

# NWMMS Pre-Kindergarten

## Parent Handbook

(Addendum to NWMMS Student Handbook)

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NOAH WEBSTER

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MICROSOCIETY  
MAGNET SCHOOL

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# **PHILOSOPHY OF NOAH WEBSTER MICROSOCIETY MAGNET SCHOOL**

## **A. MISSION STATEMENT**

It is our mission to inspire leaders by:

- Nurturing the unique heart, mind and body of each child by using a variety of teaching methods and instructional strategies that address different learning styles.
- Encouraging students to strive to his/her fullest potential by meeting the challenging academic standards in every content area through authentic learning experiences that address and solve real problems.
- Creating a teaching and learning environment in which all staff continually receive opportunities to upgrade skills and to reflect and assess effective teaching practices. Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School is a community of active learners that are accepted and safe. We respect and encourage each other and create a lifelong love of learning.

## **B. 7 PRINCIPLES OF MICROSOCIETY**

1. **Student Voice & Choice:** Students who have voice and choice as citizens, construct his/her own learning, challenge themselves and others and shape his/her school culture.
2. **Learning by Doing:** People learn and transfer knowledge best when engaged in work that is meaningful to them.
3. **Entrepreneurial Spirit:** The entrepreneurial spirit motivates dynamic learning and pursuit of new ideas, creativity and unique opportunities.
4. **Real World Experiences:** Increasingly sophisticated, intellectual, economic, social and political experiences and a balance of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards continually engage and challenge students as his/her society matures and evolves into the visionary “Noah Webster MicroSociety.”
5. **Teachers as Facilitators:** Teachers are facilitators of integrated learning, providing multiple opportunities for student success. Teacher shares responsibility that fosters student self-efficacy.
6. **Shared Responsibility and Authority:** Opportunities for leadership, meaningful decision-making, and responsibility are vested, aligned, and accounted for at every level.
7. **Partners as Contributors:** Parents and partners are essential and enthusiastic contributors to the learning community.

## **C. SCHOOL-WIDE EXPECTATIONS AND SCHOOL-WIDE MANTRA**

- Take care of yourself
- Take care of each other
- Take care of this place

## **D. POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT (PBIS)**

PBIS is a process for creating safer and more effective schools. It is a systems approach to enhancing the capacity of schools to educate all children by developing research-based, school-wide, and classroom behavior support systems. The process focuses on improving a school’s ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students. Rather than a prescribed program, PBIS provides systems for schools to design, implement, and evaluate effective school-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and student specific plans. PBIS includes school-wide procedures and processes intended for all students and all staff in all settings. PBIS is not a program or a curriculum. It is a team-based process for systemic problem solving, planning, and evaluation. It

is an approach to creating a safe and productive learning environment where teachers can teach and all students can learn. We have adopted a unified set of expectations for behavior in our school. You will see these expectations posted throughout the school and your child will be learning them throughout the school year. Our unified classroom expectations, found in every classroom and non-classroom setting in the school, are as follows:

- Expectation #1: Take care of yourself
- Expectation#2: Take care of each other
- Expectation #3: Take care of this place

As part of our PBIS process, teachers and other staff members use evidence-based practices to increase student learning and decrease classroom disruptions. To implement the rules in a positive manner, we do the following when teaching academics and behavior:

- Constantly teach and refer to our school-wide expectations.
- Provide students with more praise than correction.
- Talk to students with respect using positive voice tone.
- Actively engage everyone in the class during instruction.
- Use pre-correcting, prompting, and redirecting as we teach.
- Look for the positive first and provide positive, immediate, frequent, and explicit feedback.

**\*\*\*\*Please note that this handbook serves as an addendum to the NWMMS Student / Parent Handbook and all policies of the Hartford Board of Education\*\*\*\***

## SCHOOL POLICIES

### A. PARENT ACCESS

Parents are permitted access at any time his/her child is in attendance in the school by coming into the office and asking for assistance. Making an appointment is not necessary. However, we ask that you be courteous not to interrupt planned activities. An overview of the daily schedule is provided.

