



**Parent/Student  
Handbook  
(Universal Preschool)**

225 North Avenue - Norwalk, IA 50211

NCA: 515-313-7837

[www.norwalkchristian.org](http://www.norwalkchristian.org)

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\*\*Norwalk Christian Academy (NCA)

\*\*NCA Director: Laura Cipolla

\*\*NCA Assistant Director: Grace Higdon

Dear Parents,

We are honored that you are a part of Norwalk Christian Academy. We share a small amount of your child's life and are privileged to be given the opportunity. Our goal is to provide your child/student(s) with a Foundation where they feel safe, and nurtured and provide an environment that promotes physical, intellectual, emotional and social growth, using a developmentally appropriate curriculum. We look forward to working with you as a family to help each child/student reach goals that are set for them throughout their time here. We hope that we can exceed all of your families' expectations and want to take this time to personally welcome your family to Norwalk Christian Academy.

Sincerely,

Kathy Van Amburg, Teacher

Revised 4.18.24

# Norwalk Christian Academy

## Program Policies and Procedures

### I. Welcome to Norwalk Christian Academy QPPS 10.1

- a. **Preschool and Childcare** is a Christian preschool and childcare center that is a cooperative effort between home and school.

The program's goal is to provide a high-quality preschool program that meets each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. It is our goal to have a program that shows excellence. The preschool program adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices.

### II. Mission & Philosophy, Goals for Children & Families, Program Standards QPPS 10.1

#### a. Mission and Philosophy

- NCA strives to work as partners with families of Norwalk and neighboring communities to provide a safe, healthy, fun and loving environment that promotes physical, intellectual, emotional, and social growth.

#### b. The Opportunity To

- Children will show competency in social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language development skills.
- Children will be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- Children will be safe and healthy.

#### c. Goals for Families

- Families will be assisted in the training and equipping of their children as we share with families resources.
- Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
- Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to prepare children for life long learning.
- Families will advocate for their children.

#### d. Program Standards

- Promotes positive relationship among all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth and belonging as part of a community, and to foster each child's ability to contribute as a responsible community member.
- Implements a curriculum that is consistent with its goals for children and promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive.
- Uses developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches that enhance each child's learning and development in the context of the program's curriculum goals.
- Is informed by ongoing systematic, formal and informal assessment approaches to provide information on child learning and development.
- Promotes the nutrition and health of all children and protects children and staff from illness and injury.
- Employs and supports a teaching staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests.
- Establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with each child's family to foster children's development in all settings, being sensitive to family composition, language and culture.

- Establishes relationships with, and uses the resources of, the children's communities to support the achievement of program goals.
- Provides a safe and healthful environment with appropriate and well-maintained indoor and outdoor physical environments.
- Implements policies, procedures and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal and program management so all children, families and staff have high-quality experiences.

### III. Enrollment

- Equal Educational Opportunity** – It is the policy of NCA not to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have any questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact Laura Cipolla, 225 North Ave. Norwalk IA 50211, 515-313-7837.
- Eligibility** – Children must be four years of age prior to September 15<sup>th</sup> of the current school year to enroll in our 4-year-old preschool program.
- Registration** – Registration begins late winter for children who are already in our program or have siblings in our program. Registration begins early spring of each year for new incoming students. Registration materials are available at NCA.
- Calendar** – The preschool follows the Norwalk School Calendar with few exceptions. The childcare of Norwalk Christian Academy is closed 10 holidays out of the year. Please see calendar on our website.  
If any of these holidays fall on a weekend, we will be closed the same number of days before or after that weekend. Our staff works very hard caring for your children. We feel these days are important for spending time with their families.  
\*There will be up to 4 professional days a year that the center might be closed.
- General Information** – Before a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Iowa Code Ch 139.A(6) CCR  
The maximum class size is 20 children in each session based on square footage of the current location. The four-year-old program will maintain a teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:10. These will be maintained at all times to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity... .. among children. Directors will maintain a list of available substitutes. If any of the teaching staff needs to temporarily leave the room, the teacher will contact one of the directors who will arrange for coverage of the classroom to maintain staff-child ratio.  
QPPS 10.4
- Inclusion** – The preschool program provides for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff is aware of the needs of individual children and is trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children and their families. The preschool facilities meet the American with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.  
QPPS 9.10

### IV. A Child's Day

- Who Works With My Child?** QPPS 10.2  
Universal Preschool Program Administrator: The Norwalk Christian Academy Director Kathy VanAmburg is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program. The principal meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, and has a minimum of a Masters Degree in elementary administration with Evaluator certification.

