

Ross/Woodward Classical Studies
Inter-District Magnet School
Pre-Kindergarten
Parent Handbook



2025 – 2026

Ms. Elizabeth Reyes, Pre-K3
Ms. Jonnie Garcia, Pre-K4
Ms. Meg Dunn, Pre-K4

Ross/Woodward Classical Studies Magnet School Pre-School Program

Mission Statement and Philosophy

(2.A.01, 3.F.03, 7.A.06, 7.A.07, 7.A.09, 7.C.0, 110.A.01)

Ross/Woodward believes that quality early childhood education is essential to future school success and offers quality teaching to all children regardless of family structure; socioeconomic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds; gender; abilities, or preferred language. The goal of the early childhood program is designed to help children develop socially, cognitively, physically and emotionally in a nurturing and safe environment.

In our effort to address the needs of the whole child Ross/Woodward offers comprehensive services in the varied areas of health (school nurse) and social services (school social worker) to families directly or through a referral system.

Ross/Woodward recognizes the family as central to the well-being of the child. We believe that fostering a strong home/school/community partnership is central to meeting the needs of children and their families. Our goal is to help families become informed advocates for the education of children, to be integral partners in the educational process which includes all aspects of program design, operation and evaluation. Ross/Woodward works intentionally to foster strong reciprocal relationships with families from the initial contact and endeavors to maintain these relationships over time. **3.F.03.a**

Ross/Woodward values and celebrates diversity. We understand that the optimal development and learning of children hinges on our acceptance of children's home language, respect and value for children's home culture and the promotion and encouragement of involvement and support of all families, including extended and non-traditional family units. Thus, classrooms and curriculum are designed to accommodate the individuals that make up our community. We seek information from each family about their culture and home language and strive to incorporate this information into all aspects of our program.

Parent Involvement

Parent/School Communication and Partnership Building

(3.F.03, 7.A.06, 7.A.07, 7.A.09, 7.A.11, 7.A.12, 7.A.13, 7.A.14, 7.B.01)

An essential part of our program is the partnership between the school staff and the parents. Our goal is to stay in close contact with parents and guardians, etc. Service staff should have daily contact with family members and make a purposeful parent contact no less than monthly. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to volunteer in their child's classroom and may be involved in the classroom in many different ways, including sharing their skills, interests and cultural traditions. Check with your child's teachers about opportunities to help with a class project, read a story, or assist with a variety of additional activities (in and out of the classroom). **3.F.03.a**

We welcome your help and your input. Please do not hesitate to share ideas for developmentally appropriate activities, projects and events. Program staff and parents are encouraged to work together to plan activities, projects and events. We do our best to accommodate families' schedules and availability as part of the planning process.

Parent-teacher conferences and visits are scheduled three times a year. At these meetings we seek parent input relative to children's goals and plan for activities and services. We encourage staff and parents/guardians to work collaboratively to derive mutually agreeable solutions that can be incorporated into classroom practice. The information parents provide about their child is invaluable to us. Ongoing two-way communication is essential. Conferences are also forums for parents to provide input into program operations, evaluation, curriculum and planning.

All parents/guardians are welcome to participate in all school sponsored activities regardless of family structure; socioeconomic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds; gender; abilities; or preferred language.

Family surveys are issued annually to gain input from parents relative to program operations, evaluation, curriculum and planning. Results are shared with all stakeholders. Translators will be provided for parents whose dominant language is not English.

Parent Orientation

Parent orientations are held prior to the first day of school and are scheduled as needed to accommodate incoming families throughout the year. These important meetings address many of the requirements of our program. Parents have the opportunity to meet staff members, view classrooms, ask questions and meet other families. These

welcome orientations provide families with information about opportunities to participate in our program, health and safety requirements and program policies and procedures. The program's philosophy, curriculum objectives, including educational goals and effective strategies to promote your child's learning are also shared at orientation. Translators are available upon request.

The Ross/Woodward Classical Studies Magnet Pre-School Program is:

- A safe, secure, fun environment dedicated to learning and child development.
- Staffed by fully certified teachers.
- An educational preparatory program designed to prepare children for kindergarten.
- Not a day care program.

Who is the Pre-K Program for?

The pre-school program at Ross/Woodward Classical Studies Magnet School is for both in-district and out-of-district children who meet the program qualifications and are enrolled in the pre-school program only. All siblings who also attend Ross/Woodward from kindergarten to eighth grade are not allowed to be dropped off before 9:00 a.m. or go to the pre-k rooms after school is out at 3:24 p.m.

Pre-School hours of Operation

Ross Woodward's pre-school's hours of operation are from 9:00 am to 3:24 pm. In order to support the educational environment, children enrolled in the Pre-K program are expected to be in attendance during the regular school hours which are 9:00 am to 3:24 pm, Monday through Friday. Learning beginnings at 9:15am daily, therefore tardy students will miss morning instruction.

Drop-off and Pick-up

Parents are asked to drop off and pick up their children in a timely manner. **Parents must sign in and out each day.** In accordance with district and school policy, **parents, guardians and caregivers are not allowed to enter the classroom during arrival or dismissal.** While parent volunteers are always welcome, the unplanned presence of parents, caregivers and siblings can tend to disrupt the learning environment. It is also not safe to have extra children in the room that are not part of the pre-k program and it is not the responsibility of the pre-k staff to watch or care for them. **The classroom door will open for arrival at 9:00 a.m. The classroom door will open no earlier than 3:15 p.m. for dismissal.** If a child is to be picked up earlier than 3:15, a written note is required. Phone calls, faxes, or emails will not be accepted.

