



# Early Learning Parent Handbook for Preschool Programs

The Early Learning Office is located at:

**Central Education Center**  
7145 Harriet Ave S  
Richfield MN 55423

**Contact numbers:**

Early Learning Office -----	612-243-3007
Spanish Outreach -----	612-243-3021
Somali Outreach -----	612-243-3009
Early Learning Coordinator -----	612-243-3006
Early Childhood Social Worker -----	612-243-3027
PreK-12 Transportation -----	612-798-6075
Early Childhood Special Education Program -----	612-243-3004
Early Childhood Screening -----	612-243-3048
Fax -----	612-243-3067
Email -----	earlylearning@rpsmn.org
Centennial Elementary School -----	612-798-6800
Central Education Center -----	612-243-3000
Richfield Dual Language School -----	612-798-6700
Sheridan Hills Elementary -----	612-798-6900
RSTEM Elementary -----	612-798-6600

# Welcome to Preschool!

Welcome to the Richfield Public Schools. In our preschool program, we are committed to providing you and your child with a high quality preschool experience that will prepare them for success in school. Please review this handbook and let your child's teacher know if you have questions. Program procedures and policies are subject to change.

## Philosophy and Position Statement

The overall philosophy of the program is to encourage in each child a love and excitement for learning, and to prepare children with social and academic skills they need to be successful in kindergarten and throughout their educational career.

## Curriculum

Lessons are planned using the *"Creative Curriculum"* and teachers are focused on individually meeting the needs of all students. This curriculum is aligned with the Minnesota state standards for preschool and with the Richfield Public Schools (RPS) kindergarten learning standards to ensure that all students begin kindergarten with the same basic skills to promote success. Preschool at RPS will be an active year of hands-on learning with common preschool experiences for all children with a critical focus on anti-bias curriculum and support in building important social and emotional skills.

- At the Richfield Dual Language School preschool class (RDLS) 90% is taught in Spanish and 10% is taught in English.
- The Spanish enrichment preschool classes at Central are taught in English with enrichment integrated throughout the day in the form of songs, stories and visuals around the classroom.

## Early Childhood Screening

All students entering school are required to complete an Early Childhood Screening. This free session lasts approximately 50 minutes and is used to identify potential health or developmental concerns in young children. This screening is not the same as a doctor's well-child visit.

You are encouraged to schedule your child's screening as soon as you are able. Appointments fill up quickly, especially toward the beginning of the school year. To schedule your screening or ask any questions, email [ecscreening@rpsmn.org](mailto:ecscreening@rpsmn.org) or call 612-243-3048.

## Communication and Conferences

Each fall an event will be held to welcome children into the classroom and begin the process of connecting with families to partner in learning. In addition, parents/guardians have the opportunity to meet with the preschool teachers in a scheduled conference each fall and winter. Conference schedules will be posted on district calendars, websites and through communication from building administration. Regular communication with your child's teacher is important and additional conferences can be arranged if needed. Parents can expect regular communication from teachers via Seesaw, newsletters and all-district communications.

## Assessments

The early learning program assesses students in a variety of ways. We value observation as a tool and also use the Teaching Strategies GOLD online portfolio system. TS GOLD is an authentic, ongoing, observation-based assessment system aligned to the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. Children are assessed in all developmental domains including the areas of literacy, math, social-emotional and cognitive development in the fall, winter and spring using TS Gold. This assessment focuses on children's growth and progress during the year, understanding that children develop at different rates. Teachers will share children's growth with parents at parent-teacher conferences twice per year. You will receive a final paper copy of your child's assessment by mail or in your child's backpack at the end of the year.

