

**MASON CITY COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS
PRE-K PROGRAMS**

2018-2019

Program Sites:

Harding Elementary
1239 N. Rhode Island Ave.
Mason City, IA 50401
(641) 421-4406

Hoover Elementary
1123 8th St. NW
Mason City, IA 50401
(641) 421-4408

Jefferson Elementary
1421 4th St. SE
Mason City, IA 50401
(641) 421-4411

Roosevelt Elementary
313 15th St. SE
Mason City, IA 50401
(641) 421-4415

EARLY CHILDHOOD PHILOSOPHY

We believe that all children, parents, and staff will learn and grow in a positive learning environment. We believe in the unique value and potential of children and their families. We honor the diversity of beliefs, values, customs, and cultures in our local community and the world around us. We believe preschool children are ready to experience the diversity of others. We respect and support their families in achieving the goals they desire for themselves and their children.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Mason City Community School District offers two programs for students ages 3-4. The programs are designed to provide positive early learning experiences while fostering independent functioning and age appropriate development. A structured and nurturing environment provides opportunities for successful learning. Daily experiences address the following areas: cognitive, communication, social, emotional, behavioral, health, nutrition, safety, self-help, large and fine motor development as well as pre-academic readiness. While kindergarten readiness skills are important, they will only be promoted in the context of what children are interested in and mature enough to grasp. The programs provide for flexibility to meet the individual needs of each child and family.

- The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and Head Start program is a collaborative effort between two community partners. ECSE/Head Start classrooms are located at Harding, Hoover and Roosevelt schools. The program serves children 3 to 5 years of age. The hours for the program are from 8:15 a.m.–2:30 p.m. (Tuesdays 8:45 a.m.– 2:30 p.m.). Head Start students are dismissed at 1:15 p.m. each day.
- The preschool program also serves 4-year-old children five days a week. Preschool classrooms are located at Harding, Hoover and Jefferson schools. The hours for the morning session are from 8:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m. (Tuesdays 9:00 a.m.– 11:15 a.m.). The afternoon session meets from 12:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m. (Tuesdays 12:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.).

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- We will demonstrate our respect and concern for children and families, colleagues, and others with whom we work, honoring their beliefs, values, customs, and cultures.
- We will demonstrate in our behavior and language respect and appreciation for the unique value and human potential of each child and acknowledge that the development of choice-making skills, a sense of self and personal autonomy is critical to promoting life-long learning.
- We will oppose any discrimination because of race, stereotyping, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, political affiliation, disability, age or marital status in all aspects of personnel action and service delivery.
- We will actively involve the families in their child's education and growth.
- We will protect the privacy and confidentiality of information regarding children and families, colleagues, and students.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

In your child's best interest, it is the parent's responsibility to insure regular attendance. Instructional time lost is never fully regained. Every effort should be made toward prompt arrival and regular attendance. It is the responsibility of the parent to send a healthy child to school. Check for signs of illness. Call the school if your child will be absent for any reason.

The following procedure will be followed:

1. If the parent has not notified the school of an absence, the teacher will attempt to contact the parent.
2. If the parent has no phone, two alternate phone numbers must be provided to the school. The teacher will attempt to contact one of those persons who will then be requested to check on your child. Either that person or the parent must then call the school.
3. After approximately two missed days, if the parent has not been able to be contacted, a home visit may be made to discuss educational concerns related to absences.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Although each teacher arranges the day to best meet the needs of his/her group of children, a typical day will include the following types of activities:

Arrival	Large Motor Skill Development
Breakfast	Outdoor Activities
Large/Small Group Activities	Music
Center Time (child selects activities)	Lunch
Story Time	Quiet Time
	Individual Work Time

CLOTHING/SUPPLIES

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothing that has front closure zippers, snaps, or buttons. Their clothes should be chosen so the child and staff need not worry about getting dirty. Shoes need to be comfortable so each child can easily run and climb safely. Sandals and other open shoes are not appropriate for the playground. Also, please remember to dress your child appropriately for the weather (i.e. snow pants, boots, hat and mittens in winter, light jacket in spring). Children will be expected to go outside every day if possible. A doctor's order is needed to keep the child inside. All children will stay inside if the wind chill or temperature is below 0 degrees Fahrenheit.

All school supplies are provided. STUDENTS NEED TO BRING ONLY THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS:

*Please mark materials and clothing with permanent marker

- Extra set of clothing
- Diapers, training pants, and wipes if needed (provided for Head Start students)
- School bag (Due to safety concerns, no backpacks on wheels or ones larger than 24" x 18" will be allowed.)