Parking (10.D.06)

In order to make drop off and pick-up times as safe as possible, we ask that you observe the following procedures;

- **Please drive slowly on or near school grounds.**
- **Please do not park in the fire lane or other areas not designated for parking.**
- **Do not double park in fire lane or pick up lane.**
- **Please do not leave your vehicle running or play music loudly.**
- **Never leave a child unattended in your car; this is against the law in Connecticut.**
- **Do not park in spaces with reserved signs.**
- **Be courteous to others.**
- **Always have your child get out of the car on curb side, not the street/lot side.**

Late Policy

Children are expected to be picked up on time every day. If there is an emergency that results in a delay, then please contact the school.

Birthdays, Holidays & End of the Year Celebration Guidelines

Students can celebrate and share their birthday with their classmates at appropriate times set by the classroom teacher according to daily schedules. Please consult with your child's teacher to set up birthday activities. All celebrations must follow the NHPS healthy eating/foods guidelines and policy. Celebrating in ways that do not include sugary, high fat foods are recommended by the NHPS Board. Please remember this program is a peanut/nut free center. No peanut/nut products are allowed in the building. Allergies and dietary restrictions must be honored at all times.

We encourage the sharing of children and families' cultures and traditions and the integration of these learning opportunities into the curriculum, while considering classroom allergies and diet restrictions.

The end of the school year is a natural time to acknowledge children's achievements and growth over the previous nine months. All programs plan meaningful events to mark the end of the school year with children and families. These celebrations focus on involving families and supporting transitions.

Holidays are celebrated in the classroom. Please let the staff at Ross/Woodward know if you prefer for some reason that your child does not celebrate a holiday and curriculum adjustments will be made for your child.

Please note that balloons pose a choking hazard and are not allowed for any Pre-k events. Each year, in conjunction with program parents and staff, end of the year celebrations will be planned with these considerations in mind.

Toys

We strongly discourage bringing toys to school; however, toys may be allowed under certain circumstances. If you feel a certain plush toy may help your child feel more comfortable during nap time, the child will be allowed to keep the item in his or her cubby and the special “rest toy” can be retrieved at nap time as needed. Also, a special toy can be brought to school for “show and tell” if it is related to the curriculum. Your child’s teacher will provide additional guidance on this topic. Pre-k age children are just learning how to share and may not understand social rules and ownership. ***Under no circumstances are children allowed to bring play guns, weapons or other aggressive toys into the school.***

Discipline and Guidance

(3.B.12)

Conflict resolution is a strategy that we use to help students work through the various steps inherent in conflict. Our conflict resolution strategy is specific but flexible. We can use a variety of tools at each stage of the resolution (talk, write, draw, build, etc.) The role of facilitator is simply to guide the involved parties through the process. The facilitator should avoid having an opinion or agreeing/disagreeing with the party’s idea. Staff members spend more time empowering the children involved in the conflict rather than focusing on the aggressors. We ask children to participate in telling aggressors how they feel and we insist that children participate in the problem solving process.

The overriding purpose of the conflict resolution practice is to teach children a healthy tool for conflict management. We are more concerned with teaching students how to manage conflict, and the child’s ability to engage in the process of resolving. This of course looks different at different ages and developmental stages. **3.B.12.c**

Aggressive Behavior Procedures (1.E.01)

When young children bite, scratch, hit or engage in negative physical behaviors, it is often because they lack the ability to cope with the current emotion they are feeling and know no other way to express this. However aggressive behavior does present a threat to the safety and well-being of other students and will be addressed immediately in the following manner:

- A. Immediately attend to the child who is injured, seek medical attention if needed (school nurse).

- B. Staff members make every effort to keep all children safe and address challenging behaviors.
- C. Move the child who did the biting or scratching to another area of the room (time away from the group should be very brief). Very simple statement such as “no biting or scratching”, “it hurts”, should be made to the child. “What else can you do if you want the toy from a friend?” staff give examples.
- D. If aggressive behaviors continues the parent(s) will be asked to attend a parent teacher conference. The purpose of this conference is to confirm that guidance procedures at home are consistent with guidance procedures at school. The parents will also be involved in planning strategies to be used both at home and at the school.
- E. In extreme cases, where injuries result, program staff will work with the family, teachers and community partners to develop and implement an action plan that will best support the needs of the child, family and school (such as additional resources, modified schedule, etc.).

Smoke Free Environment (9.D.06)

The building and outdoor play area are entirely smoke free.

Use of alcohol, drugs, profanity or threat of violence will not be tolerated on any NHPS property.

Abusive, Hostile or Rude Behavior

Persons demonstrating verbal or physical hostile, rude, or intimidating behavior towards staff, parents, or children risk being dismissed from the program. If the person picking up a child uses inappropriate language or attempts to intimidate the staff or other parents, a meeting with administration may be required to remain in the program. As mandated reporters, any person or persons displaying such behavior requiring security or police intervention may be reported to DCF.