## Children's Basic Needs

In order to grow and learn, all children have basic needs including safety, good nutrition, shelter, medical attention, clothing, appropriate discipline and love. Parents or guardians who are having difficulty providing for their child's emotional or physical needs are encouraged to ask for help. Our Early Childhood Social Worker will work with you and can be reached at 612-243-3027

If your family is currently experiencing homelessness, such as staying in a shelter, hotel or temporarily with others, we can help make sure your child has stability in their education through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act. For help in accessing these services, please contact your school's Social Worker or Counselor at 612-243-3027

## Policies and Procedures

### Drop-off / Pick-up:

**Be on time when dropping off and picking up your child from school.**

- Drop off
  - If you arrive for class early, please wait with your child outside of the classroom door until the teacher opens the door.
  - Take your child to the classroom and check in with your child's teacher
- Pick up
  - If a person who is NOT on the child's emergency contact form will be picking up a child from school, the parent or guardian must let the teacher know in advance. The person picking up the student must show photo identification.
  - When picking up your child from school, please plan to arrive **5 minutes** before class ends.

### Non-Custodial Parent Pick-Up

A copy of a current court order must be on file with the school if a non-custodial parent is not allowed to pick up a child from the program.

### Late Pick-Up Procedures

1. If we have not heard from a parent/guardian **5 minutes** after the end of class time and/or they are not at the bus stop to receive the student, staff will call emergency contacts.
2. If a pattern is repeated a program social worker will be available to assist in addressing the concerns.

We understand that occasionally conditions beyond one's control exist (inclement weather). If these conditions arise, you must notify your school as soon as possible and make arrangements for someone else to pick up your child.