Program Director: Kathy Van Amburg, meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Department of Human Services Licensing Standards & Procedures.

Preschool and Childcare Teachers: For more information visit [www.norwalkchristian.org](http://www.norwalkchristian.org).

Support Staff: Heartland AEA 11 support staff provide resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist or others.

- b. **Daily Activities** – A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day.

Large and Small Group Activities	Self-Directed Play	Snack
Learning Center Activities: Art, Science, Writing Table, Games and Put Together	Story Time	Individual Activities
Toys, Book Center, Blocks and Wheel Toys, Pretend Play	Outdoor Activities	

Lesson plans for each week are posted showing how these activities are incorporated into the daily schedule. Weekly notes will be sent home to families.

- c. **Curriculum** – Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting.

It is the policy of Norwalk Christian Academy that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers and roles that are open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion and physical disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our ... country and an awareness of the rights, duties and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a diverse society. QPPS 1.7

The preschool program uses Creative Curriculum. Flexible materials fit the classroom. Age-appropriate resources benefit all Pre-K learners. It is based on the themes familiar and meaningful to young children such as: QPPS 2.1 2.2

All are researched based curriculum and must have training.

- d. **Child Assessment** QPPS 4.1 4.2
- Guiding Principles: It is the belief of NCA that the 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 or to 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, placed in each child's file and stored in a secure filing cabinet.
  - Children are assessed in the following ways: Child portfolios reorganized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data and child work samples collected on an ongoing basis. Families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.
  - The information from above is used in the following ways:

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

Assessment information will be shared with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. Monthly an informal assessment called the Observation Checklist is used to note children's cognitive progress in literacy, math, science and social studies as well as to record their social, emotional and physical development. QPPS 7.3 7.5

If through observation or information through informal and formal assessments, 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 concern. Suggestions for the next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

1. Extra support will be given in small groups, individually and include parent home activities. If needed, parent meetings will be set to discuss further options.
2. A request made to Heartland Area Education Agency for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing.
3. The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated. QQPS 7.4

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.

- e. **Program Assessment** – Like every program that is a part of the Universal Program grant, we are audited on the annual basis by the Iowa Department of Education to ensure compliance with program standards. As part of our program assessment, in the spring of each year, we provide you with a questionnaire to evaluate our program. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses and make improvements. QPPS 10.15, 7.6
- f. **Supervision Policy** – Before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher will complete a daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor. All safety plugs and electric outlets covered, heat/AC, water temperature and toilets, etc. in working order. All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children reach and stored properly. Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground. Supplies checked – first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc. Daily monitoring of environment – spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems reported to director. Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.  
**No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool.** Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check frequently on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the library area, etc.) QPPS 9.2
- g. **Child Guidance and Discipline, Prohibited Practices** – Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection and planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property and



learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs and learn turn taking.

- **Challenging Behavior** – The teaching staff in the preschool are highly trained, responsive, respectful and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors, teachers promote pro-social behavior by:
  1. Interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
  2. Modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors.
  3. Helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
  4. Engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
  5. Encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed.
  6. Lead children to understand how choices can have positive or negative consequences.
  7. Helping children understand how to respect the boundaries set by teachers.Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication and emotional regulation skills. Teachers will take care to clearly communicate to children the boundaries that keep them safe and allow for optimum learning within a group setting. Children will receive verbal praise and affirmation for making socially positive choices and working within set boundaries for behavior. A child who makes choices that disrupt group learning may be separated from the group for a short time while he or she regains control. The child will be reminded about the expectations or boundaries within the classroom and will be encouraged to make a new, more responsible choice and will be invited and welcomed back to the group. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff and parents will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success; AEA support staff may be used as a resource. Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. QPPS 1.2 1.8 1.9 1.10
- **Permissible Methods of Discipline** – For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, scratching, hitting and severe verbal outbursts) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may:
  1. Separate the children involved and separate the aggressive child from the group for a short time.
  2. Immediately comfort the individual who was injured.
  3. Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident.
  4. Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident.
  5. Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.
- **Prohibited Practices** – The programs do not and will not employ any of the following disciplinary procedures: Harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children or making

threats or derogatory remarks. Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing. Any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect, withhold, or threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