Restraining Orders

A parent/guardian having custody of a child must have a Restraining Order in place to prevent a parent listed on the child’s birth certificate from visiting or picking up a child from school. A copy must be provided to the head teacher and main office.

Inclement Weather

In general, the pre-school program follows the delays and closures of the New Haven Public Schools. In the pre-school program, there are occasionally times when the program is dismissed early because of unusual circumstances. If this occurs, each teacher will call the families of the children to notify them of the early closing and to

arrange pick-up of the children. For this reason it is **very important** that we have **up-to-date, working phone numbers** for each parent or guardian.

Snow Days and delays For Pre-K-3 & 4

Normally the preschool program runs from 9:00 till 3:24. However when there is a delayed opening due to bad weather, **the school program also gets delayed.**

Therefore if New Haven Public Schools has a 1 hour delay, then the Preschool program begins at 10:00am. If there is a 90 minute delay, the Preschool program starts at 10:30am; 2 hour delay Preschool program starts at 11:00am.

In the event of an early dismissal, the Pre-K-3 & 4 ALL STUDENTS must be picked up by 1:24 p.m.

1 hour Delay: Pre-K opens at 10:00am

90 min. Delay: Pre-K opens at 10:30am

2 hour Delay: Pre-K opens at 11:00am

Early Dismissal: All Pre-K classes dismiss at 1:24

Potty Training (5.A.08)

Children do not need to be completely toilet trained in order to enter and stay in the program. However, teachers and parents must make a plan for home and school for routine and consistent toileting. The teachers will work with families to create a toilet training plan when your child enters the program. If your child consistently has accidents please make sure that you provide several changes of clothes for your child. If your child requires diapers or pull-ups please provide them along with wipes. Staff will check students, who are in diapers or pull-ups, for signs of soiling at least every two hours when awake, and upon awakening after nap time. Diapers and pull-ups will be changed when wet or soiled. **5.A.08.d.c.e** Staff will use the designated changing area for assisting children with soiled diapers, pull-ups and or clothes. **5.A.08.g.h**

If on an elevated surface, staff have a hand on the child at all times, when changing the child. **5.A.08.i** All changing procedures must be posted and followed. **5.A.08.j.k.l** 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. **5.A.08.m** Containers that hold solid diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly by using a hands-free device. Containers are kept closed and are not accessible to children. **5.A.08.n.o.p.**

Change of Clothes

Each child MUST have at least two complete changes of clothes labeled with his or her name. Please make sure to replace the clothes when they are used and when the seasons change. Please also label all coats, hats and gloves that your child wears to school.

Outdoor Play/Appropriate Clothing (5.A.06.a.b.c, 3.D.01.a.b)

Students should wear clothing that is appropriate for the season. Your child should always come to school dressed to play outside. The preschool classes go outside daily unless it is raining or below 32°. We encourage students to dress themselves; therefore, it is important to select clothing that is easy for your child to manage themselves. When weather refrains us from having outdoor physical activity (gross motor opportunities), students will engage in indoor gross motor activities and play.

Uniform Policy

Ross/Woodward students are required to wear uniforms every day of the school year. This uniform consists of navy blue or khaki pants/slacks, skirts or jumpers and hunter green or navy blue shirts/blouses. Shirts must be hunter green or navy blue: there should be no writing or pictures on them. Students should also wear appropriate footwear: a closed shoe or sneaker. **No flip flops, sandals, open –toed shoes, clogs or high heeled boots are allowed, no tie laces on shoes/sneakers.** Please cooperate and dress your child in uniform daily.

Dress Code

The uniform dress code at Ross/Woodward is as follows:

GIRLS: short sleeve hunter green/ navy blue shirt (summer), long sleeve hunter green/navy blue shirt (winter) and a choice of a navy blue/khaki bottom (i.e. skirt, skort, jumper, shorts and closed in brown or black shoes).

BOYS: short sleeve hunter green/navy blue shirt(summer), long sleeve hunter green/navy blue shirt, navy blue/khaki pants and closed in shoes (no open toed, flip flops, backless or tie lace shoes) . **All pre-K students must wear no tie laces on their shoes to school.**

Health Assessment/Physical 5.A.01

A health assessment is required of all children prior to admission to our program.

No child can begin attending school without a complete physical with up to date immunizations. Children's health records are reviewed by the school nurse and must be updated annually. This information will be in a file in the nurse's office. 5.A.01.a Students who do not stay in compliance with updated physicals will be

excluded from the program once proper notification has been given. 5.A.01.b

At this time, registration staff and school nurses assist families with medical insurance, medical homes and follow up on on-going care. Children's health records are reviewed by nursing staff and must be updated annually. This information is maintained on file in a central location at each site. The content of the file is confidential but is available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records, child's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and regulatory authorities. **Parents and caregivers are also strongly encouraged to register their child(ren) in our School Based Health Clinic – More information, and registration materials, will be available during orientation. 5.A.01.c.d.e.f.g.h**

Bedding/ Rest Time (10.D.01.f)

Each child is provided with a mat/cot for sleeping. These mats/cots are cleaned and sanitized weekly and when soiled.

Please provide the ***required*** items on the first day your child attends our program: a small blanket and/or crib sheet.