PROCEDURES

PROGRAM SERVICES: Each child will receive developmental screening which includes a vision screening, speech/language screening and hearing screening. Students that qualify for special education services may receive speech/language therapy, physical/occupational therapy, adaptive physical education or special programs and services by Mason City Schools and Central Rivers Area Education Agency. The AEA audiologist will screen hearing periodically throughout the school year. Vision, weight and height are monitored periodically throughout the school year.

PICK-UP/DROP OFF PROCEDURES: All parents/guardians will be asked to provide two emergency contacts and to keep staff up to date of any changes. Anyone picking up a child at the center or accepting a child from the bus must be listed on the emergency contact list and provide picture identification if asked. Staff is required to ask for a picture ID if they do not know the person wanting to pick-up the child. We will allow children to be picked up and dropped off by someone between the ages of 14 and 18 years old with written permission from the parent/guardian

Staff must release a child to either biological parent as listed on the birth certificate, unless we have a copy of the custody order or court document on file. If there is no court document available and if there is any doubt that the child should leave with the parent, staff may choose to call the custodial parent/guardian/entity and/or the police department. It is in the best interest of the child that the parents notify us immediately of any family changes that could be a potential problem. We are bound by confidentiality policies not to discuss or give out information on children to anyone else, but we do ask parents to confide in us when necessary.

When you bring your child to school, we ask that you walk them into the classroom and sign them in. This helps to assure the safe arrival of your child. Please do not arrive before the usual starting time; the teachers need time to prepare for the day. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children until school starting time. When you pick-up your child, remember to sign your child out. Head Start children are dismissed at 1:15 p.m., ECSE children at 2:30 p.m., and 4-year-old preschool children at 11:00 a.m. (11:15 a.m. on Tuesdays) for the morning session and at 2:30 p.m. for the afternoon session. If children are not picked up at the end of the school day and staff is unable to reach parents or emergency contact person, local law enforcement will be called.

CANCELLATION, DELAY, OR EMERGENCY DISMISSAL OF SCHOOL: The regular school schedule will be changed only when a real or potential safety risk for students exists. If school must be canceled, delayed, or dismissed early due to weather conditions or other emergencies, announcements will be made on local radio stations, KIMT television, and the school messenger system. Please listen for announcements on very hot days and bad winter weather days.

If there is a delay to the start of school, students in the ECSE and Head Start classrooms will start at the time designated by the Mason City Community School District (same as K-4 students). The morning session of the 4-year-old preschool program will be cancelled.

If there is an emergency early dismissal, students in the ECSE and Head Start classrooms will be dismissed at the time designated by the Mason City Community School District (same as K-4 students). Students will be dismissed to the destination indicated by you for "Emergency Dismissal" at registration. Notify the school anytime these plans change.

If threatening weather conditions exist at dismissal time, students may be held at school until it is safe to travel home.

Education

The programs use The Creative Curriculum for Preschool; it is based on five fundamental principles. These principles are:

- Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
- Social – emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
- Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
- The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
- Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

Teachers use the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment that has been selected by the State of Iowa Department of Education to monitor children's progress. Teachers use the information gathered to help plan their instruction. Parents receive information about their child's assessment and progress three times a year.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Communication with the teachers and other staff will be ongoing. The teachers will complete two home visits: one prior to the beginning of school and the second in the spring. The purpose of these visits is for the teaching staff to discuss your child's progress and to assist families in fostering the growth and development of their children. Two parent/teacher conferences are held at the school during which the child's progress and individual goals are discussed. Conferences are scheduled for fall and end of year.

Parents can request a conference with their child's teacher at any time. Throughout the school year, staff will share information on classroom activities, health and nutrition information, community agencies and resources and information about parent activities and meeting. Information is shared with parents through handouts, newsletters, See Saw app, and Facebook.

GUIDANCE

Guidance will be provided in a positive and constructive manner. Physical discipline methods, isolation, withholding food or derogatory comments will never be used in our classrooms. Nothing in these procedures will preclude the use of professionally prescribed interventions for individual children. The intervention plan shall be discussed at IEP meetings and recorded. Data will be collected that provides documentation whether a child is making progress with the interventions utilized.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Staff is required, by law, to report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Services. All reports are confidential.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

All children are expected to go outside. A doctor's order is needed to keep the child inside. If your child is unable to do so, please keep him/her home until well enough to go outside. Please refer to the health, illness and attendance procedures concerning communicable diseases.

HEALTH INFORMATION

All children must have current immunizations before starting school. Physical and dental examinations must be completed within 30 days after starting. Screenings for speech, hearing, developmental, behavior/emotional, and vision will be provided for all children. Other services will be provided as needed.

There is staff certified in first aid, CPR, medication administration, and in using health precautions.