## **Requesting BusTransportation**

### **Preschool for 4s**

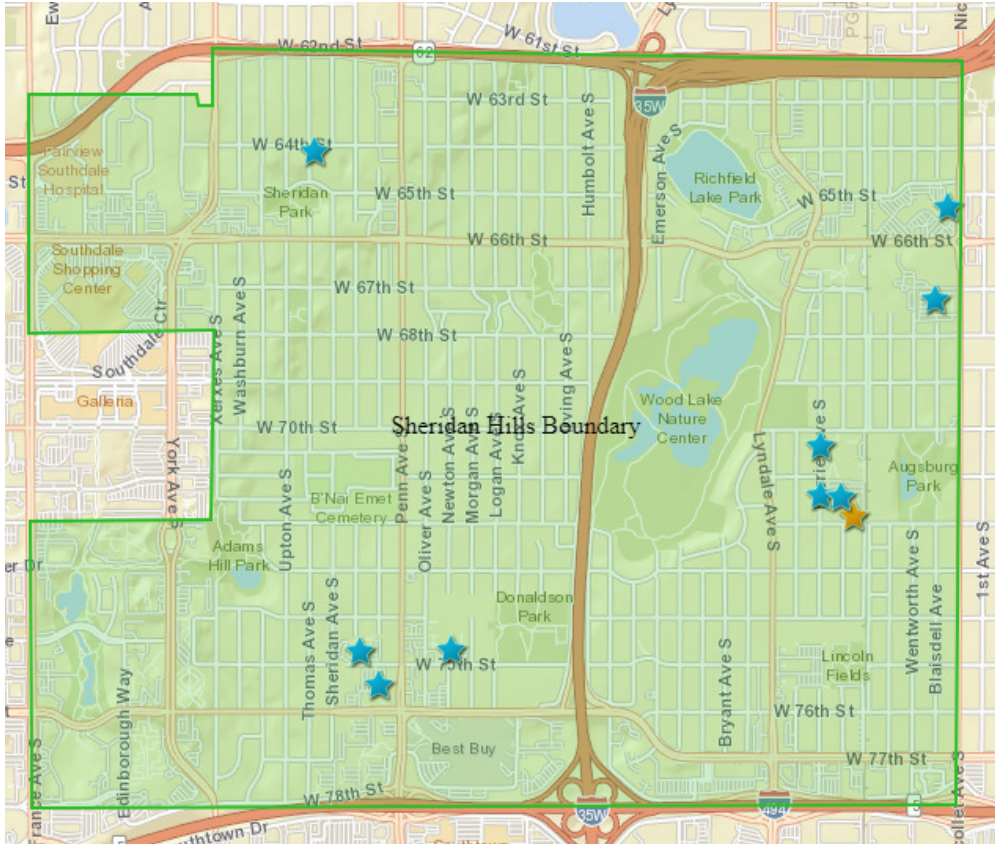
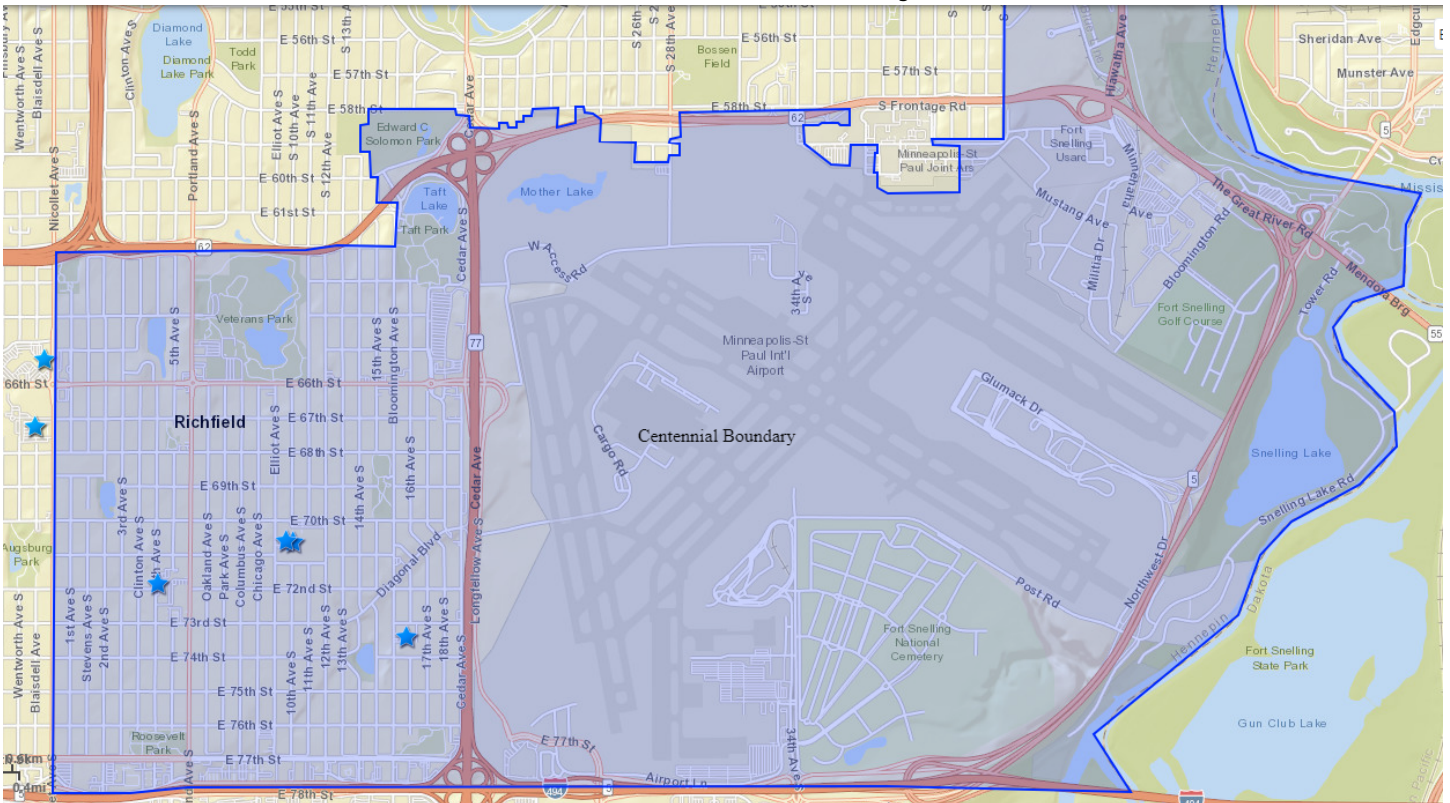
- Students in a 4 year old program who live within the school district boundaries are eligible for busing. Richfield Public Schools does not transport to any location outside the district boundaries. Community school boundaries apply. For complete information on busing please see the parent Handbook.
- Requests for transportation received after July 31st may not be ready in time for the first day of school.
- School buses do NOT stop in front of houses for pick-up and drop-off.