All linens should be labeled with your child's name. *Linens are sent home each Friday so that they may be washed and returned with your child on Monday.*

In the event that your child has an accident during rest time, the linens must be washed and returned the next day. Please make sure you provide the required bedding and a change of clothes each day. **Please also provide a reusable bag to store the blanket, crib sheet, etc.**

Establish a regular routine for bedtime

A bedtime story is a wonderful time to bond with and settle your child. Remove all electronic devices, (Cell Phones, TV, iPad, etc.) which interrupt your child's sleep habits and attention. Telling a story or singing a lullaby is a nice way to settle your child, too. A well-rested child will adjust more easily and be ready to learn.

Security Policy

Parents must sign their child out each day. Only those on the emergency form may pick-up the student. All persons' picking up students' will be asked for ID. **In accordance with district and school policy, parents, guardians and caregivers are not allowed to enter the classroom during arrival or dismissal.**

Attendance Policy

Absences:

- Students are expected to attend school daily. Absences due to extenuating circumstances are listed below and will be recognized as acceptable excuses from school attendance.

- A student must be in attendance at least half of his/her school day in order to be counted as present (3 hrs.). Any student arriving after 11:00 am will not be allowed to stay and will be marked absent.
- A record of student tardiness and absenteeism is kept by the school and placed on the students' permanent record. Letters will be sent to parents regarding students' absences and tardiness.

Excused Absences:

- Illness or injury
- Religious holidays approved by the school system
- Death in immediate family
- Family emergencies
- Educational opportunities with prior administrative approval
- Quarantine
- Court Appearance

Illness:

If your child has become sick with the following illnesses your child **must** stay home for 24 hours before returning to school and must not exhibit any symptoms from their illness. This is to ensure that these illnesses do not spread throughout the classroom to other children and staff:

- Stomach virus
- Pink eye
- Strep throat
- Fever (100 or higher) *(Fever free without use of fever reducing medications)
- Ringworm
- Lice

In order to get the most out of the educational environment, parents should ensure that any sick children are kept home. Sick children tend not to be able to participate in the Pre-K program, spread the infection throughout the class, and often distract the other children in the program.

Health Policies **(5.A.01, 10.D.01)**

Sick Child

If your child starts the day with a sore throat, stomach ache, persistent cough or fever, an excessively runny nose or thick, green drainage from nose, he or she must be kept at home. Please refer to the sick child plan and procedures below.

Should your child become sick during the school day, the teacher or nurse will call you

so that you can pick up your child in a timely manner. Three alternate telephone numbers must be given to the school in case parents cannot be reached. Please make sure that we have all of your updated emergency contacts in the event an emergency should occur. In order to protect your child, other children, and staff, we have developed the following guidelines on illness.

Sick Child Plan and Procedures

We recognize that when a child becomes ill, it can be very stressful for the child and the parent. Dealing effectively with sick children requires cooperation among staff and families. Therefore:

- ◆ If an illness prevents a child from participating comfortably in activities;
- ◆ creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide;
- ◆ if a child's condition is suspected to be contagious and requires exclusion as identified by public health authorities; then the child is made comfortable in the nurse's office or other designated on-site locations, such as the site, where he/she can be supervised by a familiar caregiver.
- ◆ If a child is suspected of having a contagious disease then he/she is made comfortable in an area where new individuals will not be exposed. NHPS will immediately notify the parent, guardian or other person authorized by the parent. Care is provided until the parent/guardian or other authorized person arrives.

It is important to consider when early signs or symptoms of illness are recognized, we can prevent the illness from spreading to other children.

These are some of the basic guidelines that the program must follow:

- 1. Children with a FEVER of 100° F degrees or more are excluded from school until 24 hours have passed since the fever ended and no medication such as Tylenol or Motrin were given.**
- 2. Children with DIARRHEA are excluded from school until diarrhea has stopped for 24 hours.**
- 3. Children who have been VOMITING are excluded from school until vomiting has stopped for 24 hours.**
- 4. Children with an UNIDENTIFIED RASH *require a doctor's note stating that the rash is non-communicable.***
- 5. Children with STREP THROAT are excluded from school for 24-48 hours after medical care is initiated. *A doctor's note is required.***
- 6. Children with CHICKEN POX are excluded from school until all lesions are**

scabbed over (about 6 days after onset).

7. Children with IMPETIGO are excluded from school until medical care is initiated. *A doctor's note is required.*
8. Children with RINGWORM must be treated and ringworm site must be covered to attend school. *A doctor's note is required.*
9. Children with CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE) are excluded from school until medical care is initiated. *A doctor's note is required.*
10. Children with live HEAD LICE are excluded from school until medical care is initiated. The child will be inspected by the Nurse or designee before re-entering the classroom

NHPS Authorization of Medication Policy for Students **(5.A.11, 10.D.01, 10.D.10)**

It is the policy of the New Haven Board of Education that children who require medications during school hours may be given those medications only with a completed Authorization of Medication Administration form from the child's physician. **5.A.11a** With children's health and safety in mind, the nurse will only accept dated, labeled and sealed medication in the original pharmacy container. Medications are not to be brought to school by the child or given to the teacher; it must be given to the Nurse or administrator, by the parent/guardian or by a responsible adult. The nurse trains staff as needed in the administration of medications where appropriate.