- **Biting Policy** - Our program recognizes biting is unfortunately not unexpected when toddlers are in preschool. We are always upset when children are bitten in our program and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. While we feel ... .. biting is never the right thing for toddlers to do, we know they bite for a variety of reasons. Most of these reasons are not related to behavior problems. Our program does not focus on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques, which address the specific reason for the biting. When biting occurs, we have three main responses:
  1. Care for and help the child who was bitten.
  2. Help the child who bit learn other behavior.
  3. Work with the child who bit and examine our program to stop the biting.

Our teachers express strong disapproval of biting. They work to keep children safe and to help the child who bit learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not and will not use any response that harms a child or is known to be ineffective.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs:

- The biter will be immediately redirected and moved away from the bitten child;
- The bitten child will be comforted;
- If necessary, first aid will be given to child who got bit;
- The parents of both children will be notified the same day of the biting incident, keeping names confidential;
- The biting incident will be documented;
- If medical attention is required, the administrative staff will be informed promptly about the incident.

When we experience ongoing biting in a room, we develop a written plan with specific strategies, techniques, and timelines to work on the problem. This written plan is shared with all parents in the room.

Our staff attends trainings annually on developmental issues such as this. In addition, we have current resources on biting available for staff and parents. We encourage parents to bring their concerns and frustrations directly to the director or teachers.

- h. **Water Activities** – We have a water/sensory table in the classroom for children to stand and play with their hands in the water. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate in the activities. Staff supervise all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables. QPPS 5.9 9.15
- i. **Hand Washing** – Frequent hand washing is key to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Staff teaches children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices requiring hand washing:
  - Staff members 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 staff, volunteers and children as it reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
  - Staff assists children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.
- j. **Snacks/Foods and Nutrition** – Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of ... .. foods

from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

Snack is served during both AM and PM preschool sessions. A written snack menu is posted in the classroom and on our website and is available to families. All menus are kept on file for review by a program consultant. The preschool serves a wide variety of nutritional snacks and encourages children to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered.

All food is prepared, served and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

High-risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, are not served. For children younger than four years, these include hotdogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; raw peas; hard pretzels; spoonful of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

NCA will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. QPPS 5.12-5.21

- k. **Outside Play and Learning** – Children of all ages have daily opportunities for outdoor play (when weather, air quality, or environmental safety conditions do not pose a health risk). When outdoor opportunities for large-motor activities are not possible because of conditions, the program provides similar activities inside. Indoor equipment for large-motor activities meets national safety standards and is supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or the Heat Index is safe for outdoor play. These guidelines are posted <https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/Files/HCCI/weatherwatch.pdf> QPPS 5.5

In cases when we cannot go outside due to weather conditions, children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment. For example, tumbling mats may be offered for upper body activities or rolling across the mat.

To protect against cold, heat, sun injury, and insect-borne disease, the program ensures that:

- Children wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather.
- Children have the opportunity to play in the shade. When in the sun, they wear sun-protective clothing, applied skin protection, or both. Applied skin protection will be either sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher that is applied to exposed skin (only with written parental permission to do so).
- When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents, due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing DEET are used. Staff apply insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written parental permission. IQPPS 5.6

Outdoor play areas, designed with equipment that is age and developmentally appropriate and that is located in clearly defined spaces with semiprivate areas where children can play alone or with a friend, accommodate:

- Motor experiences such as running, climbing, balancing, riding, jumping, crawling, scooting, or swinging.
- Activities such as dramatic play, block building, manipulative play, or art activities.
- Exploration of the natural environment, including a variety of natural and manufactured surfaces, and areas with natural materials such as nonpoisonous plants, shrubs, and trees.