### B. APPOINTMENTS AND PHONE CALLS

If you need to speak with a teacher, please make an appointment and time will be made for you. If you call during the school day, please let the office know that you are a parent and that it is important for you to speak with a teacher. If we can deliver a message for you, we will be happy to do so. We try to keep classroom interruptions to a minimum so that our teaching staff can teach. Please see the Hartford Board of Education Policies and Regulations Handbook # P-5123

### C. ENTRY PASSES

For the security of your children, access to the building through the Tremont St entrance requires the visitor badge you were given on the first day. This is required for daily entry, and must also be presented by your emergency contacts that might pick up your child. Any entry not within the pick-up / drop-off time window must use the front Whitney St entrance and check-in through the office.

### D. RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

Children will not be allowed to leave the school with anyone other than those persons listed on the enrollment form. Please alert the people authorized to pick up your child that a picture I.D.-driver's license or valid state identification will be required.

### E. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES

Parents are expected to notify the school immediately and in writing of any change in name, address, employment location, and/or phone numbers so they can be contacted in case of an emergency. Without accurate information, we cannot inform you if your child becomes ill or has an accident. If the name and/or number of the child's physician changes, this information must be provided to the school as soon as possible. A form for these purposes can be obtained from the office.

### F. MANDATED REPORTING / CHILD ABUSE

The staff at Noah Webster are mandated reporters. This means we have a legal obligation to protect children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through injury and/or neglect and to ensure a safe and nurturing environment. Please see page 56-59 (Child Abuse and Neglect) of the Noah Webster Student Handbook for more information and procedures related to this topic. Please see the Hartford Board of Education Policies and Regulations Handbook # P 5156

## G. DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Our school day begins at 8:15 and ends at 3:25. Doors at the Tremont St. entrance open at 7:55am and close at 8:10am. Please be sure your child is in his/her classroom by 8:15am. The doors open at 3:20pm for pickup. Please be sure that you have signed your child out by 3:25.

If you arrive later than 8:15am, please enter through the main, Whitney St entrance and check in through the office for a late slip. If you arrive later than 3:35pm, your child will be waiting in the office. You will need to sign a late pickup form.

### DELAYED OPENING

For security reasons, when there is a 2-hour delay in the school day, students should not arrive to school before 9:55 a.m. Per contract, there will be no school personnel before 9:55 a.m.

### HALF-DAY SCHEDULE

Students must be picked up between 11:55am and 12pm on early release days.

### LATE OPENINGS, CANCELLATIONS, EARLY DISMISSALS

For emergency and weather-related changes to the regular hours, such as cancellations, early dismissals and late openings, announcements will be made on the Snow Hotline at 860-695-SNOW. Please do not call the school, radio stations, the police department or the Board of Education office. Phone lines must remain open for emergency calls.

Weather Related information will also be announced via:

**Radio:** WTIC 1080, WDRC 1360, WPOP 1410, LATINO 1230

**Television:** Channel 3 – WFSB, Channel 8 – WTNH, Channel 30 – WVIT

**School Messenger:** With this service, the district or the schools will be able to record, schedule and send personalized voice messages to parents and families with one recorded phone call. More importantly, schools will be able to reach families at a moment's notice should an emergency arise. Please contact the school if you change your phone number to ensure your family receives these important messages.

## H. EARLY PICK-UP / LATE ARRIVAL

We believe students belong in school for the entire school day. We ask that all appointments be scheduled outside of the school day. We also believe that consistency is important. We ask that changes to dismissal (changing from taking the bus to being a pick-up, etc.) be kept to a minimum.

If your child must leave early from school, or changes must be made to your child's dismissal, we ask that you do the following: 1. The Main Office must receive a written parental/guardian notification with the date and time of the appointment or changes to dismissal the morning of the dismissal or contact the main office (860-695-5380) by 2:00 p.m. (11:00 a.m. for Early Dismissal Days). If you leave a message, a confirmation phone call will be made to let you know we received the message. After 2:00 p.m. (11:00 a.m.

for Early Dismissal Days) no changes will be made to dismissal. 2. The parent/guardian must sign the student out in the Main Office. 3. Students cannot be picked up after 2:40 p.m. This is an important transition period and students are receiving homework instructions and performing the end of day routines.

## I. ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having guardianship of the child. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate written documentation in accordance with this regulation.