Most play spaces provide shade; however, we recommend that children wear sun-protective clothing, and/or applied skin protection and hats. Parents should apply sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF15 or higher applied to exposed skin prior to school entry. When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellent due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing DEET should be used and applied by parent prior to school entry. If a child requires staff application of these products, the family must provide for each product a medical authorization form completed by the child's health care provider and the medication dated, labeled and sealed in the original pharmacy container.

Pre-K Teachers and assistants are not authorized to dispense any medicine to your child. However, in case of emergency and in the absence of the school nurse, teachers are trained to administer medications before and after regular school hours.

If two or more medications are prescribed for the same student, a separate authorization form must be completed for each medication. A physician's signature is required on the student's authorization form. Students are not allowed to carry medications with them at any time. **Cough drops and sunscreen** are considered a

medication by the NHPS and should not be sent in a child's backpack and cannot be administered by your child's teacher.

Food Policy (5.B.03.a.b.)

Breakfast and lunch is provided for your child by the New Haven School System. The pre-school rooms get one choice for breakfast and one choice for lunch. Each child will get a menu showing what is going to be for breakfast and lunch for each day in that month. If you see that there is something on the menu that you know your child will not eat it is recommended that you pack a breakfast or lunch for your child and notify the pre-k staff. Please do **not** send any items containing peanuts or other nuts. **The pre-k classrooms are nut/peanut free.**

If you feel a change should be made to your child's breakfast or lunch choice by the New Haven School System you have to talk to the cafeteria staff directly. The pre-k teachers have nothing to do with what food is served and are unable to change a food item for your child.

If your child has a food allergy it is strongly recommended that you pack all of your child's food. This ensures the safety of your child. There is no way of knowing what ingredients are in each breakfast and lunch served by the school.

Staff will discard any foods with expired dates if and when needed. **5.B.03.a**

Nutrition & Meals

(3.D.07, 5.B.14, 5.B.15, 5.B.16, 10.D.01)

Children receive nutritious and well-balanced meals through NHPS meal programs. Preschoolers are provided breakfast and lunch depending on the length and time of day. Food is served “family style” with children, teachers and volunteers sitting together, sharing a meal in a relaxed atmosphere, and engaged in conversation. Please make sure your child arrives on time so they don’t miss meals. Staff assist children when needed.

AM Part Day Programs:	PM Part Day Programs:	School Day Programs:
Breakfast and lunch provided.	Lunch and snack provided	Breakfast & lunch provided.

- Meals and snacks are served at regularly established times. Meals and snacks are at least two hours apart but not more than three hours apart. **(5.B.16)** Monthly menus are posted in classrooms and provided to families. **(5.B.15)**
- Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. **(5.B.06-07)**
- Liquid and foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children’s reach.
- Low-fat (1%) milk is served at every meal.
- Sweetened beverages are avoided. If juice (only 100% fruit juice is recommended) is served, the amount is limited to no more than four ounces per child daily. **(5.B.11)**

Allergies, Special Health or Nutrition Needs

(5.C.04, 10.D.01)

If your child has a food allergy, special health, or particular nutritional needs, your child’s pediatrician will need to complete a nutrition action plan stating the specific dietary needs of your child. The program will make a concerted effort to obtain alternate food items as possible. If it is not possible to obtain specific food items as noted by your pediatrician, arrangements will be made for you to provide those foods for your child

NHPS protects children with food allergies from contact with the problem food. If your child has food allergies you will be asked to give consent for posting information about that child’s food allergy and, if consent is given, that information will be posted in the food preparation area and in select areas that the child uses as a visual reminder to those who interact with your child during the program day. **(5.B.05)**

The program is a **peanut free center**. No peanut products are allowed in the center. We ask you to please check your child’s backpack and pockets and remove any candy, cookies and other objects before dropping him/her off in the classroom.

Teaching staff maintain areas used by staff or children who have allergies or any other special environmental health needs according to the recommendation of health professionals.

This Policy is strictly enforced because we have many children with food allergies.

Nutritional care plans are maintained for high-needs children. Allergies and religious preferences are accommodated and adhered to as possible. Teachers include nutritional education in lesson plans.

Hand Washing (5.A.09, 10.D.01)

Handwashing is an effective means to reduce germs and infections in group settings. To prevent the spread of infections, handwashing signs are posted indicating how to effectively wash children and adult hands at each sink.

When visiting or volunteering please wash your hands when entering the classroom.

All staff must wash their hands each and every time entering the pre-k classrooms, before serving and/or touching food, after using the bathroom, before and after changing a student.

All children must wash their hands each and every time they enter the classroom, before eating, after recess, before and after changing soiled clothing, and after they've used the bathroom.

All teachers, volunteers and children will wash their hands at the following times (as applicable):

Before and After:

- eating, handling food or feeding a child
- giving medication
- playing in water that is used by more than one person

After:

- diapering and toileting
- handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood, vomit) and wiping noses, mouths and sores
- cleaning and handling garbage
- handling pets or other animals
- playing in sandboxes
- handling garbage
- cleaning

*Staff will wear gloves when contamination and/or blood may occur. **5.A.09.q**



Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (10.D.03, 10.D.04)

Did you know that *all administrator, teachers and support staff are classified as mandated reporters, and are required to report suspected cases child abuse or neglect to DCF*? When confronted with indicators of abuse or neglect staff members are required to make an immediate oral report to DCF at 1-800-842-2288, and must follow-up with a written report to DCF within 48 hours. Staff should share all information concerning referrals with Program Director/Supervisor and the appropriate social

worker.

