

McLaughlin School District

Early Childhood Education/Preschool Age 4

Handbook

2023-2024

Mini Mustangs School



601 Main Street

McLaughlin, South Dakota

McLaughlin School District Mission:

To guide all learners to their full potential – academically, culturally, emotionally, and physically!

Dear Parent/Guardians:

Welcome to our early childhood classroom and preschool. We are very excited for the new year to begin this fall. We want your child to every day that he or she is with us. This information is designed to help you understand EARLY CHILDHOOD and PRESCHOOL at the McLaughlin School District.

### **SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT EACH PROGRAM**

#### **PRESCHOOL**

- A child must be **4 years old on or before September 1, 2022** to enter the preschool program.
- Enrollment will be capped at 15 students. Admission is first come first serve basis.
- If your child is dropped from our preschool attendance rolls due to a switch to any one of our local head start centers, **re-enrollment is not an option**. Once you enroll your child, we ask that you keep him/her at the McLaughlin Preschool.
- It is mandatory for all students attending preschool to be toilet trained before entering school. We strive to keep the classrooms as healthy and sanitary as possible. By toilet training your child, this eliminates the need to change soiled diapers, keeping the class area sanitary. If your child is enrolled and is not toilet trained, they will be dropped from enrollment.

#### **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

- **ELIGIBILITY** - The early childhood program serves children of families who reside within the McLaughlin School District boundaries. Children must be eligible for special education services through a written Individual Education Plan.
- This program works cooperatively with the head start centers so students have an opportunity to attend both centers.
- Parent/Guardians attend any meetings that have to do with their child's education and IEP process.

#### **ADMISSION**

Upon enrollment, certified birth certificates and immunization records must be presented or the child will not be allowed in school. You must also present Tribal Enrollment and custody court orders and name changes, if applicable.

School hours are from **8:00-3:15 PM MT** Monday through Thursday. All school-sponsored events are run on Mountain Time. Please be at the school by 3:30 PM MT if you are picking up your child.

#### **ATTENDANCE**

These are very important years in the development of your child's education. If your child is absent, call each day to the elementary office (605-823-4484, Ext. 1207) with the absence

reason. Notes may also be sent with an explanation for the absence. It is important that your child attend school every day.

### **IMMUNIZATION**

The McLaughlin School district is required by the state health department to collect a completed "Certificate of Immunization" form from all newly entering children. South Dakota Code Law 13-28-7. Requires that the parents must have a record of immunization to present at the time of pupil registration. The record must have all dates (month, day, and year) which immunizations are given. School admission will be denied if a completed immunization record is not submitted.

### **SUPPLIES**

Please bring the following supplies to school:

- 1 box large crayons (8 count)
- 1 box of markers (8 count)
- 1 glue stick
- 1 Elmer's liquid glue
- 1 Regular size backpack
- 1 small blanket
- 1 box of Kleenex

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Students attending either the preschool or early childhood program are allowed to ride the bus. Staff will be present to escort students on and off the bus and to and from the classroom. If a student's bus riding schedule is to change, you must notify the school for this. For safety reasons we cannot accept a preschool student's verbal changes in his or her bus routine. The parents/legal guardian should make any change in writing for the classroom teacher and office.

### **EARLY CHECK OUT**

Any parent coming during school hours to check out their child sooner than normal dismissal time must obtain a blue slip from the elementary office before coming to the classroom. Children can be removed from school by authorized persons only. If picking your child up at the end of the day, please be prompt in your arrival. All students need to be picked up by 3:20 MT. Teachers have many activities at the end of the day that requires them to be out of the room and we do not want to leave students unattended.

### **REPORT CARDS**

All report cards are sent home at the end of each nine-week period. Parent/Teacher conferences are held at various times of the year. Consult the current school calendar as to scheduled conference dates and times. Please set aside time to attend those conferences. They are important to your child, your child's teachers and you as the parent.

### **CURRIULCUM**

The goal of both programs (Preschool and Early Childhood) is to provide a nurturing and secure environment in which the child develops socialization skills, a positive self-image, and academic readiness in an atmosphere free of stress.

The interactive program has been designed to enhance the developmental process of the preschool age child. Activities, based on the South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines, are provided in the areas of preacademic skills and social skills. Language is an important part of the program. Activities are planned to enhance skills in listening, following directions, and being part of a group. This lends itself to helping children gain self-esteem and a sense of achievement. Children are encouraged to express themselves at their level of ability.

### **DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

Directory information about a child is available to the public. This includes the child's name, address, telephone number, dates of enrollment, parent or legal guardian of the child, participation in program activities, and individual or group photographs or video. The parent may refuse to permit the release of any of the Directory Information by notifying the building administrator annually, in writing which information may not be released. Such notification can be made at any time during the program year.

### **DISCIPLINE/GUIDANCE**

Discipline in the program has two primary goals. First, we strive to find a solution to the current situation. Second, we attempt to help the child process feelings, recognize consequences, explore alternative solutions and outcomes, and develop internal self-control.