- For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are, with *appropriate documentation* in accordance with this regulation, considered excused for the following reasons:
  1. health
  2. religious holidays
  3. court appearance
  4. funeral or death in the family
  5. approved school activities, including field trips
  6. suspension or expulsion
  7. special activities or emergencies with the consent of the parent or other person having control of the child in limited circumstances, per appropriate administrative approval and discretion
- Unexcused Absence” – an absence for any reason not included in the above listed “excused absences”. For detailed information see the Hartford Board of Education Policies and Regulations Handbook # R-5114.
- Truant is defined as a student who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in one month or ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year. The determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the building principal or his/her designee. Parents or other persons having control of the child may appeal that decision to the Superintendent or his/her designee, whose decision shall be final.
- Written documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absence within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school. This may be a signed note from a medical professional, who may be the school nurse, who has evaluated the student confirming the absence and giving an expected return date or a signed note from school nurse who has spoken with the student's medical professional and confirmed the absence, including the date and location of the consultation.



- Child who is enrolled in a school under the jurisdiction of the Hartford Board of Education and whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent (10%) of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year. In these cases, an attendance review team will be established. Any attendance review team established under these regulations may include school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers, representatives from community--based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, and chronically absent children and his/her parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent children, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and his/her parents or guardians.

#### J. EMERGENCY FORMS

Upon enrolling your child at Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School, parents/guardians complete the registration paperwork to include Emergency Contact persons. If you need to modify that information, you will need to put in writing the updated Emergency Contact information and bring it to the Main Office. As a parent/guardian, it is your responsibility to notify the school immediately if any changes are made on the phone numbers or people to contact in case of an emergency. Once the information is received, it will be inputted in the school's database for quick reference and access by the Main Office and your child's teacher.

#### K. SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES

We have social workers who work with students in large groups, small groups and individually. Counseling, for students and parents, is a chance to talk to someone regarding social, emotional and educational concerns in a confidential setting.

#### L. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

State law requires all students to participate in Physical Education. Students who are unable to take Physical Education must be excused by the school nurse with a signed parental note, a medical note or a Physical Education teacher's note. Required gym attire includes gym shorts, tee shirts, gym suits, warm-ups and/or sweat suits. Sneakers must be worn. Cut-off shorts and shirts are not permitted. **JEWELRY IS NOT ALLOWED** in class for safety reasons. There is a procedure for checking valuables during participation in P.E. class. **IF THE PROCEDURE IS NOT FOLLOWED, THE SCHOOL IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS OF ANY VALUABLES.**

#### M. FIRE DRILLS AND OTHER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire drills are held at regular intervals to ensure the safety of all students and staff. When the signal is given, students are expected to leave the building by the prescribed route as quickly as possible. The school will also conduct other periodic emergency procedures and students are expected to follow all safety procedures as explained by his/her teachers.

## N. UNIFORM POLICY AND CLOTHING

Children should wear his/her uniforms every day.

Mandatory Uniform Policy for PreK Students:

- Red polo shirt (collar and 3-button), short or long sleeves.
- No layers under the polos, such as white or colored t-shirts, blouses, etc.
- Khaki pants/skirts only; pants must be worn with a belt and shirts tucked in
- Solid sweaters in red (no patterns, prints, logos or other colors allowed)

Additional Reminders:

- No hoodies, no jean jackets or pattern jackets allowed; No large decorative belt buckles or sequined metallic or colored belts are allowed; No head scarves, bandanas or hats are allowed; Shoes or sneakers. Laces must be tied. When a student does not wear his/her uniform, he/she may not attend school activities or assemblies. Students will have to wear a uniform on all field trips. Please make sure your child is wearing his/her uniform daily.
- A variety of activities, including physical exercise, water/sand play, and art (using tempera and finger paint) are planned each day. Children's jewelry items, especially pierced earrings, present potential safety hazards. Earrings can become caught or be accidentally pulled causing a tear of the ear lobe. Earrings, rings, and other removable small objects present choking hazards for your child and other children in the group. For these safety reasons, you are asked not to allow your child to wear jewelry to school.

## O. NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SCHOOL

Please inform the office as soon as you know that your child will be withdrawing from the school.

## P. CUSTODIAL RIGHTS

Persons identified as parents/guardians on a child's enrollment forms will be allowed to pick up that child. If a court has issued an order limiting or restricting access of a parent to a child, a court stamped "filed" copy of such an order must be presented to the office and a new enrollment form completed before we will restrict a parent's access to his/her child.