IMMUNIZATIONS: According to Iowa law, all children must have their immunizations up to date and have an immunization certificate on file prior to beginning school.

STUDENT HEALTH AND ILLNESS POLICY: For students to optimally participate in their early childhood program, your child needs to be at their highest level of wellness. Students also need to be protected from communicable illness while attending school. Teachers and support personnel will attempt to detect early signs of illness. When a student appears ill, they will be monitored for fever, appetite, stools, and observed for further signs of illness. Upon any signs of illness, the parent/guardian will be notified concerning the illness; the need for medical care; and the need to remove the student temporarily from the school. By adhering to this procedure, we can help protect or reduce the risk of communicable illnesses for all the children.

GUIDELINES WHEN CHILDREN ARE SICK: In order to maintain a safe and healthy environment for your child and those around him/her, guidelines from Healthy Child Care Iowa are followed (see common child care illness and exclusion criteria). Please notify staff if your child may be exhibiting any symptoms for a known reason other than illness. You may still need to take your child home if the condition becomes severe.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you or a designated alternate immediately to come pick him/her up. The child will be provided a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian, or designated person arrives. The child will be supervised at all times by someone familiar with the child. We ask that you try to pick your child up within 30 minutes if possible. A child with a potentially communicable disease will be provided care separate from the other children, but still keeping classroom ratio in place.

If your child comes down with a communicable disease or condition, such as chicken pox, head lice, etc...let the center staff know the details so that we may send notices home with the children who may have been exposed. A notice will also be posted at the center.

A doctor's release **will be required** for a child to return to school after a hospitalization, a serious injury, any type of surgery/procedure (for example tonsillectomy, tubes in ears, broken bones splinted or casted), or after being diagnosed with disease that is reportable to the Iowa Department of Public Health.



Common Child Care Illnesses and Exclusion Criteria

***A child should be temporarily excluded from care when the child's illness causes one or more of the following:**

- Prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- A need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- An acute change in behavior: lethargy, lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or a quickly spreading rash.
- Fever with behavior change or other signs and symptoms in a child older than 6 months (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea).
- A child with a temperature elevated above normal is not necessarily an indication of a significant health problem. For children older than 4 months a fever is defined as:
 - 100°F (37.8°C) axillary (armpit), • 101°F (38.3°C) orally, 101°F (38.3°C) Aural (ear) temperature.

Get immediate medical attention when an infant younger than 4 months has unexplained temperature of 100°F (37.8°C) axillary. Any infant younger than 2 months with a fever should get medical attention within an hour.

ILLNESS	EXCLUDE*	RETURN TO CHILD CARE
Chicken Pox	Yes.	When all blisters are crusted with no oozing (usually 6 days) and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Diarrhea (infectious)	Yes (there are special exclusion rules for E.coli 0157.H7, Shigella and cryptosporidiosis).	When diarrhea stops and health care provider or public health official states the child may return.
Diarrhea (non-infectious)	Yes, if stool cannot be contained in the diaper, or if toileted child has 2 or more loose stools in 24 hours, or blood in stool.	When diarrhea stops and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Fifth Disease	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.*	If excluded due to presence of other exclusion criteria, resolution of exclusion criteria.
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.* Or is excessively drooling with mouth sores.	If excluded due to presence of other exclusion criteria, resolution of exclusion criteria.
Head Lice (Pediculosis)	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.*	Treatment of an active lice infestation may be delayed until the end of the day. Children do not need to miss school or childcare due to head lice. The Iowa Department of Public Health & Healthy Child Care Iowa recommend a 14 day treatment protocol .
Impetigo	Yes, exclude at the end of the day if blisters can be covered.	After child has been seen by the doctor, after 24 hours on antibiotic, and blisters are covered.
Influenza	Yes.	When child is fever free for 24 hours and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Molluscum Contagiosum	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.*	Skin disease similar to warts. Do not share towels or clothing and use good hand hygiene.
MRSA	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.*	Wounds should be kept covered and gloves worn during bandage changes. Do not share towels or clothing and use good hand hygiene.
Otitis Media (ear infection)	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.*	If excluded due to presence of other exclusion criteria, resolution of exclusion criteria.
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Yes.	Child may return after 5 days of antibiotics and resolution of exclusion criteria.

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.*	Child does not need to be excluded unless health care provider or public health official recommends exclusion. Resolution of all exclusion criteria.
Ringworm	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.*	Treatment of ringworm infection may be delayed to the end of the day. Child may be readmitted after treatment has begun. Cover lesion(s) if possible. Do not share clothing, bedding or personal items.
Strep Throat	Yes.	When resolution of exclusion criteria and after 24 hours of antibiotic.
Vomiting	Yes.	When vomiting has resolved and resolution of exclusion criteria.

