under no circumstances can children be admitted into the classrooms before being invited to enter. When you bring your child to school, you or a responsible adult must come into the building when you bring your child and also when you pick them up after preschool, unless he/she rides the bus. **Children cannot arrive before 8:20 A.M., as there are no adults available to supervise the children. Children in the P.M. session may not arrive before 12:30 P.M.** You or a responsible adult must sign your child in and out on the sheet. This is to ensure your child's safe arrival and departure. **If your child rides the bus to school, you are responsible to call the bus barn if he/she will not be riding on a particular day. THE BUS GARAGE TELEPHONE NUMBER: 546-6801.**

**If your child is going to be absent from school please also call Clark Elementary – 546-8121.**

If someone we do not know is to pick up your child, it is essential that you inform the teacher in advance of the pick-up. This person must be listed as an authorized person on the enrollment paperwork. Remind the authorized person to sign the child in or out and that we may ask for identification to insure your child's safety. Also, if someone else is bringing your child to LCP for the day, please notify them of start/ending times as well as drop-off/pickup locations

During arrival, it is very important to set up a routine that your family can follow every day. This routine provides your child with a sense of security. It is expected that you walk your child into the building, sign your child in, greet the teachers and friends, and encourage your child to put away items in the cubby. When it is time to go, tell your child you are leaving and say good-bye. If your child is having difficulty separating, signal a teacher for assistance. If your child is upset when you leave, feel free to call us later and we will let you know how he or she is doing.

During departure it is also important to follow a set routine. We recommend that you greet your child and the teachers upon arrival and let your child know it is time to go. While your child is finishing up, you may touch base with the teachers to discuss your child's day. Be sure and say good-bye to your child's teachers so they know you are leaving. You are asked to avoid a prolonged departure.

Since the LCP teachers have additional responsibilities at the end of each day, it is very important that your child be picked up on time. The morning class dismissal begins at 11:10 AM and the afternoon class dismissal begins at 3:20 PM. Students not riding the bus and being picked up at LCP need to be picked up by 11:10 AM (morning session) or 3:20 PM (afternoon session). The time immediately following the dismissal is used to put away materials and equipment, assess the day's events, and to modify the curriculum plans for the next school day. Being prompt is expected and greatly appreciated.

Once you have reunited with your child and are departing, the LCP is no longer responsible for your child. For safety reasons, please do not let your child run ahead of you inside or outside of the building.

If parents do not arrive within 5 minutes of dismissal to pick up their child from the program, staff members will first try to contact the parents. If parents are unable to be reached, staff members will try to contact your emergency contact persons. If your arrival becomes routinely late, we will schedule a meeting with you to determine a solution to this problem.

Pre-School AM Session runs from 8:20-11:10 a.m. and in the afternoon from 12:30-3:20 p.m.

## **WEATHER RELATED PROGRAM CANCELLATION**

LCP will follow the Le Mars Community School's yearly calendar. If parents want weather related messages from school they need to go to <https://go.schoolmessenger.com/> and click "sign up" and they have to use the **same email** address that is listed under their contact information in powerschool.

If the radio announces Le Mars Community Schools does not have school, this **WILL** include the Le Mars Community Preschool.

If Le Mars Community Schools has a **2-Hour late start due to weather**, there will be **NO A.M. CLASS**

If Le Mars Community Schools has a **1-Hour or 2-Hour Early Dismissal due to weather** there will be **NO P.M. CLASS**

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS**

Throughout the school year preschool teachers and associates will have professional development activities to attend and there will be no preschool on these days. Teachers will provide a monthly calendar so parents can plan for these days.

## **SPECIAL REMINDERS**

- If your child will be absent or late for any reason, call the LCP at 546-8121
- If your child rides the bus and will not be riding, you must call the bus garage to inform them of this at 546-6801.
- Bring your child to school dressed in clothing and shoes appropriate for active indoor and outdoor play.
- Label all of your child's outdoor clothing with his or her name.
- On a daily basis, accompany your child into the building, make contact with a teacher, sign in the child on the attendance sheet, and encourage your child to put items in their cubby. At the end of each day, notify the teacher that you are taking our child and sign-out your child. Leave in a timely manner. Follow safety rules in parking your vehicle and bringing your child into the building. Teach your child to follow the safety rules. **PLEASE teach your children to stay with you when leaving and entering the building.**
- Do not bring your child before designated arrival times; pick-up your child on time.

**THE LE MARS COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBER:**  
**546-8121 (Clark Elementary School)**

**THINGS YOU WILL NEED FOR SCHOOL:**

- 1 STANDARD SIZE Backpack--**PLEASE SEND THIS WITH YOUR CHILD EVERY DAY!**
- 1 Complete **change of clothes** (underwear and socks, too)

All additional school supplies and classroom needs will be provided by the school and program.

**PLEASE LABEL CLOTHES WITH FIRST AND LAST NAMES!**

We are looking forward to a good school year with your child! If there are any questions or concerns, please contact us.

**The Le Mars Community Preschool Staff**

**Mrs. Samantha Formanek** – Classroom Teacher

**Mrs. Emily Majeres** – Classroom Teacher

**Classroom Aides:** Marie Khemra, Danielle Kass, Brekka Trometer, Rochelle Block, Lori Westhoff, Stephanie DeAnda, Haylee Wells