## Q. EMERGENCIES AND ACCIDENTS

In the case of an accident or illness requiring immediate emergency treatment, parents will be notified as soon as possible. If the parents cannot be reached immediately, the child's physician may be contacted. In some cases, paramedics will be called and the child may be transported to the hospital. A staff member will stay with the child until parents are located. In less serious situations, parents will be contacted and asked to transport the child. It is the parents' responsibility to be certain that the school has current work and home phone numbers. Without current information, the school has no way of contacting parents in an emergency. Parents must leave information that will allow us to make contact in the event of an emergency or an illness. In the case of a minor accident, the child will be taken to the nurse for basic first aid. The nurse will fill out an accident

report with the details of the event. A copy of the report will be given to the parent when the child is picked up.

**R. PHOTOS / VIDEOS OF CHILDREN**

By signing the Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School Media Release Form upon enrollment, you are giving consent to Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School and the Regional School Choice Office to use your child's photographic image, video image, student work, audio recording, or multimedia presentation, at its discretion, in recruitment and marketing materials, and to publish it on the Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School/Regional School Choice Office Website for purposes of recruitment and marketing.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

### A. HEALTH SERVICES

The Nurse's office is designed to provide care to students who become ill or are injured while in school. Students who become ill at home should not be sent to school. Students injured outside of school should be treated by outside health care professionals. Parents should notify the nurse if a child has a serious disability so that information can be made available to the teacher. It is important that parents notify the school nurse in case of a student's illness that necessitates limited physical activity. The nurse will inform the physical education teacher. If a student should require medication during the school day, the parent must provide the appropriate medication order form completed by the doctor, and signed by the parent. Medication will only be dispensed if properly labeled from a pharmacy. The school nurse is available to parents and students for conferences regarding health problems. For more complete information, call the Nurse's Office at 860-695-5415.

### B. IMMUNIZATIONS AND YEARLY PHYSICALS

It is a state law and Hartford Public Schools requirement that all students must have verification that a yearly Physical Examination and certain immunizations have been administered to attend either classroom. A State of Connecticut Department of Education form with the title "Connecticut Early Childhood Health Assessment Record" must be completed by the medical provider. Please be aware HPS does have school based health clinics where physical and immunization updating can be performed if needed. Inquire with the school nurse regarding this. **If these state requirements are not met, state law prohibits his/her continued attendance in the school.**

Connecticut Early Childhood Health Assessment Record "Yellow" or "Blue" State Form  
Copy of current immunization record

Please submit the requested forms ***DIRECTLY*** to the School Nurse. They can be faxed directly to her by your doctor. If your appointment isn't until the summer time, please bring the forms to the first day of school in August.

### C. ALLERGIES

If your child has allergies, please discuss them in detail upon enrollment and provide a written description on the enrollment forms. The staff will take appropriate precautions to avoid children's exposure to allergens. If at any time your child develops an allergy, please let us know immediately.

### D. TOILET TRAINING

Because our facilities are not setup for diapering, children enrolled in the Noah Webster Preschool Program must be toilet trained, unless they have an active IEP that specifies otherwise. We are, however, aware that bathroom accidents happen in early childhood. If a child has an occasional bathroom accident, one of our teachers will assist the child in changing his/her soiled clothes in a sanitary space in the bathroom. Dirty clothes will be tightly bagged and placed in the child's cubby to take home for cleaning. We are unable to wash soiled clothes or diaper/wipe children. If you would like your child to use wet wipes to bathroom, please send in a box of wipes labeled with his/her name, and he/she will be given wipes to use him/herself as needed. In the case of diarrhea that cannot be

contained, the child will be brought to the nurse's office where you will be asked to pick the child up. Please see the Health and Wellness Section for more information regarding diarrhea while at school.

#### E. INFECTION CONTROL AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School uses the National Health and Safety Performance Standards for Out of Home Child Care Programs as its guidelines for health and safety issues. These standards were developed by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children are encouraged to develop healthy habits of personal hygiene, including washing hands when needed (see F). In addition to instructing children in these habits, teachers model the behaviors.