Please refer to [Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards \(third edition\)](#) or the [Iowa Department of Public Health EPI Manual](#) for guidance on specific diseases not included in this list. Contact your local [Child Care Nurse Consultant](#) for additional information.

References:

American Academy Of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2011. *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs. 3rd edition.* Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, DC: American Public Health Association. Also available at <http://nrckids.org>.

Iowa Department of Public Health EPI Manual: Guide to Surveillance, Investigation, and Reporting. Reportable Disease Information. Revised 6/2011

Healthy Child Care Iowa Head Lice brochure Revised 10/2008 http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcci/common/pdf/headlice_brochure.pdf

MEDICATION: Some students may need to take medication during their school day. Medication will be administered by authorized school personnel* following our medication policy. A signed medication administration form must be completed for each medication by the parent and an order from a health provider (MD, DO, ARNP, or DDS) must be on file before we will give any medications. All medication will be provided by parents in the original, labeled container. Whenever possible the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction. Once a day medicines will not be given at school. All medications will be stored where they are inaccessible to children. Please give all medications to transportation staff to deliver. Children must not ever handle medications.

*Authorization is obtained by passing an approved medication course and obtaining a certificate.

PROTECTION FROM HAZARDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH: Program staff protects children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping.

The preschool classroom building has been tested for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, and other hazards that could impact children’s health with documentation on file. Custodial staff maintains the building’s heating, cooling, and ventilation systems in compliance with national standards for facility use by children.

The program maintains facilities so they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer’s instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children. The program uses the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) so that the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation.

FAMILIES INVOLVEMENT

Families are actively encouraged to be involved with the education and growth of their child by helping define the needs of their child and providing feedback on their child's progress after enrollment. Home visits and conferences are scheduled throughout the school year to discuss your child's progress and other areas of concern and interest. Families can be involved in a variety of ways such as volunteering in the classroom, attending parent meetings, helping plan special activities, repairing toys, preparing materials, or being involved in parent groups. Family involvement is an important and vital part of the program.

ACCESS POLICY

Parents/guardians are welcome and encouraged to spend time with their child during preschool. Parents/guardians can come in and enjoy a meal or spend time with their child as they learn throughout the day. Because parents are not responsible for care of other children, are not left alone with children, or in ratio, they are exempt from completing a background check. However, this exemption applies only to the parent/guardian/custodian of the child.

If a parent would like to designate another person such as a grandparent or aunt to come into the center to spend time with their child, these persons must complete a state criminal background check. This is a requirement of the Department of Human Services. More information can be obtained by contacting the Human Resource Manager at the Head Start administration office at 641-494-1891.

The safety of your child is a priority for us. One way to ensure safety is to limit the people who have access to your child. Many of our centers are secured buildings; entry is gained by being “buzzed” or admitted after identifying yourself. Please know we may ask for picture identification at anytime.

Persons who exhibit inappropriate behavior will be asked to leave or denied entrance to the center. Staff members are responsible for supervising parent/guardian and other volunteers.

VOLUNTEER POLICY

- Volunteers are required to be at a minimum age of 16 years.
- Volunteers will be under the direct supervision of staff.
- All volunteers must complete the statement whether they have a criminal conviction or history of child abuse or dependent adult abuse or a communicable disease or health concern.
- All volunteers need to be informed of their responsibility of being a mandatory reporter, and sign a statement they were made aware of this responsibility and how to make a report if needed.
- All volunteers are required to complete a state criminal history check, request for child abuse information, be fingerprinted and complete a national criminal history check. Criminal background checks are run at a cost to our program. We want to make this a meaningful experience for all involved, so we ask that you have an ongoing commitment to volunteer in the program.

NUTRITION

At school, your child will receive nutritious meals that will supply a portion of their daily nutritional requirements. Children who participate in the 4-year-old preschool program will receive a snack each day. Mealtime and snack time are a valuable part of the program experience. Our goal is to help children develop healthy eating habits and positive attitudes about food by providing a variety of food experiences.

Adults are to set an example at the table with their attitude, action and acceptance of food during mealtime. Adults are to role model table manners and remind children to do the same. If there are enough adults available, at least one adult will be seated at each table during the meal. Children, staff and volunteers eat together, sharing the same menu. All food on the menu is to be passed and served at the beginning of the meal and may be eaten in any order.

We believe and practice the division of responsibility in feeding. This means the adults are responsible for what food is offered, how much food is offered and when it is offered. Children are responsible for what they eat, how much they eat and if they eat. Children are encouraged, but never forced to eat or taste foods. Food will never be used as a reward or punishment.