### **Preschool for 3s**

- Busing is not available to 3s.

Documentation of an Individualized Education Plan is required to apply for transportation accommodations.

## Community School Bus Boundaries: *Sheridan Hills Elementary*

**Centennial Elementary**

# Parent Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for their child's behavior and safety at the bus stop and as soon as he/she gets off the bus.

## Bus Stop Rules

- Pick up (before school)
  - An adult must be with the child at the bus stop.
  - Be ready at your bus stop **5 minutes** before your scheduled pick-up time and wait until 10 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time. If your bus doesn't arrive within this time frame, please call (612) 798-6075.
  - Drivers will not wait before going on to the next stop.
- Drop off (after school)
  - If no adult is at the bus stop, the driver will not let your child off the bus. After waiting for 1 minute, your child will be returned to the school office where your emergency contacts will be called and will need to pick him/her up.

***If there is no adult present at the bus stop more than 3 times, your child will be suspended from the bus for one day. If no adult is at the bus stop 5 or more times, your child will be suspended from the bus and may lose the privilege of riding the bus for the rest of the year.***

## Bus Behavior

Riding the bus to and from school is a privilege, not a right. If your child's behavior on the bus is not safe, he or she may lose the privilege of riding the bus to and from school. Parents and teachers will work together to teach appropriate bus riding skills for your child.

### Expected behaviors include:

- Sit in the first few rows of the bus
- Remain seated on your pockets facing forward the whole ride
- Use a quiet voice
- Do not stand up until the bus driver says its ok to stand up
- Listen to the bus driver

## Absences

**It is important for your child to be at school every school day.** When possible, please schedule doctor and other appointments during times when school is not in session. If your child will be absent from class, please call your school. Phone numbers are listed below.

If your child misses **5 or more** days of school, the teacher will call you.

If your child misses **15** consecutive days of school, he/she will be disenrolled from the program in alignment with state statute.

## Attendance Lines

Centennial -----	612-798-6800
RSTEM-----	612-798-6600
Richfield Dual Language -----	612-888-7357
Sheridan Hills -----	612-798-6900
Central -----	612-243-3010

## Snow Days/Emergency Closing

If Richfield Public Schools close, all Richfield Preschool classes will close. Information will be posted at [www.richfieldschools.org](http://www.richfieldschools.org), <https://www.facebook.com/RPSCCommunityEd> as well as on local media: KSTP, WCCO, FOX, and KARE11.

## Health Guidelines

Please help to keep our classrooms healthy. If your child is sick with any of the following, keep them home and notify the classroom teacher or the attendance line.

- Fever 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours that is not related to a known chronic condition
- Undiagnosed rash that is unexplained or that is not related to a known chronic condition
- Unexplained tiredness, crying, paleness, restlessness
- Have breathing difficulties, wheezing
- Have a cold with yellow-green mucus or cough unrelated to a chronic health condition
- Have a contagious condition that has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others (for example: strep-throat, impetigo, scabies, ringworm)
- Due to COVID-19 it is especially important to keep your child home if experiencing any of the above symptoms.
- **For the latest information and requirements related to COVID-19**, please visit the Richfield Schools website <https://www.richfieldschools.org/about/covid-19>

## Illness or Injury at School

If your child becomes sick or is hurt at school and cannot continue with the school day, we will call you to come and pick your child up. If we are not able to reach you, we will call the emergency contact person. You must have a person listed on the emergency card who would be able to pick up your child if necessary. A child who is sick may be separated from the group and an adult will stay with the child until he/she is picked up.