#### F. HAND WASHING

Because germs can spread easily with a preschool age group, we wash our hands as often as possible to avoid spreading illness. We wash our hands:

- Upon morning, before entering the classroom (parent responsibility)
- Before and after eating
- Before and after sensory play
- Before and after outdoor play
- After handling body fluids (blowing nose, etc.)
- After using the bathroom

#### G. ILLNESS

Neither the physical facility, nor the staffing is designed to care for children who are sick. Sick children need closer supervision than we can provide. Ill children also risk infecting others. We use the guidelines developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and The American Public Health Association to protect the children. Please see next section "When Should a Child Stay Home," as well as Appendix A: More Information on Infectious Diseases. We will use these same guidelines when determining if a child must be picked up from school due to illness.

#### H. WHEN SHOULD A CHILD STAY HOME?

##### a. Fever

The child's temperature should be normal without medication for 24-hours before returning to school (this includes temperatures due to ear infections). If your child has a fever in the evening, he/she should not be brought to school in the morning, even if his/her temperature is normal. Temperatures often are lower in the morning and rise again in the afternoon. FEVER is defined as: 100.4 ORAL.

##### b. Vomiting

If your child vomits during the night, he/she should not be brought to school the next day, unless you are confident that the vomiting was not due to an infectious condition and he/she can eat a normal diet.

##### c. Diarrhea

Diarrhea is defined by the Centers for Disease Control as more than one abnormally loose or watery stool. While loose stools can have many causes, a child who has two abnormal loose stools should not return to school until bowel

movements have normal consistency. A child can also be excluded from the school after one loose stool if the stool can't be contained.

d. Colds

If there is no FEVER associated with the cold, and if the child is not terribly uncomfortable, the child can come to school.

e. Conjunctivitis (pinkeye)

Your child's eyes must be COMPLETELY free of discharge and your child must have been on medication for at least 24-hours before returning to the school.

f. In the case of impetigo, lice, ringworm, pinworms, rashes, chickenpox, thrush, etc. your child must be NON CONTAGIOUS before returning to the school.

I. MEDICATIONS

Medications (prescription or over-the-counter) will be given to a child only when the child's doctor and parent have completed and signed an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form in the nurse's office. Medications are kept in the nurse's office, and the school nurse will administer all non-emergency medications. Teachers will only administer medications in emergency situations, (EpiPens and Rescue Inhalers when needed).

J. STORAGE OF MEDICATION

A locked medicine cabinet is kept in the nurse's office for storage of all medications. The nurse will administer all medications. If your child needs medication at school, please contact the nurse and complete the appropriate paperwork. Your child's first and last name must be on the medication bottle/box.

K. SUNBLOCK

If you would like teachers to administer sunblock to your child's exposed areas (ears, face, neck, arms, lower legs) for outdoor play, please fill out the sunblock administration form with your child's classroom teacher and send in your child's sunblock clearly labeled with your child's name. Spray bottle form only.

## DAILY ROUTINES

### A. ARRIVAL

Parents must bring children into his/her classroom each morning and come into the classroom to pick up the child in the afternoon. Please take your child to the bathroom and wash his/her hands before entering the classroom.

Sign your child in and give his/her name card to the teacher. Upon pickup, sign your child out, and put his/her name card back in the labeled box. The sign in / out form and name card system helps the teachers keep track of the children still under his/her care. Please be sure to use this system every day.

### B. DISMISSAL

Sign your child out. Take your child's name card from the teacher. Children will not be allowed to leave the school with anyone except the persons designated on the enrollment form. Please let the person(s) you authorize to pick your child up know that identification will be required. Any person picking up a child must have a visitor's pass. Please do not re-enter the classroom once your child has been signed out.

### C. OVERVIEW OF DAILY SCHEDULE

Our daily schedule includes: 1 hour of gross motor play, 30-minute lunch block, 15-minute snack block, 1 hour 15 minutes of rest time, 2 separate hours of center / station time, 1 hour of special (art, gym, science, etc.), and a 15-minute circle time. The flow of events specific to your child's classroom will be posted near the entrance of your child's classroom.

### D. PARENTAL SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

You are responsible for your child once he/she has been signed out. Please do not let your child re-enter the classroom once signed out. Please do not allow your children to run ahead of you to the front entrance of the building when you pick up. This is a high-traffic area with many parents arriving to pick up children. Our front entrance is secured, however for safety purposes, we do not want young children inadequately supervised.