The program makes adaptations so children with disabilities can fully participate in the outdoor curriculum and activities. IQPPS 9.5

Program staff provide for an outdoor play area that is protected by fences or by natural barriers to prevent access to streets and to avoid other dangers, such as pits, water hazards, or wells. IQPPS 9.6

The outdoor play area is arranged so that staff can supervise children by sight and sound. IQPPS 9.7

- i. **Clothing** – Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we cannot guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics or pictures that are profane, immoral illegal or disruptive in nature. All families are asked to provide an entire extra set of clothing (pants, top, underwear, socks) for their child in case of an “accident” or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child’s name to reduce the possibility of mistakes and keep these items in their backpack.
- m. **Toilet Learning** – Toilet learning is an important time in a child’s development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently the following procedures are in place: Child sized bathroom toilet and sink allow a child to go to the bathroom easily. Staff will follow all guidelines set forth in the Iowa Preschool Programs Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 7: Clothing that is 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 clothes are wet or containing feces at least twice a day. Staff will help children change their soiled underwear in the bathroom. Containers that hold soiled materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g. step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container will be clearly labeled to show its intended use. Gloved posters will be posted in the bathrooms showing procedures through the use of visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program administrator to evaluate teaching staff that are helping children with their soiled clothes. Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
- n. **Objects from Home and Things to Bring** – Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you limit toys brought from home to one. If your child brings an “attachment” item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, electronic games, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home. No electronic devices, trading cards, or any items that could fit through a toilet paper roll. If smaller than this there is a risk of choking.
- o. **Classroom Animals and Pets** – Animals kept on site shall be in good health with no evidence of disease, be of such disposition as to not pose a safety threat to children and be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner. Documentation of current vaccinations shall be available for all cats and dogs. No ferrets, reptiles, including turtles, or birds of the parrot family shall be kept on site. Pets shall not be allowed in kitchen or food preparation areas. DHS 109.10(14)
- p. **Birthdays** – Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or vegetables or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Exceptions are made if we have a family night or family get together. The teacher provides families a list of foods meeting the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. Those who have summer birthdays are welcome to choose a school day to celebrate with their class.
- q. **Weapon Policy** – No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or a look-alike weapon on any school premises, in any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any building used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. “Look alike

weapon” means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon. Weapons or look alike will be confiscated and returned only to parents; parents will be contacted if these are brought to school.

- V. **Communication with Families** – The program promotes communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or email. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent’s communication. Staff uses their notes to inform families about the child’s experiences, accomplishments, behavior and other topics that affect the child’s development and wellbeing. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, ongoing, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs email, in person, notes, or phone calls.
- a. **Open Door Policy** – Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. Visitors are asked to please use discretion with regard to bringing babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt class sessions. Photo identification shall be required for any unknown visitor to the classroom. Any visitor who is in ratio, put in charge of the care, supervision and guidance of a child, or is alone with a child will need a record check. No record check is needed if you are there to observe or take part in your child’s day.
  - b. **Arrival and Departure of Children** – All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians should include the use of age-appropriate and size appropriate seat restraints. When bringing your child to school, we ask that you park your car in the parking lot and turn off the engine before entering the building. Please hold your child’s hand as you enter the building to decrease the possibility of an accident. Parents or legal guardians must either accompany children to the classroom at the beginning of the day or leave their child in the care of one of the teaching staff. No child is permitted to leave the building without an adult. Parents or legal guardians picking up will wait in the hallway for their child. Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization (Parent Consent Form) are allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, shall be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them. When all children have arrived, teaching staff will walk the children to the classroom where the preschool teacher will record attendance for the day. Throughout the day each time children transition from one location to another, i.e. classroom to outdoor, the teacher... .. will be responsible for counting the number of children to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times.
  - c. **Attendance** – Students who are enrolled for classes in Norwalk Christian Academy are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Please call the office with the reason for an absence. UP Preschool Grant requires students to have no more than 10 unexcused absences or the district will pull funding and the family will be responsible for tuition.
  - d. **Ethics and Confidentiality** – Staff follows an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child’s parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

All teaching staff will receive training on ethics and confidentiality. Each staff person will sign a Statement of Commitment to document their willingness to hold close the values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood education (National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct).

**Children's Records** – Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory

- e. information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have legitimate educational interest, are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular office hours.
- f. **Grievance Policy** – Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high-quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for assistance from Director Laura Cipolla.

VI. **Family Involvement** – Norwalk Christian Academy encourages families to be very involved in their child's education by observing their children during the day, and when possible meeting with staff. Family members are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions.