If a staff member is accused of abuse or neglect, the following procedures are followed:

- The reporter will be asked to document their allegations.
- The accused staff member will be asked to document their response.
- The parents of the child are called and notified of the allegations and the program's process.
- The Director of School Readiness is notified of allegations immediately.
- NHPS personnel department is notified of allegations immediately.
- Unionized employees are placed on paid leave immediately.
- At will employees are placed on unpaid leave immediately.
- DCF investigates and determines if the case is substantiated.
- NHPS personnel department conducts an internal hearing to determine any disciplinary action, if applicable.

Teaching staff are trained bi-annually on DCF reporting procedures and requirements.

Teachers and Supervisors may work in partnership with families to seek services for a children and family in crisis through DCF.

Curriculum and Assessment
(2.A.01, 2.A.02, 2.A.03, 2.A.05, 2.D.01)

The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards

The CT Early Learning and Development Standards are statements of what children from birth to age five should know and be able to do at various ages across their earliest years of development. These learning progressions serve as guides for the adults who support children's growth and development over time, providing a basis for planning experiences and providing support through the early childhood years. **2.A.02** Connecticut's newly drafted Early Learning and Development Standards serve as the foundation for supporting ALL young children, no matter where they live, play and learn. Connecticut's Early Learning and Development Standards were developed to help families, communities and schools work together to support children's early learning and growth. **2.A.04.a.b**

NHPS Early Childhood programs plan developmentally appropriate learning experiences based on the CT State PAF and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning requirements. **2.A.02** Our goal is to close the achievement gap by providing rich literature and language experiences every day. To this end our programs have married the CT Early Learning Developmental Standards and our core literacy program. **2.D.01.a.b.c**

Ross/Woodward preschool program utilizes *The Creative Curriculum* and *Foundations* as its core literacy program. **2.A.02** The curriculum goals and objectives of the program align with assessment of child progress. **2.A.03, 2.A.05** Instruction in Whole-Group, Circle Time, and Story Time lessons provide an anchor for conversations, planning, and learning. **2.D.01.a.b.c** Also, Foundations and Heggerty are used to enhance phonemic awareness for PreK students intentional instruction in all learning domains including:

- Social-Emotional Development Science
- Oral Language and Vocabulary Social Studies
- Emergent Reading Fine Arts
- Emergent Writing Physical Development
- Mathematics Technology

Teachers utilize additional planning resource to support and enrich the program's curriculum. **2.A.03** The program provides teachers with what they need to create and manage a purposeful and fun early-learning environment.

The Project Approach **(2.A.01, 2.A.02, 2.A.03)**

Project-based learning is a dynamic approach to teaching in which students explore real-world problems and challenges. **2.A.02** With this type of active and engaged learning, students are inspired to obtain a deeper knowledge of the subjects they are studying. The core idea of project-based learning is that real-world problems capture students' interest and provoke serious thinking as the students acquire and apply new knowledge in a problem-solving context. The teacher plays the role of facilitator, working with students to frame worthwhile questions, structuring meaningful tasks, coaching both knowledge development and social skills, and carefully assessing what students have learned from the experience. **2.A.03** Typical projects present a problem to solve (What is the best way to reduce the pollution in the school year pond?) or a phenomenon to investigate (What causes rain?)

Comprehensive Project-based Learning:

- is organized around an open-ended driving question or challenge;
- create a need to know essential content and skills;
- requires inquiry to learn and/or create something new;
- requires critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and various forms of communication, often known as "21st Century Skills;"
- allows some degree of student voice and choice;
- results in a publicly presented product or performance..

Assessment Plan

(2.A.04, 2.A.05, 2.A.06, 2.D.01, 4.A.01, 4.A.02, 4.A.03, 4.B.01, 4.B.03, 4.B.04, 4.C.01, 4.E.02, 4.E.06, 7.B.03, 7.B.04, 7.C.03)

Ross/Woodward employs an ongoing system linking assessment to curriculum and planning. Our children are assessed using a variety of tools and sources including:

- Child Observation-Teachers complete daily observation for each child.
- Portfolios (including work samples, pictures, etc.)- The children's portfolio refers to the collection of work samples and photographs (if possible) that documents their developmental progress within various learning domains. The Portfolio is meant to tell a developmental story from the first day a child enters the class until their last day of school.
- Child Profile
- Pre-literacy Assessments centered on concepts about print, oral language, phonological awareness, letter identification and letter sound knowledge.
- Parent input-Teachers encourage parent input and review all intake information including language acquisition for planning. **2.A.04**
- Child assessments are considered when planning for learning experiences through which the curriculum goals will be achieved. Teachers utilize childrens' assessments to inform curriculum planning. **2.A.06**

Teaching staff is primarily responsible for assessments and screenings. Children are assessed primarily in the natural setting of the classroom or other educational setting (i.e. Playground, field trip, etc.) through use of observation, work sampling, etc. Other educational staff and itinerants (speech pathologist, special education teacher, etc.) are consulted when warranted. Our assessment system is centered on the following tenets:

1. Benefiting children: The primary purposes of assessment are to benefit children and identify their strengths, specific needs and interests.
2. Observing and listening: Observing and listening are essential skills for early childhood teachers. Using multiple sources of evidence: to best assess children's knowledge of concepts and skills, teachers should use multiple sources of evidence collected on a systematic basis. Multiple sources include work samples, audio taped descriptions of children's problem solving discussions, anecdotal records and observations describing children's work at centers, in whole group, small group and in individual situations.
3. Assessing learning and development: Teachers have a responsibility to assess their own teaching effectiveness as well as children's learning and development. Assessment information also is used in planning program improvements (i.e. Professional development, curriculum development, assessment tools, materials, environments, etc.