### E. MEALS AND SNACKS

A daily, nutritious breakfast and lunch are served to your child at no cost. We ask that you send in a light, daily snack for your child. This should include a drink such as water or juice, and a healthy snack ***that does not include a peanut product***. Peanut products are not allowed in our school at any time for any reason due to severe and life-threatening allergy.

### F. NAP AND REST TIME

Children will be given an opportunity to nap or rest each day. Children who do not sleep will be encouraged to rest quietly for 25 minutes. Children who do not fall asleep by that time will be offered quiet alternative activities such as looking at a book or playing quiet games.

## G. OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is essential for physical development and emotional health. Children play outside every day, unless it is raining or the wind chill is below 32 degrees F. On days when the temperature is above 90 degrees, outdoor playtime will be shortened, but not eliminated. Please make sure that your child wears suitable clothing each day. During winter months, hats, warm jackets, and gloves/mittens are necessary every day. If your child is taking prescription medication, or is unable to participate in outdoor play, please discuss the situation with the nurse and classroom teacher.

## H. WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

- Extra Clothing.
  - EACH CHILD MUST HAVE AT LEAST ONE COMPLETE CHANGE OF CLOTHING (INCLUDING SOCKS, UNDERWEAR, AND FOOTWEAR) AVAILABLE IN THE SCHOOL AT ALL TIMES. The classroom temperature may fluctuate during the day. It is helpful to have a jacket or light sweater in the child's cubby at all times. All clothing must be marked with the child's name.
- Daily nutritious snack
  - Please pack your child with a light snack to eat in the afternoon. With a focus on health, please do not send candy or soda in your child's snack.
- Blankets
  - Please send a small blanket along with a crib sheet (these fit best on our cots) for your child to use during rest time. A pillow may also be used if preferred, but please be sure it is a small pillow, as storage space is limited. We will send the blankets home to be washed each Friday. Please bring them back in on Monday.

## I. PERSONAL ITEMS

It is the teacher's personal decision whether or not toys from home are permitted in his/her classroom. Please remember that many children own identical or very similar objects, and that teachers are not responsible for the care of toys brought from home. It is important for you and your child to understand that other children in the group will want to play with toys brought from home. If the toy becomes a source of repeated conflict, it will have to remain in the child's cubby. When a child brings an item to the school, we recommend that the object be clearly marked with the child's name.



## LEARNING EXPERIENCES

*Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School is a community of active learners who are accepted and safe. We respect and encourage each other to create a lifelong love of learning. Our goal is to provide a high quality early childhood program that equally promotes academic, physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development in a safe and caring environment. Noah Webster bases its learning program on the recommendations of developmentally appropriate practice as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is the national professional association of early childhood teachers. The following statements are taken from *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8; Expanded Edition* by Sue Bredekamp (NAEYC, 1998). These statements serve as the framework for the activities and policies of our program.*

### A. CURRICULUM

Our program uses Big Day Curriculum. This is a developmentally appropriate curriculum that provides for all areas of a child's development: academic, physical, emotional, social, and cognitive through an integrated approach.

Appropriate curriculum planning is based on teachers' observations and recording of each child's special interests and developmental progress.

Curriculum planning emphasizes learning as an interactive process. Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials.

Learning activities and materials should be concrete, real and relevant to the lives of young children.

Programs provide for a wider range of developmental interests and abilities than the chronological age range of the group would suggest. Adults are prepared to meet the needs of children who exhibit unusual interests and skills outside the normal developmental range.

Teachers provide a variety of activities and materials; teachers increase the difficulty, the complexity and the challenge of an activity as children are involved with it and as children develop understanding and skills.

Adults provide opportunities for children to choose from among a variety of activities, materials, and equipment; and time to explore through active involvement. Adults facilitate children's engagement with materials and activities and extend the child's learning by asking questions or making suggestions that stimulate children's thinking.

Multicultural and gender-neutral experiences, materials and equipment are provided for children of all ages.

Adults provide a balance of rest and active movement for children throughout the program day.

Outdoor experiences are provided for children of all ages. When weather does not permit outdoor play, indoor gross motor movement activities are implemented.