To accomplish these goals we use the following techniques:

- Prevention
- Positive Redirection and Guidance Modeling
- Clear Limits
- Problem Solving
- Time Out

Children will not be placed in alternative settings that would be harmful or dangerous to the child's physical or emotional health.

The use of the following punishments is prohibited:

- Withholding or forcing snacks or meals;
- Use of substances such as hot pepper, pepper or soap in the mouth;
- Hitting, pinching, shaking, spanking or inflicting corporal punishment;
- Restricting of movement by binding or enclosing in confined spaces, and
- Verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or family.

The program reserves the right to use physical guidance that is reasonable and necessary to keep a child from harming him/herself, other children and staff or program property.

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

The school district maintains a confidential file on each individual child. The file must contain current enrollment and immunization records. State regulations specifically require written permission from parents or legal guardians allowing for the child's emergency medical care to be included in your child's file. The child's family will be financially responsible if care is given.

**It is imperative that both the preschool program and early childhood program records are up-to-date and accurate. The elementary office should be notified immediately of any changes in your address or phone numbers or immunization status. It is essential that an emergency number be listed so that the program can contact you in the event of illness or injury.**

It is important that parents identify all allergies a child may have at the time of enrollment. The enrollment form establishes existing allergies. If necessary, a health care plan will be developed that outlines the procedures to be followed in the event of an allergic reaction. Teachers and paraprofessionals throughout both the preschool program and early childhood program are informed of the type of allergy, treatment, and if applicable, location of child's medication. In the McLaughlin School district, if the nurse is available will help with this process. Children who develop allergies over the time present at the center will be added to the existing list of children with allergies. Due to allergies, latex balloons are discouraged. McLaughlin School District is a peanut free school.

## **ILLNESS**

On a daily basis, only children in good health will be admitted. The Preschool and Early Childhood programs do not provide care for sick children.

Some conditions that will merit removal from program are a fever at or above 100 degrees, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, head lice, or any other contagious disease. Exclusion may also occur if the child is unable to participate comfortably in his/her daily program activities due to illness or the illness results in a greater need for care than the teachers and paraprofessionals can provide without compromising their ability to care for other children. Should a child be determined ill, the parent or emergency contact person will be notified and will be required to make other arrangements for the child's care. Once notified, the child will be isolated from the other children (but supervised) until you arrive. Please do not bring your child back until he/she has had a normal temperature for 24 hours without the use of medication, has quit vomiting, is on a normal diet, has control of his/her bowel movements or has been excluded for the time period recommended for a specific illness by a doctor or Department of Health. These conditions apply to all children unless we receive written instructions from a physician directing us to act otherwise. The child must be able to participate comfortably in his/her daily program activities without extra staff monitoring. Habitual refusal of a parent/guardian to take an ill child home will result in a referral to the appropriate social agency.

The McLaughlin School District is required by law to report all contagious diseases to the Department of Health. In the event communicable diseases have been diagnosed in families of children who attend the program, the program staff will attempt to notify parents so

precautions may be taken. Parents will be advised to check with their personal physicians to discuss which course of action to pursue with regard to the health of their children. Parents are asked to inform the McLaughlin School District if their child will not attend on a given day due to illness at 605-823-4484, Ext. 1207.

## **INJURY**

Both programs can only provide basic first aid to children. In a typical emergency situation, the procedure below will be used:

1. Call the school nurse and/or;
2. Contact a parent or guardian at home or at work;
3. Contact emergency contact person listed on the registration document;
4. Call 911. In instances where medical attention is needed without delay, the parent/guardian will be called at the same time as the emergency personnel, or immediately thereafter.

Should minor injuries occur involving children, accident reports will be completed which include proper notification of parents and authorities in charge of the program.

## **MEDICATIONS**

District policy prohibits dispensing of any over-the-counter or prescription medications without authorization/release for each medication. Children will not be given medicine while in the program unless medicine is given to them by the school district nursing staff or other trained staff member acting under specific written request of the parent or guardian and/or under the written instruction of the child's physician. If a written request is given to the McLaughlin School District by a parent or guardian, a full release is thereby given to the school district from the responsibilities pertaining to the administration and consequences of such medication. Medications must be kept in their original container, with the original label. The label for prescription medications must contain legible directions for use, the expiration date, the child's name and the physician's name. A drug container without a label or with an illegible label is not permitted. Medications requiring refrigeration will be placed in another nonabsorbent container labeled "medications".

## **SECURITY**

The security of your child is a primary concern. Parents may pre-authorize a designated person who may be allowed to pick up their children in lieu of the parents. This includes older siblings. Any pre-authorized person picking up a child will be required to show personal identification.

If a parent possesses a Court Order, which denies certain person's access to their child, a copy of that Court Order must be on file in the office in order for the staff to comply with that order. The staff may not deny a parent or legal guardian access to their child without a Court Order that stipulates this action.