Information is shared with parents informally and formally. Parents and teachers

conferences are held three times per year regarding children's progress. Teachers and family members work together to develop next steps for each child. (November, February, May/June) **4.A.02.d.e**

Developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive screening tools are used to identify children's potential developmental, health and behavioral issues. Teaching staff will administer the developmental and behavioral screening tools, within 45 calendar days of entry and health staff will administer the sensory screenings with the assistance of community partners, as appropriate.

Early childhood screenings are completed within the first 45 days of school. Information from these screenings is used to help teachers develop a deeper understanding of each child and for referral purposes when warranted. Teaching staff is primarily responsible for assessments and screenings. Children are assessed primarily in the natural setting of the classroom or other educational setting (i.e. playground, field trip, etc.) through use of observation, work sampling, etc. Other educational staff and itinerants (speech pathologist, special education teacher, etc.) are consulted when warranted.

Information regarding children, families, and staff is never shared with non-essential staff or outside agencies without written permission from parents. Children's files are kept in locked cabinets. **4.A.02.c**

Pre-referral/Referral Process **(3.B.12, 4.A.03, 7.B.04, 7.C.03)**

Identifying concerns about a child's development may stem from multiple avenues including results from screening tools or parent and/or teacher observation. When there is a concerns about a child's development, with parent's permission and signature, a six week pre-referral period begins where parents, teachers and specialists, if applicable, implement specific strategies to minimize specific concern/s.

At this time, an administrator completes a formal observation and teachers complete a series of developmental inventories.

After the six-week pre-referral intervention is complete, summary documentation is completed by both teachers and administrators and a meeting is held with parents to review the developmental progress of their child.

If progress is not noted or deemed adequate, a referral to the Early Childhood Assessment Team of the NHPS Special Education Department is made. The assessment team (student's teacher, special services professionals, parents/guardians, administration) is responsible for monitoring the process and

follow up.

Parents are an integral partner in this process. Parents are encouraged to make the primary decisions about services and are supported throughout this process. Staff encourages parents to advocate obtaining needed services. **4.A.03.f**

Behavioral Health Referral
(3.B.12)

If a child's behavior becomes a danger to himself or to others, staff may make work with parents to make referrals to outside agencies such as Clifford Beers, ECCP, or Integrated Wellness for support. These agencies can help support the child, family and program with the goal of supporting the child's pro-social behavior and integration into a positive pre-school experience. **3.B.12.a.b.c.**

Confidentiality
(4.E.07, 10.D.05, 7.C.05)

Information regarding children, families and staff is never shared with non-essential staff or outside agencies without written permission from parents. Children's files are kept in locked cabinets.

A child's teacher(s) and program administrative staff have access to assessment and screening data. This allows teaching staff to plan appropriately for each child and the group. This data is also used to initiate a pre-referral/referral process where warranted. Assessment and screening information is kept in locked file cabinets in the child's classroom. Parents/guardians are informed about the use, administration, interpretation and representation of results relative to all assessment and screening tools used and shall have access to assessment and screening information. Parents will be informed formally through parent orientations, parent chats, parent advisory team meetings and parent conferences.

Evaluation of Screening Tools
(4.B.03, 4.B.04)

Ross/Woodward selects research based screening tools that accurately help identify children that may be in need of special services. As part of NHPS ongoing program improvement process curriculum, assessments and screening tools are reviewed and reevaluated periodically.

Assessment Training
(4.B.06)

Teaching staff is trained in the purposes, values, uses and administration of assessment and screening tools including conditions under which the child will be assessed. Teaching staff is also trained relative to the interpretation and representation of results. This training takes place during pre-service, in-service and as needed as part of our on-going professional development plan.

Teachers have a responsibility to assess their own teaching effectiveness as well as children's learning and development. Teachers will assess their own teaching effectiveness through the use of our self-reflection process and professional development planning. Assessment information also is used in planning program improvements i.e. professional development, curriculum development, assessment tools, materials, environments, etc.

Evaluation of Assessment Tools

NHPS selects research based screening tools that accurately help identify children that may be in need of special services. As part of NHPS ongoing program improvement process curriculum, assessments and screening tools are reviewed and reevaluated periodically.

Program Evaluation

(10.F.01)

Administrators, families, staff and other stakeholders are involved in an annual comprehensive program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. Valid and reliable processes are used to gather data such as parent and teacher surveys. All stakeholders are invited to participate in the process, share findings and identify goals for the following year

Emergency Contact Information

When you registered your child for preschool you were asked to complete an emergency release form authorizing several adults to pick up your children in your absence. If there is a change in either the individuals designated to pick up your child or their telephone numbers, please inform your child's teacher and the main office as soon as possible so they can update your child's records. Also, please remember to inform us if you change your home phone number or employment. Staff may need to reach you during the day and it is very important that we have accurate work numbers so we can reach you quickly.