The same menu is served to all children and adults. No other food or drink is allowed at meal or snack time. We will provide special diet needs for a child after we receive a Diet Modification Form completed by your child’s doctor.

Family style meal service is used to help children learn self-help and socializing skills. Each child serves their own food and pours their own drink as it is passed around the table. Table conversation about the child's total experience should be encouraged. Mealtime is usually about 20-30 minutes in length. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for cleaning their own spills and clearing their dishes when done eating. Teachers establish their own rules for excusing from the table and clean up.

If you are volunteering for the day or only eating with your child, please let the teacher know by 9:00 a.m. of that day. We ask that no other children come to the school during school hours.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

NUTRITION ACTIVITIES: Nutrition activities will also be offered at your school to broaden your child's food experience. Exploring, tasting, preparing and cooking new foods are examples of nutrition activities.

NUTRITION ASSESSMENT: All Head Start children are provided with a free nutrition assessment by a Registered Dietician. Parents complete a nutrition screening form about your child's eating habits and nutritional status. The screening forms are reviewed by a registered dietician and a follow up letter will be sent if any concerns are identified.

FOOD DONATIONS: Due to Head Start regulations and Child and Adult Care Food Program requirements, our program cannot accept donations of food prepared outside of our program.

HOLIDAYS/BIRTHDAYS: Parents will be asked for their input regarding holidays, birthdays, traditions, and beliefs. The classroom teacher will utilize this information in his/her planning in order to respect the wishes of all families. We also request that no edible treats and/or snacks be brought to school, as we are not allowed to serve these items.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parent involvement is a vital part of our program. You are the child's first and most important teacher, and we recognize this. The center receives many hours of volunteer service which is required for funding. We offer many exciting ways for you to become actively involved and welcome you as part of the team. How to record your volunteer time:

All services or materials donated to the program are called "in-kind." Volunteer hours and donations are recorded on an "in-kind" sheet which is kept at the center. Any time you spend providing services to our program can be recorded as "in-kind." This includes, but is not limited to, time spent helping in the program, at parent meetings, or on the policy council.

Communicate with the teachers and other staff. Read newsletters and notes that are sent home with your child. These contain information on:

- classroom activities
- health and nutrition information
- facts about community agencies and resources
- information about parent activities and meetings

FAMILY EVENTS: Events are held throughout the year to provide educational opportunities for positive parent/child interactions and school readiness. Parents are asked what topics they are interested in learning more about. Policy Council members will have input and will assist family workers in planning family events.

POLICY COUNCIL: Policy Council is the governing body of the Head Start Program. It is comprised of a parent representative from each program and a community representative from each county. Specific functions under the jurisdiction of policy council include:

- serving as a link between Head Start, the business sector, and the community
- having the opportunity to initiate suggestions and ideas for program improvement
- advising in the establishment and regulation of general policies and procedures
- providing input into Head Start personnel policies and criteria for hiring/firing staff

- making decisions regarding budgeting
- assisting in communicating with possible volunteer sources and mobilizing these to meet identified needs
- conducting self-evaluation of the program and
- having the opportunity to attend further training sessions.

FAMILY SERVICES: We recognize the family as the cornerstone of a child's life. For this reason, staff persons are available to serve the entire family. Outreach workers are available at each of the Community Action offices. Head Start family workers will support the family and link families to agencies that will best meet their needs. A Head Start family worker will complete a visit to your home (Head Start students) to get to know your family and complete family file paperwork. The family worker is a valuable resource for your family as they will assist you in finding available community resources and will advocate for services in the community. As needs arise, feel free to call staff to ask questions or just to talk things through.

TRANSPORTATION

Head Start families will be responsible for transporting their children to school. It is expected that children will be picked-up when scheduled. Some transportation services are provided. We strive to serve as many children as we can within our time and budget constraints. The bus routes are approved and established in the beginning of the school year based on parental request, to accommodate as many children and stops as possible in the most efficient time. To ensure that we can provide bussing in a timely manner, parents or caregivers must be watching for the bus to assist & sign their child on or off of the bus. Families, who are consistently late for either the pick-up or drop-off time, may lose their bussing privileges.

The Mason City Community Schools may provide school bus transportation for students in the 4-year-old preschool program. Parents or legal guardians may request transportation at enrollment, indicating the pick-up and drop off address, the name of the responsible person at that address, and emergency contact information for all parties involved. Parents or legal guardians are asked to keep their information current by reporting changes to the preschool teacher or elementary school secretary. All information will be updated at least quarterly by teaching staff. For children who have special needs for transportation, the facility will use a plan based on a functional assessment of the child's needs related to transportation that is filled out by the child's physician. This plan will address special equipment, staffing and care in the vehicle during transport. Any accommodations indicated in the child's Individualized Educational Program will be implemented as described.