Teachers and directors use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of childrearing practices and communication. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires like the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, a parent-completed, child-monitoring system for social-emotional behaviors. Ongoing interactions throughout the school year help strengthen the home/school relationship regarding family, their beliefs, and preferences. Family teacher conferences are held twice a year, as well as when either party requests. At least one Family Night is held during the year. Norwalk Christian Academy staff invites parents/ guardians to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcomes other ideas as well.

Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keeping the teacher/director informed of changes and events that might affect your child allows the teacher/director to be:

- More responsive to your child's needs;
- Attend family meetings;
- Return all forms;
- Attend Family/Teacher conferences held twice during the school year;
- Take time to read the Family bulletin board, Facebook, Class Newsletter & visit our website(s);
- Check your child's backpack each day;
- Participate in field trip activities;
- Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken;
- Share any of your families' cultural traditions celebrations, or customs;
- Help prepare snack and enjoy it with your child;
- Read all the material sent home with your child;
- Come to play;
- Help with special events. Helping takes many different forms such as preparation of materials at home, making telephone calls, preparing or posting flyers, recruiting other volunteers, collecting donations or prizes, photography, setup before the event, or clean up afterwards; or serve on the Preschool SIAC.

The teaching staff provides information to families about available community resources, Christian resources, and assists as requested in helping the family make connections. Staff supports and

encourages families' efforts to negotiate health, mental health, assessment, and educational services for their children. QPPS 7.1 7.2

- a. **Home Visits** – Home visits are scheduled prior to the start of preschool. This is an opportunity for the Preschool teacher to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school to best meet your child's needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you would like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with either the classroom teacher or director.
- b. **Family Teacher Conferences** – The preschool program and K-6<sup>th</sup> have formal family teacher conferences at the same time as the elementary school – fall and spring. The teacher sends home a sheet before the conference asking you to consider what new skills you see your child developing at home or in the community. You will be asked to think about what you would like more information on regarding the classroom, and whether you have new or different goals for your child. During the conference, the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together, we can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.
- c. **Family Day** – Family day is an opportunity for you and your family to come to school to participate in fun as well as educational activities. With help from family volunteers, the day is planned to meet the needs of the children and families in the classroom.
- d. **Transitions** – Home to school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool and NCA staff will provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible. QPPS 7.9 7.10

e. **Community Resources**

Iowa Child Care Referral and Resource Network:

<https://iowaccrr.org/>

Warren County Health Services:

<https://www.warrencountyia.gov/government/public-safety/health-services/>

Heartland Area Education Agency:

<https://www.heartlandaea.org/families/>

Norwalk Public Library-Kids Resources:

<https://www.norwalklibrary.org/kids-0-11/>

Norwalk Parks and Recreation Programs

[https://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/government/departments/parks\\_recreation/recreational\\_programs](https://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/government/departments/parks_recreation/recreational_programs)

Hidden Acres Christian Center

<https://www.hacamps.org/>

Norwalk Area Food Pantry:

<https://www.newlifenorwalk.org/norwalk-area-food-pantry.html>

Norwalk Free Medical Clinic:

<https://www.2thecrossroads.com/clinic>

Warrior Giving Project:

[https://mms.norwalkchamber.net/Calendar/moreinfo\\_responsive.php?eventid=429346&org\\_id=NORW](https://mms.norwalkchamber.net/Calendar/moreinfo_responsive.php?eventid=429346&org_id=NORW)

Single Parent Provision:

<https://www.singleparentprovision.org/>

Norwalk MOPS/MomsNext:

<https://www.mops.org/groupsearch/>

Moms in Prayer:

<https://momsinprayer.org/>

- VII. **Health and Safety** – NCA programs are committed to promoting wellness and safeguarding the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our programs. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies (including CCR&R and QRS) and Warren County Health authorities in the field.
- a. **Health and Immunization Certificates** – Before the child begins the preschool programs, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.  
When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child’s entry into the program(s) and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program(s), except for immunizations for which parents are using religious exemption.
  - b. **Health and Safety Records** – The program has written procedures that outline the health and safety information to be collected from families and to be maintained on file for each child in one central location within the facility. The files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to:
    - Administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records;
    - The child’s parents or legal guardian;
    - Regulatory authorities, upon request. IQPPS 10.10
  - c. **General Health and Safety Records include** – The program maintains current health records for each child:
    - Before the child begins the program, and as age-appropriate thereafter, health records document the dates of service to show that the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended, published in print, and posted on the Web sites of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control of the United States Public Health Service (CDC-USPHS), and the Academy of Family Practice;
    - When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for these services before the child’s entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunizations for which parents are using religious exemption.
- Child health records include:
- Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
  - Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests 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 year;
  - Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;



- Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
- Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of 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. IQQPS

5.1

The program has written, up-to-date, comprehensive procedures to prepare for and respond to medical and dental emergencies for children and adult staff. The procedures include:

- Identification of a hospital or other source of medical care as the primary site for emergency care (program staff have informed the facility of their intent to use their services in an emergency);
- Immediate access to written familial-consent forms to relevant health insurance information for emergency medical treatment and transportation arrangements;
- Arrangements for emergency transport and escort from the program of individuals who require immediate medical attention;
- Presence of an adult with current pediatric first-aid training certification on-site at all times (training includes providing rescue breathing, management of a blocked airway, and any special procedures that physicians of enrolled children have documented what the children require);
- Individual emergency care plans 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). IQPPS

10.14

- d. **Dental Emergency** – Should a dental emergency occur where a tooth is damaged or prematurely extracted (excluding the loss of loose baby teeth) the director will be called to evaluate the situation. Permanent teeth that have been extracted will be placed in a glass of whole milk until further arrangements are made. The parent will then be called to make arrangements for the child to be transported to the dentist. In the event that the parents or emergency contacts cannot be reached, the child's dentist will be contacted by the director.
- e. **Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children** – For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not come to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms in the evening or during the night, he or she will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children:
- Fever greater than 100 degrees F;
  - Vomiting;
  - Diarrhea;
  - Pink eye with drainage;
  - Cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge;

NCA established policy for an ill child's return:

- Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications (e.g., ibuprofen or acetaminophen);
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted);
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication;
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode;
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye): 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage;

If child has visited a doctor due to illness, a doctor's excuse explaining illness, needs to be given to NCA Director Cheri Minella. When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at

preschool, parents, legal guardians, or another person authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child's pediatrician. In the meantime, the preschool will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian, or designated person arrives under the supervision of someone familiar with the child. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until she or he can be picked up, the child is located where individuals will not be exposed. A sick child is to be ...  
... picked up within a reasonable amount of time from the time the parent was contacted.

QPPS 5.3

- f. **Reporting Communicable Diseases** – Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the preschool programs and that the families should implement at home. The programs have documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and have, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur. QPPS 5.4
- g. **Medication Policies and Procedures** – The facility will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child or a specific condition for any child in the facility for who a plan has been made and approved by. Because administration of medication poses an extra burden for staff, and having medication in the facility is a safety hazard, medication administration in childcare will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside childcare hours cannot be made. Parents or legal guardians may administer medication to their own child during the childcare day. Lead teacher will administer medication only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent; the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that meets the safety check requirements. The facility must have on file the written or telephone instructions of a licensed physician to administer the specific medication.
- For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide caregivers with the medication to the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage and disposal instructions. For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child.
  - Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the child care staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label by a physician.) This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications.
  - A physician may state that a certain medication may be given for a recurring problem, emergency situation, or chronic condition. The instructions should include the child's name; the name of the medication; the dose of the medication; how often the medication may be given; the conditions for use; and any precautions to follow. Example: children who wheeze with vigorous exercise may take one dose of asthma medicine before vigorous active (large muscle) play; child with a known serious allergic reaction to a specific substance who develops symptoms after exposure to that substance may receive epinephrine from a staff member who has received training in how to use an auto-injection device prescribed for that child (e.g.,

Epipen®). A child may only receive medication with the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian and when the staff person who will give the medication has demonstrated to a licensed health professional the skills required.

- Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant, closed container that is inaccessible to children and prevents spillage.
- Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.
- A medication log will be maintained by the facility staff to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted.
- Medication errors will be controlled by checking the following 5 items each time medication is given:
  1. Right child
  2. Right medicine
  3. Right dose
  4. Right time
  5. Right route of administration

When a medication error occurs, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the facility. QPPS 5.10

- h. **Cleaning and Sanitization** – The facility is maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area is made inaccessible to children and the area is 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 soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using a non-toxic solution of one-tablespoon household bleach to one quart of tap water made fresh daily. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. The bleach solution will be left on for at least 2 minutes before it is wiped off with a clean paper towel, or it may be allowed to air dry. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used. Staff is 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. Routine cleaning is supervised by the directors and follows the Cleaning Sanitation Frequency Table of the IQPPS manual. QPPS 5.24 5.10
- i. **First Aid Kit** – Fully equipped first-aid kits are readily available and maintained for each group of children. Staff take at least one kit to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site. IQPPS 9.13
- j. **Fire Safety** – A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classrooms and throughout the facility with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log. QPPS 9.14
- k. **Medical Emergencies and Notifications of Accidents or Incidents** – NCA has an "Emergency Preparedness Plan" in place that describes the following situations and procedures to follow.

This plan is posted in each room. The "Emergency Preparedness Plan" is reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made to it.

- Emergency phone numbers
- Fire/explosion/bomb threat procedures/smoke
- Media Inquiries
- Severe Weather/Inclement Weather/Ice and Snowstorms
- Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health
- Dental Emergency
- Emergency Procedure
- Safety Procedure
- Lost, Missing or Abducted Child Procedure
- Chemical Spill, Hazardous Material Exposure, Evacuation Procedure
- Intoxicated Parent or Visitor Procedure
- Intruder Procedure
- Injuries and Medical Emergencies for staff and children
- Tornado, Earthquake and Flood Procedure
- Utility Failures (electric power failure, water line break, gas line break/gas leak)
- List of CPR/First Aid experienced persons in the building
- Criminal Activity
- Structural Damage
- Thunderstorm/Lightning
- Airplane Crash

This booklet will be posted in each classroom and all licensed areas. The booklet will be reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made to it.

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life-threatening injury during their time at NCA, our teacher will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any incident or injuries will be documented on a "Child Injury and Incident Report Form" and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

All staff will have immediate access to a walkie-talkie device that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, Hospital and Poison Control will be posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

Emergency phone numbers will be verified by calling the numbers to make sure a responsive, designated person is available.

- i. **Inclement Weather** – In the event that NCA must be closed due to bad weather, we will notify by Remind messages, email and local TV channels. As ratios allow, the center will start sending staff home. If parents are unable to immediately pick up their child, a ratio-sufficient number of our team, including an onsite supervisor, will stay with the children as long as necessary. In case of power failure, parents should come immediately.
- m. **Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health** – Program staff protect children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns or scalding, slipping, tripping, and falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping.  
The preschool classrooms in the building have been tested for radon and are free of lead, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass and other hazards that could impact children's health with

documentation on file. The buildings heating, cooling and ventilation systems are in compliance with national standards for facilities used by children.

The programs maintain the facilities so that they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation. QPPS 9.16 9.17

- n. **Smoke Free Facility** – In compliance with the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act of 2008, NCA buildings and grounds are smoke free. A "No Smoking" sign meeting the law's requirements is posted at the entrance to the preschool building to inform people that they are entering a non-smoking place. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children. QPPS 9.19
- o. **Child Protection Policy** – The health and well-being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An applicant or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the preschool program that involves direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the programs or have responsibility for children.  
The program has a written policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. (Legal Reference 232.73) All teaching staff complete "Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse" at least every five years and within six months of employment. NCA does not tolerate employees physically, or sexually abusing or harassing students. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, legal guardians, teacher, principal or another employee. Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, health-assessment records, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a secure location. QPPS 10.8 10.16 10.19
- p. **Substance Abuse** – Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of NCA. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- q. **Volunteers** – Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. Please contact the teacher(s) or Director Cheri Minella, if you would like to be a school volunteer. We have a volunteer job description that defines the role and responsibilities of a volunteer. A record check is NOT needed if the volunteer does not have direct responsibility for child care or access to a child when the child is alone. A record check IS NEEDED if the volunteer is a person in ratio, is being charged with the care, supervision and guidance of a child, the person has access to a child alone. For safety's sake, if a volunteer will be working with ... .. children, he/she is required to complete a volunteer screening form. These individuals are screened to help ensure clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. IN addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children. If a volunteer works more than 40 hours per month with children, he/she will also need to provide a current health assessment, not more than one year old. QPPS 10.15 10.17
- r. **Security** - Because the safety of our students is of paramount concern to us, we have installed security door locking mechanisms on all doors leading into the NCA facility. Anyone who has had a sex offense against a minor shall not be allowed on NCA property except for the time

reasonably needed to transport the offender's own child to and from NCA. They will not operate, manage, or be employed by NCA.