Program Standards and Regulatory Requirements

Ross/Woodward's Early Childhood Program is funded by multiple grants including, but not inclusive to state School Readiness grants, Department of Public Health, and state and federal magnet school grants.

Ross/Woodward Classical Studies Magnet School

Fire Drill Procedures

We conduct fire drills once a month. Staff and children learn how to evacuate the building in case of a fire or any other emergency. Emergency evacuation procedures are posted in each classroom.

Field Trip Policy

Field trips are invaluable learning experience for our students. Students who have shown a consistent ability to follow the school rules and show respect for the learning process are welcome on field trips. Please note the following:

Electronics

Possession of an iPad, cell phone, laser pointers, or computerized games are not allowed in school at any time. They may be confiscated by a staff member or a school administrator and will be returned to only a parent or guardian at the end of dismissal. Return of these items after the second violation of this rule will be at the end of the school year.

REGISTRATION

The New Haven Public School system is committed to a School Choice application process that is open to everyone and follows basic principles of fairness. In addition to providing effective and innovative educational practices, the schools are designed to foster student enrollment patterns that reflect racial, ethnic and economic diversity.

All schools give preference to siblings of students currently enrolled. Siblings are defined as brothers and sisters living in the same household. Neighborhood magnets give first preference to students living within the attendance zone of that school. Citywide schools are those that accept applications from the entire city without serving any particular local school attendance zone.

The description of each school indicates what preferences apply to that school.

- ❖ **Head Start and Magnet Pre-K Programs do not charge fees.**
- ❖ **Head Start families must meet federal requirements.**
- ❖ **Magnet School** Applicants are chosen through an annual lottery. Applications are accepted in the Spring each year. Applications are only available online at the NHPS Magnet School website <http://www.newhavenmagnetschools.com/>
All students must be registered at Meadow Street.



School Choice (Kindergarten) REGISTRATION

School Choice Applicants are chosen through an annual lottery. Applications are accepted in the Spring each year. Applications are thru the program as well as online and at the NHPS Registration office. If you plan on staying at Ross Woodward for Kindergarten, it is not necessary to reapply.

Kindergarten Transition

Teachers and support staff work throughout the year to prepare children for a successful transition from one learning environment to the next. The curriculum is designed to help children develop socially, cognitively, physically and emotionally through developmentally appropriate activities to become confident learners, ready to enter kindergarten.

Transitions are found to be most successful when parents are involved in the process and children are prepared for the transition. Open communication between parents/guardians and school staff is always valued and becomes especially important at times of major transition.

In order to help children and families transition to kindergarten NHPS does the following during the months of December to June of each school year:

- Provides information on NHPS school choice process including application deadlines;
- Provides information on NHPS registration process for ALL schools;
- Schedules a forum where parents get information about the NHPS School Choice process ;
- Provides tips to families regarding easing transition
- **ALL FAMILIES MUST REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN AT 54 MEADOW STREET REGARDLESS OF PROGRAM**

In addition, NHPS PK teachers do the following during the spring of each school year:

- ♥ Read books about transition in general and kindergarten transition in particular;
- ♥ Schedule visits to neighboring kindergarten classrooms;
- ♥ Provide a portfolio of children's work to receiving kindergarten teacher

What can you do?

- ♥ **Read to your child daily, or as often as possible.**
- ♥ Engage your child in conversations about books, movies, TV shows, their interests, ideas, dreams, etc. The more you converse with your child the faster they will learn to speak clearly and begin to learn pre-literacy skills.
- ♥ Count objects while waiting in line, or at a restaurant waiting for food;
- ♥ Play "I Spy" and take turns.
- ♥ Sing and recite Nursery Rhymes, poems and finger songs such as *Itsy Bitsy Spider* and *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Vanessa Diaz-Valencia, Director of Early Learning

54 Meadow Street

New Haven, CT 06519

vanessa.diaz-valencia@new-haven.k12.ct.us

Early Childhood Enrollment

54 Meadow Street

New Haven, CT 06519

Early Childhood Enrollment Officer- Pamela Ng

pamela.ng@new-haven.k12.ct.us / 475-220-1440

NHPS School Choice and Enrollment Office

Registration Office

Gateway Center

54 Meadow Street

New Haven, CT 06519

Main Office: (475) 220-1430

<http://www.newhavenmagnetschools.com>

Office of Special Education and Student Services

Typhanie Jackson, Executive Director

typhanie.jackson@new-haven.ct.us

54 Meadow Street

New Haven, CT 06519

(475) 220-1760 ph / (203) 946-7358 fax

ECAT

ecat@new-haven.k12.ct.us

183 Goffe Street

New Haven CT 06511

(475) 220-7950 ph / (475) 220-7995 fax

*211 - United Way referral for local services
utility assistance, food, housing, child care,
after school programs, elder care, crisis intervention and much more*

To All Parents/Guardians:
Please read and sign this sheet.
It must be returned to your child's classroom
teacher:

I have read and reviewed the entire Preschool Parent Handbook on

(Date) _____

Signature: _____

I have gone through orientation on (Date)_____ and had an opportunity to
ask questions and get answers on things that were unclear to me.

Signature: _____