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN ON A FIELD TRIP: The following policy has been established for children transported to and from our program including field trips:

1. All children attending our program will not be transported on a field trip unless a parent/ guardian signs the field trip permission form.
2. Children must wear when available a safety restraint at all times when riding the bus
3. NO toys on the bus
4. NO food or drinks are allowed on the bus.

BUS BEHAVIOR POLICY:Our philosophy is:

- * The bus ride is a part of your child's school day.
- * All children can behave appropriately and safely while on the school bus.
- * No child's behavior will interfere with the safety of the other children on the bus or the performance /safety of the bus driver or bus aide.

The following guidelines will be used to accomplish this:

- * Children will have assigned seats.
- * Children will sit with their backs against the seat and their feet in front them.
- * Everyone will wear a seat belt/child restraint that is adjusted appropriately.
- * Children will be asked to use "inside" voices on the bus (conversation is encouraged).
- * Children will keep all body parts and objects inside the bus.
- * Children will keep their hands, feet, and book bags to themselves.
- * Children will not use inappropriate language, and/or rude gestures (such as name calling, teasing, etc.).

If a child/adult chooses not to follow a guideline, then one or more of the following consequences will be applied:

1. Bus aide will give a verbal warning.
2. Parents/guardians will be informed of child's behavior and a contact record will be completed as documentation of the conversation.
3. A meeting will be held to include parents/guardians and all appropriate personnel.
4. If suspension of bus privileges occurs, parents/guardians will be responsible for transporting their child.

ANNUAL NOTICES OF THE MASON CITY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Bullying/Harassment Policy

The Mason City Community Schools District is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and/or harassment of or by students, staff, and volunteers is against federal, state, and local policy and is not tolerated by the board. Bullying and/or harassing behavior can seriously disrupt the ability of school employees to maintain a safe and civil environment, and the ability of students to learn and succeed. Therefore, it is the policy of the state and the school district that school employees, volunteers, and students shall not engage in bullying or harassing behavior in school, on school property, or at any school function or school-sponsored activity.

Definitions: For the purposes of this policy, the defined words shall have the following meaning:

- "Electronic" means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optic cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. "Electronic" includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, and electronic text messaging.
- "Harassment" and "bullying" shall mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student based on the individual's actual or perceived age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status, and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:
 - (1) Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
 - (2) Has a substantial detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
 - (3) Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's academic performance.
 - (4) Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
- "Trait or characteristic of the student" includes but is not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.
- "Volunteer" means an individual who has regular, significant contact with students.

Filing a Complaint

A Complainant who wishes to avail himself/herself of this procedure may do so by filing a complaint with the superintendent or superintendent's designee. An alternate will be designated in the event it is claimed that the superintendent or superintendent's designee committed the alleged discrimination or some other conflict of interest exists. Complaints shall be filed within 180 days of the event giving rise to the complaint or from the date the Complainant could reasonably become aware of such occurrence. Complaint forms may be found on the schools website under public notices or see policy 102.E4. The Complainant will state the nature of the complaint and the remedy requested. The Complainant shall receive assistance as needed.

School employees, volunteers, and students shall not engage in reprisal, retaliation, or false accusation against a victim, witness, or an individual who has reliable information about an act of bullying or harassment.

Investigation

The school district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee (hereinafter "Investigator") will be responsible for handling all complaints alleging bullying or harassment. The Investigator shall consider the totality of circumstances presented in determining whether conduct objectively constitutes bullying or harassment. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall also be responsible for developing procedures regarding this policy. The investigation may include, but is not limited to the

following:

- A request for the Complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint;
- A request for the individual named in the complaint (hereinafter “Respondent”) to provide a written statement;
- A request for witnesses identified during the course of the investigation to provide a written statement; and
- Review and collection of documentation or information deemed relevant to the investigation.

The Investigator shall consider the totality of circumstances presented in determining whether conduct objectively constitutes bullying or harassment. Upon completion of the investigation, the Investigator shall issue a report with respect to the findings.

Decision

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include suspension and expulsion. If after an investigation a school employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the employee shall be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include termination. If after an investigation a school volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, the volunteer shall be subject to appropriate measures, which may include exclusion from school grounds.

A school employee, volunteer, or student, or a student’s parent or guardian who promptly, reasonably, and in good faith reports an incident of bullying or harassment, in compliance with the procedures in the policy adopted pursuant to this section, to the appropriate school official designated by the school district, shall be immune from civil or criminal liability relating to such report and to participation in any administrative or judicial proceeding resulting from or relating to the report.

Individuals who knowingly file false bullying or harassment complaints and any person who gives false statements in an investigation may be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall any person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. Any student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. Any school employee found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment. Any school volunteer found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds.