## B. HOME / SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

*Parents have both the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about his/her children's care and education. Parents are encouraged to observe and participate. Teachers are responsible for establishing and maintaining frequent contacts with families. Teachers share child development knowledge, insights, and resources as part of regular communication and conferences with family members. Parents are encouraged to complete an annual survey (in their preferred language) that will inform improvement plans.*

### **We encourage parental involvement within our school by:**

- a. Inviting parents to participate in P.T.A. and other social functions with the building. The Parent Teacher Association is a vital link among the school, community and the parents it serves. Thus, parents are urged to join and take an active part in the PTA. Please contact the school for more information on how to join this great organization.
- b. Inviting parents to visit the school and share skills and interests with the children
- c. Inviting parents to accompany us on field trips when possible
- d. Publishing a monthly newsletter with school news, curriculum information, and parenting information
- e. Providing detailed curriculum plans including learning objectives, daily activities, song and activity ideas for home follow-up for each instructional unit
- f. Providing informal opportunities for regular written and oral communication
- g. Our Open House is held every year during the beginning of the school year. It is an excellent opportunity for parents to visit the school, meet his/her children's teachers and learn about academic and social expectations and extracurricular programs offered by the school. An invitation specifying date and time will be sent to each parent at the beginning of the school year. Parents are encouraged to attend this important event.
- h. Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School and its staff will do everything possible to keep open lines of communication with the home. Teachers will be available to respond via telephone and/or in person any concerns or questions that parent may have. The school will also hold two parent conferences during the school year to provide parents with specific information regarding the academic/social progress of his/her children and to distribute students' reports cards. At least one week before conferences, parents will receive a scheduled appointment for his/her conference that has been arranged at the mutual convenience of the parent and teacher. Parents are required to attend these conferences.
- i. We encourage parents to discuss his/her concerns with teachers whenever questions or problems arise. As part of the annual program evaluation of the school, parents are asked to complete a survey rating his/her satisfaction with various aspects of school operations. Anytime a parent has a concern or inquiry, a teacher and/or administrator will be happy to schedule a time to meet. Additional information of interest to parents is posted on the Parent's Bulletin Board in each classroom.

### C. TEACHER / CHILD INTERACTIONS

- a. Adults respond quickly and directly to children's needs, desires, and messages and adapt his/her responses to children's differing styles and abilities.
- b. Adults provide many varied opportunities for children to communicate.
- c. Adults facilitate a child's successful completion of tasks by providing support, focused attention, physical proximity, and verbal encouragement. Adults recognize that children's misconceptions reflect his/her developing thoughts.
- d. Teachers are alert to signs of undue stress in children's behavior, and are aware of appropriate stress-reducing activities and techniques.
- e. Adults facilitate the development of self-esteem by respecting, accepting, and comforting children, regardless of the child's behavior.
- f. Adults facilitate the development of self-control in children.
- g. Adults are responsible for all children under his/her supervision at all times and plan for increasing independence as children acquire skills.

### D. DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION OF CHILDREN

*Developmental assessments of children's progress and achievements are used to adapt curriculum to match the developmental needs of children, to communicate with the child's family, and to evaluate the program's effectiveness. Developmental assessments and observations are used to identify children who have exceptional needs and/or who are at risk and to plan appropriate curriculum for them.*

- a. Developmental expectations are based on standardized measurements and norms. The norms used (DIAL IV) are age-matched, gender, culture, and socio-economically appropriate.
- b. Reading Screener
- c. PPT
- d. SAT

### E. SEPARATION ANXIETY

*Separation from parents is sometimes difficult with preschool aged children. Parents can help by having a short, simple routine for leaving.*

1. Hug your child
2. Remind him/her that you love him/her and that you are going now.
3. Be sure to tell your child good-bye and remind him/her that you are coming back in the afternoon.
4. Then leave, even if your child is crying. Do not go back into the room.
5. Teachers will spend time comforting your child and will remind your child that you love them and will come back in the afternoon to take them home.