- s. **Video Surveillance Policy** - To ensure the safety and security of all children, staff, parents, and visitors, as well as the security of our childcare facility, NCA is equipped with a 24-hour video surveillance system and security cameras are installed in hallways, entrances and lobby. We may conduct video surveillance of any portion of the premises at any time. Video/security cameras will be positioned in appropriate places within and around our childcare facility and used in order to help promote the safety and security of children, staff and our program. Because we respect the privacy of all children, parents, and staff in our childcare program, our 24-hour video surveillance system/security cameras are for internal purposes only. If at any time it is necessary for parents/guardians to review video of their child, they will only be permitted to view pertinent video of their child in the facility including where other children may be present. NCA pledges to keep all information about your child and your family confidential. This means we will not release any information or video unless we are required to under state law or if you give us written permission to do so. State law mandates that we release certain information when requested by childcare licensing, law enforcement agencies, child protection agencies, or government health officials.

#### VIII. Staff – QPPS 10.15-10.20

- a. **General Information** – NCA has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, including reporting relationships; salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, and performance evaluation; benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievances procedures. Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in ... .. professional development opportunities. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring. Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and a current health assessment.
- b. **Health Assessment** – The preschool programs maintain current health information from documented health assessments for all paid preschool staff and for all volunteers who work more than 40 hours per month and have contact with children. A current health assessment (not more than one-year-old) is received by the programs before an employee starts work or before a volunteer has contact with children. The health assessment is updated every two years. Documented health assessments include:
  - Immunization status;
  - Capacities and limitations that may affect job performance;
  - Documentation by a licensed health professional of TB skin testing using the Mantoux method and showing the employee to be free from active TB disease. For those who have positive TB skin tests and who develop a persistent cough or unexplained fever, immediate assessment by a licensed physician is required. For those who have increased risk of TB according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), documentation is required annually by a licensed health professional showing that the employee is free from active TB disease;Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, health- assessment records, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a locked file cabinet in the director's office.
- c. **Orientation** – Employees must know their role and duties. New preschool teaching staff will be required to participate in an initial orientation program that introduces them to fundamental aspects of the program operation including:
  - Program philosophy, mission and goals;

- Expectations for ethical conduct;
- Individual needs for children they will be teaching or caring for;
- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques;
- Daily activities and routines of the program;
- Program curriculum;
- Child abuse and reporting procedures;
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria;
- Regulatory requirements;

Follow-up training expands on the initial orientations, See Staff Orientation Checklist.

The employee's director should provide the new employee with a review of the employee's responsibilities and duties. The director will explain payroll procedures, hours, programs and accompanying forms to the employee. QPPS 6.2

- d. **Staffing Patterns and Schedule** – The preschool programs are in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our programs follow requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times for the preschool universal preschool 4-year-old class. The programs director will maintain lists of current substitutes for both the preschool teacher and the preschool teaching assistant in case of absences.

Staff is provided space and time away from children during the day. Should staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff is provided breaks of at least 15 minutes each four-hour period.

- e. **Staff Development Activities** –All teaching staff continuously strengthen their leadership skills and relationships with others and work to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community or region, and beyond. Teaching staff participate in informal or formal ways in local, state, or regional public-awareness activities related to early care by joining groups, attending meetings, or sharing information with others both at and outside the program. QPPS 6.6

The program has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, including reporting relationships; salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, and performance evaluation; benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures. Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring. IQPPS 10.15

- f. **Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan** – All staff are evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or director. Staff also evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflections and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. From this, they develop an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and use it to inform their continuous professional development. QPPS 6.5 6.6

Acknowledgement: I have received a copy of the current Parent/Student Handbook of Facility Operational Policies & Procedures and understand by enrolling my child, I am agreeing to the terms set forth. I agree to keep a copy of the policies for future reference.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

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Director Signature

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Date

\*\*I acknowledge that at any time there may be changes/revisions made to the Parent/Student Handbook. When changes/revisions have been made you will be notified.