## Immunization Record

Your child's up-to-date immunizations or a legal exemption must be on file at school and will be reviewed by the school nurse. **Children who are not up-to-date on documentation will not be able to begin school.**

# Medical Concerns and Medications at School

If your child has health concerns and/or needs medication at school, please let your child's teacher know and we will work with you and your child's healthcare provider in following our medication procedures and/or response to your child's health concern at school.

## The following is needed in order to give medicine at school:

- A Medication Consent Form from a licensed prescriber. This form is available under "Health Services" at [www.richfieldschools.org](http://www.richfieldschools.org)
- Signed permission from the parent/guardian
- Labeled medication in its original container

Please provide a written excuse letter If there is an activity that you do not want your child to participate in for health or other reasons.

## Toilet Training

Children must be toilet trained before attending preschool unless a previously granted medical/developmental exemption applies. Children must be wearing underwear. A child having accidents daily would not be considered toilet trained. Please note that wearing pull ups is NOT considered toilet trained.

Why do children have to be toilet trained before they begin preschool?

- There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull ups and our classrooms are not equipped for this.
- When an adult is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it is taking away from learning time for all students and it removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of the class.

We do understand that even toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible. A toilet trained child is a child who can do the following:

- Communicate to the teachers that they need to go to the restroom before they need to go
- Possess the self control to stop what they are doing, to go and use the bathroom.
- Pull down their clothes and get them back up without assistance
- Wipe them self after using the toilet (with minimal assistance for 3 year olds)
- Get on/off the toilet by them self
- Wash and dry hands
- Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom

We certainly will ask your child many times throughout the day if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently. This is an issue which protects all concerned.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Preschool staff are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary. Please have your child dressed in clothing that they can easily manage independently. Please send a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season. These will be left at school in case of accidents, and returned at the end of the school year. Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow 4 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents.

***A child will not be considered toilet trained for our preschool program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 4 weeks of school.***

## School Supplies

- All students should bring a backpack everyday.
- Send an extra set of clothes and write your child's name on all clothes and other things he or she brings to school.
- School supply lists will be distributed over the summer

## Clothing

**Children should wear clothing that is:**

- Comfortable and casual for play.
- Easy for them to take on and off by themselves to go outside or to the bathroom.
- Appropriate for the weather:
  - o Winter – coat, boots, hat, mittens, snow pants
  - o Spring and Fall – long pants and light jackets
- Comfortable shoes for running and playing, like tennis shoes.
- The school is not responsible for lost jewelry.
- Please contact our social worker if you need any assistance (612) 243-3027

## Food

Children will have a light breakfast or snack and water or milk each day. Snack time is learning time for preschoolers. Children practice self-help skills (unfolding their napkin, pouring their own water, opening a package). Snack time is also a great time for children to practice talking with one another and with the teachers.

## Holidays/Celebrations-Equity Policy

While teachers may teach about religious holidays as part of an objective and secular educational program of teaching about religion, celebrating religious holidays in the form of religious worship or other practices is unconstitutional. Teaching about holidays with both a religious and secular basis may be constitutional if it furthers a genuine secular program of education, is presented objectively, and does not have the effect of advancing or inhibiting religion. The study of religious holidays should reflect this nation's diversity and bountiful heritage.

The purpose of Richfield's Equity policy is to provide a district environment in which all students achieve high-level academic outcomes that are not predictable by race, culture, socioeconomic status, language, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, migratory status or any other real or perceived demographic characteristic.

# Behavior Guidance/Discipline in the Classroom

Our goal is to develop a culture that supports and communicates non exclusionary positive guidance practices when necessary.