Publication of Policy (Board Policy 104)

The board will annually publish this policy. The policy may be publicized by the following means:

- Inclusion in the student handbook,
- Inclusion in the employee handbook
- Inclusion in the registration materials
- Inclusion on the school or school district’s web site

Complaint Procedure

It is the policy of the Mason City Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a complaint procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the Equity Coordinator, Tom Drzycimski, 1515 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Mason City, Iowa, 50401, 641-421-4403, tdrzycimski@masoncityschools.org.

Students, parents of students, employees, and applicants for employment in the school district have the right to file a formal complaint alleging discrimination. The district has policies and procedures in place to identify and investigate complaints alleging discrimination. If appropriate, the district will take steps to prevent the recurrence of discrimination and to correct its discriminatory effects on the Complainant and others.

A Complainant may attempt to resolve the problem informally by discussing the matter with a building principal or a direct supervisor. However, the Complainant has the right to end the informal process at any time and pursue the formal complaint procedures outlined below. Use of the informal or formal complaint procedure is not a prerequisite to the

pursuit of other remedies. Please note that informal processes and procedures are not to be used in certain circumstances (e.g., sexual harassment and sexual assault).

Filing a Complaint

A Complainant who wishes to avail himself/herself of this complaint procedure may do so by filing a complaint with the equity coordinator(s). An alternate will be designated in the event it is claimed that the equity coordinator or superintendent committed the alleged discrimination or some other conflict of interest exists. Complaints shall be filed within 180 of the event giving rise to the complaint or from the date the Complainant could reasonably become aware of such occurrence. The Complainant will state the nature of the complaint and the remedy requested. The equity coordinator(s) shall assist the Complainant as needed.

Investigation

Within 15 working days, the equity coordinator will begin the investigation of the complaint or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation (hereinafter "equity coordinator"). If the Complainant is under 18 years of age, the equity coordinator shall notify his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) that they may attend investigatory meetings in which the Complainant is involved. The complaint and identity of the Complainant, Respondent, or witnesses will only be disclosed as reasonably necessary in connection with the investigation or as required by law or policy. The investigation may include, but is not limited to the following:

- A request for the Complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint;
- A request for the individual named in the complaint to provide a written statement;
- A request for witnesses identified during the course of the investigation to provide a written statement;
- Interviews of the Complainant, Respondent, or witnesses;
- An opportunity to present witnesses or other relevant information; and
- Review and collection of documentation or information deemed relevant to the investigation.

Within 60 working days, the equity coordinator shall complete the investigation and issue a report with respect to the findings.

The equity coordinator shall notify the Complainant and Respondent of the decision within 5 working days of completing the written report. Notification shall be by U.S. mail, first class.

Decision and Appeal

The complaint is closed after the equity coordinator has issued the report, unless within 10 working days after receiving the decision, either party appeals the decision to the superintendent by making a written request detailing why he/she believes the decision should be reconsidered. The equity coordinator shall promptly forward all materials relative to the complaint and appeal to the superintendent. Within 30 working days, the superintendent shall affirm, reverse, amend the decision, or direct the equity coordinator to gather additional information. The superintendent shall notify the Complainant, Respondent, and the equity coordinator of the decision within 5 working days of the decision. Notification shall be by U.S. mail, first class.

The decision of the superintendent shall be final.

The decision of the superintendent in no way prejudices a party from seeking redress through state or federal agencies as provided by in law.

This policy and procedures are to be used for complaints of discrimination, in lieu of any other general complaint policies or procedures that may be available.

If any of the stated timeframes cannot be met by the district, the district will notify the parties and pursue completion as promptly as possible.

Retaliation against any person, because the person has filed a complaint or assisted or participated in an investigation, is prohibited. Persons found to have engaged in retaliation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures. (Board Policy 102.R1)

Corporal Punishment, Restraint, and Physical Confinement and Detention

State law forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student. Certain actions by school employees are not considered corporal punishment. Additionally, school employees may use “reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain” to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property. State law also places limits on school employees’ abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. The law limits why, how, where, and for how long a school employee may restrain or confine and detain a child. If a child is restrained or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child’s parent.

Guidelines:

Areas used for behavior intervention will ensure that the students have reasonable space, sufficient light, ventilation and a comfortable temperature and students are allowed reasonable break period to attend to bodily needs (this does not include sleep). The area will be adequately supervised and students will be able to leave the area during an emergency. The room will be free of dangerous objects or instruments. Material restraints will not be utilized.

Adult supervision is maintained in all areas used for student behavior intervention.