All community members are encouraged to report anything unusual to a building office or to the district Administration Office immediately. Surveillance cameras are in used in school

facilities and on school buses to promote safety and to encourage reasonable orderliness in school, on school property, at school functions, and on school buses. Any person entering a school facility, on school property, at a school function, or riding a school bus is subject to being videotaped. Videotaped recordings are considered security data and are the property of the McLaughlin School District.

McLaughlin School District utilizes a camera/buzzer system to manage access to the school buildings. All entrance doors will be locked and all visitors/parents will need to “ring the bell” and be “buzzed in” by school staff. Parents/visitors should then report to the appropriate office. The building will be locked for the day unless access is given due to special circumstances/activities.

### **SAFE SCHOOLS ALERT SYSTEM**

All community members are encouraged to report anything unusual to a building office or to the district Administration Office immediately.

### **SAFETY**

McLaughlin School District is a certified ALICE district. ALICE is a response protocol that provides all staff and students with proactive responses in the unlikely event of an active shooter or other violent intruder event. ALICE stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. These are not sequential steps to be taken, but options to be considered in a dangerous situation. McLaughlin School District works closely with law enforcement to provide training to all staff and students in ALICE.

Important things for parents to know: 1) student safety is our primary objective and will be our focus; 2) in the event of an emergency situation, the district will do all it can to provide parents with as much information as possible—keep in mind that school personnel will be dealing with different things and it may take some time for messages to be sent; 3) calls to the schools may not be answered as the staff is busy dealing with an emergency situation; phone lines should be left open for communications with emergency responders; 4) we have rally points should evacuations occur, DO NOT come to the schools—traffic clogging streets will prevent responders from getting to where they need to be.

In collaboration with law enforcement, the McLaughlin School District has created a comprehensive Crisis Plan that outlines specific procedures for many situations. Drills are carried out regularly to prepare everyone in case of an actual emergency situation. These processes are reviewed and refined regularly. These procedures are posted in each service area.

### **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

All staff members are required by law to report any suspected incident of child abuse or neglect. We will report any suspicions of abuse/neglect to the Department of Social Services. If a staff member is accused of abuse or neglect, he/she will be suspended until an investigation is

completed and outcome decided. When hired, each individual signs a statement to indicate his or her awareness of this legal obligation.

### **HANDLING/DISPOSAL OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

All staff is required to wear gloves when direct contact with bodily fluids is anticipated. Children will be taught to handle their own body fluids, as appropriate for age, state of health and ability level. Children will be taught good hand washing techniques and are encouraged to do so routinely. Contaminated items will be disposed of according to McLaughlin School District policy. Contaminated areas will be cleaned according to health guidelines by designated district staff.

Chemicals used for routine cleaning, that are stored within the classroom, will be stored in a locked cabinet out of the reach of children. Chemicals used meet OSHA standards and will be used in the prescribed manner.

### **PERSONAL ARTICLES**

Please label all personal articles (coats, hats, sweaters, jackets, mittens, boots, etc.). Children should be dressed in comfortable clothing and shoes that are suitable for normal daily activities. Children participate in outdoor activities; therefore parents should send their child in clothing appropriate for the weather conditions. During extremely cold or rainy weather, recess will be shortened or cancelled. Extreme cold is defined as zero degrees or zero wind chill factor. Toys are not to be brought to class unless for a special activity designated by the staff.

### **NUTRITION**

Both programs may provide snacks at times. If a child has a known **allergy** to certain foods, the program can adjust and monitor the child's food, **ONLY if we received a signed statement from a doctor listing specific food allergies. Without a signed medical statement, we are not able to accommodate your child's needs. This statement must be updated annually.**

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Constant communication between parents and staff is essential. We encourage parents to inform us of their ideas, needs, questions, or concerns. We will also make every effort to keep you informed of your child's participation in school activities, either by written or verbal methods. In addition, the both Preschool and Early Childhood programs hold parent-staff conferences periodically throughout the year. These dates will be sent home to the parents/guardians.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips and special events are planned to supplement and enrich curriculum. Parents will be notified each time we schedule a field trip and will need to notify staff if their child cannot attend. Children may also periodically visit areas within walking distance of the school.



**TRAFFIC/PARKING**

If picking up or dropping off your child for the Preschool or Early Childhood program, please park in the designated visitor parking. Parking in the bus/fire land at the school is prohibited.

**CONCLUSION**

We are proud of the quality of early intervention services that the Preschool program and the Early Childhood program provides and thank you for the opportunity to work with your child.

**EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

All students of the District will have equal educational opportunities. The board will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, disability, economic status, national origin, or ancestry in its policies or programs. To accomplish this policy on nondiscrimination, the board will provide all students of the McLaughlin School District equal access with respect to educational opportunities and participation in school-sponsored programs or activities unless otherwise allowed by law (i.e., such as laws related to special education which required individualized educational programs and laws related to student suspension and expulsion).

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*