## What guidance looks like in the classroom:

- Staff will model respectful behavior in the classroom.
- Adults support children as they learn what is expected.
- The activities in the classroom help children stay involved in learning.
- When children need extra help with making friends, solving problems or telling us how they feel, adults will teach children these skills.

Teaching children social emotional skills is an important part of the preschool program. We use positive ways to help children learn and practice appropriate behaviors, and are committed to working with your child while they learn these skills.

In addition to teaching and learning, our role is to ensure a safe, secure classroom for all children and staff. If your child needs more support, we will work with you to develop a plan. Sometimes we will work with Early Childhood Special Education staff, social workers or behavior specialists in order to help your child. *If parents and staff are not able to agree on a behavior plan, we will work together to find alternative placement that better supports your child.* If your child's behavior at school is not safe, your child's teacher will contact you. We want to work in partnership with families to support all children.

## Mandated Reporting

Staff are mandated by the State of Minnesota to file a report with Hennepin County Child Protection or the Sheriff's Department if there is suspicion of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect.

## Weapon-Free Policy

### A. "Weapon"

1. A "weapon" means any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; airguns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; nunchucks; throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace and other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.
2. No person shall possess, use or distribute any object, device or instrument having the appearance of a weapon and such objects, devices or instruments shall be treated as weapons including, but not limited to, weapons listed above which are broken or non-functional, look-alike guns; toy guns; and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon.
3. No person shall use articles designed for other purposes (i.e., lasers, laser pointers, belts, combs, pencils, files, scissors, etc.), to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

- B. "School Location" includes any school building or grounds, whether leased, rented, owned or controlled by the school, locations of school activities or trips, bus stops, school buses or school vehicles, school-contracted vehicles, the area of entrance or departure from school premises or

events, all locations where school-related functions are conducted, and anywhere students are under the jurisdiction of the school district.

- C. "Possession" means having a weapon on one's person or in an area subject to one's control in a school location.

## Transfer Procedures

Requests for transfer will be evaluated on an individual basis. Requests will only be honored if the request is within enrollment criteria and space is available.

## Withdrawal from the Program

If you wish to withdraw your child from the program, a written notice must be submitted to the office by mail, email or in person at the Central Education Center a minimum of *one week* in advance.

Payments already made may not be refunded or prorated.

## Tuition Payments

### (For 3-Year-Old Preschool)

If tuition is part of your child's program, the yearly tuition is broken evenly into 9 monthly payments, regardless of the number of participation days in the month. Tuition is due on the 1st of the month. You will receive your invoice by email. It is parents responsibility to make sure their email address is current and they are receiving our monthly invoice.

**Automatic Payments:** We encourage you to sign up for monthly automatic tuition payments using any of the following: VISA, Mastercard, Discover, Checking or Savings Account. Sign up for AutoPay directly online through your preschool account at <https://richfield.ce.eleyo.com> or call 612-243-3007 for assistance in setting it up.

**Credit Card Payments:** VISA, Mastercard, Discover & American Express

**Cash:** If you wish to pay your account in cash, please deliver in exact amounts directly to the main office of the Central Education Center so that our staff can provide you with a written receipt.

**Check or Money Order:** Make payable to ISD 280 Community Education and either drop off or mail to the office. (Please write your child's name in the memo line).

**Late Payments:** If your payment will not be on time, please call the office immediately at 612-243-3007. If you do not call, a late notice will be mailed to you. If payments are more than two months past due, and you have not contacted the preschool office, we reserve the right to remove your child from the program.

**All accounting and payment information must be communicated directly with the office staff at the Central Education Center (in person, by phone, by email, etc.) Classroom staff cannot accept payments.**



**PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**I acknowledge that I have received and read all the policies and procedures in this handbook.**

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Parent/Guardian (s) Printed Name

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Student (s) Printed Name:

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Parent/ Guardian (s) Signature

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Date Signed

Please return this signed copy to your child's teacher or to the Central Education Center.