Physical restraint, confinements, and detention will only be utilized when reasonable disciplinary techniques have been attempted. Physical restraints will only be utilized to keep the students, staff, and property safe. Prone restraints will not be utilized as a restraint method. If for emergency safety reasons, students are placed in a prone restraint position, the staff must take immediate steps to end the prone restraint.

School staff will receive adequate and periodic training prior to using physical restraints.

Parents/guardians will receive notification from the school if physical restraints were utilized with their child, and/or if their child was removed from the classroom and placed in an intervention area where the student’s egress was physically prevented. (Iowa Code 281- Chapter 103)

Due Process

Mason City community School District recognizes and supports the principle of due process. Students and/or parents who feel discontented with decisions made in accordance with school procedures may appeal the decisions in writing to the building administrator within five (5) school days following the giving of notification of the action. Following the review, the administrator shall affirm, reverse, or modify the previous decision. Students and/or parents who are still discontented with the decision of the administrator may file a request for review with the Superintendent or the designee within five (5) school days after the giving of notification of the building administrator’s decision. At the conclusion of the review, the Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee shall affirm, reverse or modify the building administrator’s decision. Students and/or parents may appeal the Superintendent’s decision to the local Board of Education. State law provides for an appeal beyond the local Board of Education. (Board Policy 503.1)

Students who believe they have suffered harassment shall report matters in a timely manner to a teacher, a counselor, or a building administrator. Procedures for reporting are included in Administrative Regulation 502.10E1. (Board Policies 403.5 and 502.10)

School employees shall be responsible for promoting understanding and acceptance of, and assuring compliance with, state and federal laws and board policy and procedures governing harassment within the school setting.

Illegal Items – Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, Weapons, and Explosives

Students are prohibited from distributing, dispensing, manufacturing, possessing, using, and being under –the influence of alcohol, drugs or look-a-like substances; and possessing or using tobacco, tobacco products or look-a-like substances. Weapons or look-a-like weapons and explosive devices or look-a-like explosive devices are not allowed on school grounds or at school activities with the exception of weapons in the control of law enforcement officials or those being used for educational purposes and approved by the principal. Chains and laser pointers are not allowed.

Disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion, may result based upon the conditions of the incident. Parents of students found in violation of this policy will be contacted, and the students may be reported to law enforcement officials.

(Code of Iowa, 279.8; 724; Board Policies 502.6; 502.7)

Multicultural/Gender Fair Education

Students will have an equal opportunity for a quality education without discrimination, regardless of their age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status or familial status.

The education program will be organized to provide equal opportunity, and to foster knowledge, respect, and appreciation for the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society. Special emphasis is placed on Asian-Americans, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans and persons with disabilities. It will also reflect the wide variety of roles and opportunities open to both men and women and provide equal opportunity to both genders. (Board Policy 603.4)

Nondiscrimination Statement

It is the policy of the Mason City Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a complaint procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a complaint related to this policy, please contact the Equity Coordinator, Tom Drzycimski, 1515 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Mason City, Iowa, 50401, 641-421-4403, tdrzycimski@masoncityschools.org. (Board Policy 102.E2)

Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of the Mason City Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. For the purpose of this section, “educational institution” includes any preschool, elementary or secondary school, community college, area education agency, or postsecondary college or university and their governing boards. This section does not prohibit an educational institution from maintaining separate toilet facilities, locker rooms, or living facilities for the different sexes so long as comparable facilities are provided. Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting any bona fide religious institution from imposing qualifications based on religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity when such qualifications are related to a bona fide religious purpose or any institution from admitting students of only one sex.

There is a complaint procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the Equity Coordinator, Tom Drzycimski, 1515 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Mason City, Iowa, 50401, 641-421-4403, tdrzycimski@masoncityschools.org.

The Mason City Community School District Board of Education requires all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school district to subscribe to all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations pertaining to contract compliance and equal opportunity. (Board Policy 102)

Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy ACT (FERPA) afford parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading or in violation of the student’s privacy rights.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
4. The right to inform the school district that the parent does not want directory information, as defined below, to be released. Any student over the age of eighteen or parent not wanting this information released to the public must make objection in writing at the time of registration to the principal. The objection needs to be renewed annually.

Name, Address, Telephone Listing, Date and Place of Birth, E-Mail Address, Grade Level, Enrollment Status, Major Field of Study, Participation in Officially Recognized Activities and Sports, Weight and

Height of Members of Athletic Teams, Dates of Attendance, Degrees and Awards Received, the Most Recent Previous School or Institution Attended by the Student, Photograph and Likeness, and Other Similar Information.

5. Mason City Community School District will release a student record to other school(s) in which the student intends to enroll. This will be done automatically to help facilitate the transition of the student from one school district to another school district
6. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U. S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605.