*If you are upset about leaving, please call us and we will be happy to give you an update. If your child is experiencing typical separation anxiety, within 15 minutes following your departure, they will be okay. Our teachers are very good about re-directing your child into helpful and calming activities. (See Appendix B for additional information that may be helpful.)*

## F. SPECIAL OCCASIONS

- HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

- We look forward to holidays because of the educational and rich cultural diversity it brings to our school. We recognize that our families do not celebrate holidays in the same manner. We want to remain respectful and neutral when planning activities for the children.
- We invite and encourage parents to visit the classrooms and share a family holiday tradition with the children. We believe our children benefit greatly in knowing how other families celebrate the holiday season. Each classroom will send out a survey asking parents how they would like to celebrate in his/her classroom. We would love to have guest speakers to come share his/her traditions, sing a special song, make a special art project, or read a special book.

- MEET-UPS

- NWMMS hosts several meet-ups throughout the school year. These meet-ups typically take place outside of school hours and in a nearby Hartford location. These events will be announced several weeks before the event.

- BIRTHDAYS

- Due to allergies, food celebrations are not allowed. Please see your child's teacher for alternate ideas for celebrating your child's birthday at school.

## APPENDIX A:

### *A Word About Separation Anxiety*

Separation anxiety is a healthy manifestation. It demonstrates the child's healthy emotional attachment to his/her parents and/or any other adult that may be very important to that child. All children pass through this stage several times throughout the early childhood years. This developmental stage is over for the most-part by the time the young child enters first grade. Several factors will determine how long each stage of separation anxiety lasts: The child's age, the child's personality, how the parents manage the emotional state, and how the teaching staff support the child and parent. Children who are experiencing separation anxiety react in several ways: Crying, screaming, clinging to the parent, and/or refusing to go to the teacher. Once the parent leaves, the child will cry for approximately 5 to 10 minutes then stop. After a few more minutes the child will start to engage in various activities in the classroom. The child will usually take comfort from the teacher once the parent leaves.

What you can do to help your child (and yourself) cope:

- 1) Establish a nighttime routine. Make sure your child goes to bed at a reasonable time such that he/she will not be too tired to get up the next morning.
  
- 2) Get your child up each morning at the same time. Give yourself and your child enough time to get ready. Trying to rush children out the door creates an environment full of stress, not only for your child, but for you as well.
  
- 3) Take a few minutes to pick out one storybook and read to your child prior to leaving the house. This time of "settling" will help calm young children down and help both of you relieve a little stress. Take the time to enjoy just being together.
  
- 4) Be upbeat about going to school. Tell them they are going to school to see his/her favorite teachers and to play with his/her friends (name several friends in the classroom). Make sure you have a copy of the lesson plans for that day so you can name some of the things they will get to do.
  
- 5) Once you arrive, greet and talk briefly with your child's teacher. Warm and friendly interactions between parents and teachers demonstrate to young children that you trust this person to care for them and that it is okay for the child to stay with them. Most teachers will be happy to take little ones from your arms and hold them for a few minutes until after you leave. Teachers of older children will usually take them by the hand or place his/her arm around them for comfort. All teachers try to direct and encourage young children to participate in activities set out for the morning. This helps establish a consistent and repetitive morning routine that the young children can depend on each day when they enter the classroom.
  
- 6) If you need reassurance that your child is okay, once you arrive at work, call back and ask an administrator to check on your child to see if he/she is okay. Try not to worry; you and your child will make it through this stage!

## TOILETING PROCEDURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Because our facilities are not setup for diapering, children enrolled in the Noah Webster Preschool Program must be toilet trained, unless they have an active IEP that specifies otherwise. We are, however, aware that bathroom accidents happen in early childhood. If a child has an occasional bathroom accident, one of our staff will assist the child in changing his/her soiled clothes in a sanitary space in the bathroom. Dirty clothes will be tightly bagged and placed in the child's cubby to take home for cleaning. We are unable to wash soiled clothes or diaper/wipe children. If you would like your child to use wet wipes to bathroom, please send in a box of wipes labeled with his/her name, and he/she will be given wipes to use him/herself as needed. In the case of diarrhea that cannot be contained, the child will be brought to the nurse's office where you will be asked to pick the child up. If the bathroom accident is beyond a light clean-up, you will be notified by the school nurse. Please see the Health and Wellness Section for more information regarding diarrhea while at school.

I \_\_\_\_\_ understand and acknowledge the toileting procedure policy at Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School.

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Signature

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Date